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## *INSIDE THIS ISSUE*

This newsletter is dedicated to the class of 2016.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Upon arriving at Virginia State University I began speaking of how at VSU we Embrace Opportunities for Excellence. I can think of no better example of this statement than our May 2016 graduates. Your accomplishments speak for themselves but perhaps what I am most impressed by is how in your tenure at VSU you have given back so very much. This University is a better place because of you. You make us proud!

Dr. Makola Abdullah, President

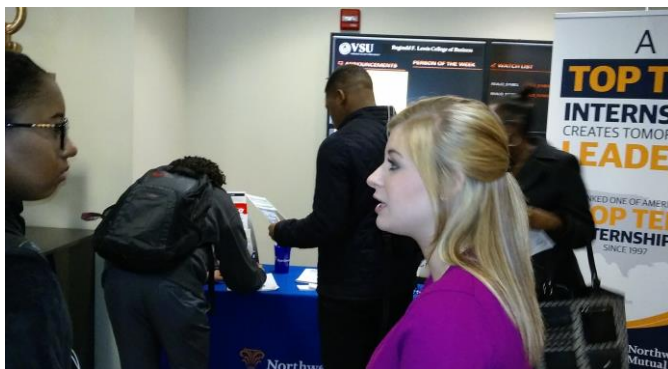
Every year we graduate another group of very special young people who have excelled in every regard to include academically and professionally but this class of graduates is not just another group. You are exceptional for what you have done but more importantly for who you are. I am confident that you will do very well in your careers but I am even more confident that you will do very well in your lives.

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

# 2016: THE SPRING SEMESTER IN PICTURES



Monet Graves and Devin Lightner at TEDxRVA with President Abdullah.



Tieona Booker discusses job opportunities with Alison Hudson.



Jasmine Baskett attends networking event with Congressman Bobby Scott.



Jhadee Gordon attends dinner with President Abdullah.



Chanel Brown is a superstar marketing major and helps recruit students to the College of Business; she makes new friends at Matoaca High School.



Diamond Sims networks with Samuel Little.



Marshawn Shelton delivers remarks at ribbon cutting for Multipurpose Center.



Martin Short networks.





Hunter Johnson is such a ham!



Kara Rogers participates in a VGR focus group.



Center for Entrepreneurship hosts Friday workshops.



Tamiko, Tim, and DeJon at networking event.



Briana, Keana, and Monet pose for a pic.



L'Nique and Chanel attend Petersburg Chamber dinner.

## Visit to Mr. Jefferson's School

This semester over thirty students in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business had the opportunity to spend a day on the campus of the University of Virginia trying on the shoes of a Darden School of Business graduate student. And for most of the students, the shoe fit! The chance to visit one of the leading graduate business schools in the country exhilarated the undergrads and reminded them of the value of performing well academically. For a few folks, it was as though the lightbulb glowed even brighter than usual having seen what could be possible for them subsequent earning their undergraduate degree. For most of the students, the trip to UVA only affirmed their desire to attend graduate school. Said Marvel Taylor (Management major), *"The whole experience was just so amazing and made me realize that I definitely want to earn a graduate degree and the Darden School is a top choice."* Jhadee Gordon added *"I didn't expect this visit to be as informative as it was but I am grateful for the opportunity. I learned a lot from my work-sessions and I am definitely going to grad school"*

A big thanks to Thompson Hospitality for their generous sponsorship of this visit to Charlottesville!

## We all have a little bit of a kid in us

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business is a partner of Ettrick Elementary located across Chesterfield Avenue from campus and regularly supports the school and its students. This semester, a group of students in Career Launch spent an afternoon tutoring a group of forty children. Thought it was not just the children that benefited from the experience. Arguably, the undergraduates got more out of the experience than even the children. One particularly precious moment was caught on camera when Jonathan Young rounded a corner and found Chanel Brown (Marketing major) racing the children on a tricycle. For Chanel, that was the hook; she is now a regular volunteer at Ettrick!



## Big League Competition

Two students from the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business won first place in the Emerging Business Issues Competition at the annual Virginia State Leadership Conference for Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) held in Glen Allen on April 2. Lawrence Fitch, of Petersburg, and Jerry Chris Dow, of Norfolk, worked as a team in the Emerging Business Issues Competition with the topic Ransomware and the Challenges that Businesses Undertake with Ransomware after Adopting Cloud Computing. Both students are senior Management Information Systems majors.

Other university participants included the University of Virginia, George Mason University, James Madison University, Longwood University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Tech.



Students also participated in additional competitions such as business ethics, business sustainability, business presentation, social media challenge, website design and mobile application development. Based on the success of this year's competition, VSU plans to expand its participation in the future. Fitch and Dow will be representing Virginia State University and Virginia PBL at the National Leadership Conference in Atlanta, Ga., competing against teams from the other 49 states. For rest of story, **CLICK HERE:** <http://www.progress-index.com/news/20160414/vsu-students-win-first-place-in-emerging-business-issues-competition>

## Up and Running

In the last edition of this newsletter, you read about the soft launch of the College's new Center for Entrepreneurship. In between then and now, the Center has been busy at work! Specifically, the Center launched Friday workshops and a co-working space program, created a website, initiated a fundraising campaign, and secured students to staff the facility. Fridays constituted the busiest day of the week for the Center with a lot of activity. Successful business owners shared invaluable advice with undergraduates and aspiring entrepreneurs. Arguably even more importantly, priceless connections were made. For example, Trevon Byron (Management major) who aims to pursue a career designing shoes was connected by former Louis Vuitton designer Micheal Sparks to stylists at Nike and Adidas. Said Trevon, *"I think I just met someone who will change my life."*

## More on Center for Entrepreneurship

In partnership with the Emmy-Award winning team of Jesse Vaughan and Cedric Owens at Virginia State University, The College of Business will profile its Center for Entrepreneurship on film. Filming has been finished and editing is about to commence. The storyline will regard how the Center is making connections and providing invaluable mentoring. The subjects of the film will include Neil Amin (CEO of Shamin Hotels), Howard Deskin (CEO of Impression Marketing), and Micheal Sparks (CEO of Underground Kitchen) along with Aiyana Glover (Management major), Jawuan House (Management major), and Dennis McRae (Accounting major).

A big thanks to the Advance Creative Services Group at VSU of Jesse Vaughan and Cedric Owens along with Devin Lightner (Marketing minor) for everything that they do for us in the College of Business!

## From the horse's mouth

One hard cold fact for any college is that the customer composition is constantly changing; after all, students are only around for four years. The relevance includes the requirement that the college has to consistently identify new customers, i.e. prospective students, and recruit to enroll. In a couple of words, it is a sales job. In the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, our very best salespersons are our students and this semester we put them to work! We regularly get our students off-campus to attend college fairs, to conduct workshops at high schools and to visit with K-12 students. The objective is for our recruits to hear straight from the horse's mouth on what it is to be a student in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. Said Tim Sloan (Management major), *"It is fun to represent VSU and to share with young people how in the College of Business students are afforded so many unique opportunities."* Justine Santana (Management major) added, *"I think it's important for high schoolers to hear from us at VSU."*



### Coming Soon to TV

Embrace Opportunities for Excellence is more than just VSU's new brand. It is a cultural expectation and in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business our students are our very best spokesmen and women. For a quick peek at over thirty of our students before they debut on TV as a commercial, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRQ4q7e718g>

### Brandcenter

Congrats to Vanessa Brown (Marketing minor) on being admitted to the prestigious VCU Brandcenter for grad school!

## Healthy Living

The College of Business this semester partnered with the Virginia Department of Health to address healthy lifestyles in southside Virginia. Specifically, a team of marketing students including Jasmine Baskett, Chanel Brown, Vanessa Brown, Craig Lowe, and Elijah Miller led an initiative that took them to Emporia to study their target market. What came out of the project is a nearly half a million dollar plan to promote healthy lifestyles and to address chronic disease particularly in underserved communities.



## Ribbon Cutting

It isn't every day that Virginia State University opens a \$84 million facility so when over two hundred persons celebrated the opening of the new Multipurpose Center it was quite an honor for Marshawn Shelton (Management major) to commemorate the occasion with remarks on behalf of the VSU student body. *"With the opening of the Multipurpose Center, Virginia State University demonstrates our commitment to providing student first class facilities."*

## Who said it's scary to give a speech?

It has been said that for a lot of people they would rather be caught up a creek without a paddle than to give a speech or to speak in public. However, for at least five students in the College of Business, no such fear. In fact, these undergraduates jumped at the chance to participate in a speech competition. Sponsored by the Urban Financial Services Coalition, Bobby Harper (Management major), Messiyah Kerr (Management major), Vanessa Brown (Marketing minor),





Chanel Brown (Marketing major), and Tim Sloan (Management major) competed for an opportunity to win scholarship money. All five students performed very well at the venue in downtown Richmond but Tim Sloan in particular impressed all of the attendees to include most importantly the judges. His topic regarded Reginald F. Lewis inspiring young minority entrepreneurs. Now, Tim has advanced all the way to the national finals to be held next month in Washington, D.C. Go Tim go!

## Exotic Places

Some students have described Singleton Hall as an exotic place but that is probably a bit of a stretch. That said, undergraduate College of Business students are more and more frequently spending a semester in an exotic place. Beneficiaries of study-abroad, students like Ce'Erra Patton (Management major) spent a semester in Thailand learning new cultures, languages, etc. This summer, Monet Graves (Marketing major) will not only study in Beijing but will intern there too. For these students, the world is becoming a smaller place.



## An Interview with a Student



Jhadee Gordon is a junior Accounting major from Guyana by way of Northern Virginia

Age: 21 years old Career Goal: Retail Auditor and VSU Professor

**Regarding your future, what are you most excited for?** Seeing the world.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”*

Ecclesiastes 9:10

## An Interview with Faculty



Dr. Aurelia Donald is an Assistant Professor of Management Information Systems

Place of origin: Harlem, New York

Education: Fayetteville State University, Bowie State University, and UTEP

**What do you like most about teaching?** Encouraging minorities to embrace information systems and statistical career opportunities.

**What has been your most memorable experience here?** The first day of classes and having the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and students; it is truly a family environment.

## An Interview with an Alumnus



David Ghartey is a December, 2015 Management Information Systems graduate with a minor in Cyber Security

Employment: SAP Commercial Consultant with Deloitte in the McLean, Virginia office

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** Traveling, e.g. in two weeks I traveled to Atlanta, Texas, and Detroit. Also, I am about to depart for Singapore where I am managing a project. Regarding Singapore, I am working on a \$30 billion project!

**Most rewarding?** I am part of the recruiting team; coming back to VSU to share what I am doing and to provide opportunities for internships. The opportunity to come back is the most rewarding.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Greg Campbell is Owner of Smarter Interiors (full service office furniture dealership providing space planning and interior design services to support the sales of office furniture)

Education: Bachelor of Science from Virginia Tech

**What are your biggest goals and challenges for your businesses?** The biggest goal is to attract and hire new blood because I am not getting any younger. The challenge is to develop relationships and referrals to increase business opportunities relevant to office furniture sales.

**What is your advice for our students?** Set goals, develop relationships, do what you say you are going to do, and think outside of the box. Be willing to take risks and don't follow, be a leader.

## An Interview with an Industry Stakeholder



Jessie Bell is a Recruiter for Aspiring Business Owners at State Farm

Education: Bachelors in Science Degree at Michigan State University and Master's in Human Resource Management from Troy University

Place of Origin: Detroit, Michigan

**Why do you work with students in the College of Business?** You have an entrepreneurship program; while students may not be ready to start a business right out college, they may be ready

in two to five years. I am planting seeds for our agent aspirant program, they benefit from mentoring and training from our agents.

**What recommendation would you share with a freshman?** Try to get as much experience as possible and do not graduate without at least one internship.

**Identify your favorite quote.** *“If you want something, ask for it”* Jessie’s mom

## Remembrance of a very special friend

Few persons on this planet are remembered for being genuine and sincere. Perhaps it’s the human condition that limits so many people in their capacity to be sincere. This shortcoming was not a problem for the late Oliver Singleton (Late President of Metropolitan Business League). A titan in the Richmond business community, Oliver was an awesome friend to the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. He provided internships, hosted students for corporate dinners, sponsored college programs, and incessantly advocated for us. He did all of these things not because he had to but because he believed it was the right thing to do.

Oliver Rodney Hunt Singleton served as president of the MBL for over 13 years. He was responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organization and overseeing the association’s day to day activities. He is credited with developing community shaping events and activities including the Women Who Mean Business Summit, one of the largest conferences for professional and executive women in this region.

To so many in the Richmond community, he was much more than just a business leader and executive. George Martin (long time friend and managing partner at McGuireWoods) said *“I met Oliver Singleton on my first day as a student at University of Virginia. I knew then that he was special. He was a dear friend. He blessed so many people with his love, intellect, and humor. Richmond was his adoptive home. He loved it and worked hard to make it better. He believed in the Metropolitan Business League and its mission. He will be sorely missed. My prayers go out to his friends, family and community members.”*

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun (Dean of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University) attended the remembrance ceremony and thanked Mrs. Singleton for what her husband had done for students in the College of Business. An alumna of VSU, Mrs. Singleton is in our thoughts and prayers and we join you in celebrating the life of a man who did so very much for so many that had so little.

Virginia State University President Makola Abdullah said of Mr. Singleton, *“His contributions and love for faculty, staff, and students will never be forgotten. Mr. Singleton lived life joyously and deeply - caring to make a difference when others would not.”*

*“His contributions and love for faculty, staff, and students will never be forgotten. Mr. Singleton lived life joyously and deeply – caring to make a difference when others would not.”* Dr. Makola Abdullah, President of Virginia State University

## If there isn’t a picture, did it happen?

If you aren’t one of the over 1,300 persons following the College’s news on social media, what are you waiting for? This semester alone we posted nearly 200 announcements and all of them included a picture because after all; if there isn’t a picture, did it happen? The College had over 50,000 views on social media constituting an awesome marketing tool. To learn more and/or get connected, contact Jonathan Young (Director of Corporate Relations) at [jyoung@vsu.edu](mailto:jyoung@vsu.edu) or 804-524-5987.





## Conversation with industry

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business hosted President Makola Abdullah for an address and remarks at the April 15<sup>th</sup> Industry Council(s) meeting. Set with a backdrop of the brand-new Multipurpose Center, President Abdullah shared his vision with over forty of the College's key industry stakeholders. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions of the President and to learn about his plans for the University. President Abdullah conveyed his appreciation for industry's support. Additionally, he remarked that he was impressed by how the participant companies were interfacing with students to include providing curriculum consultation. It should be noted that The College of Business has developed a portfolio of over six hundred companies that regularly provide material support to our students.



## Congratulations

For starters, congratulations to our May 2016 graduates! Next up, congratulations to the scores of students that were recognized at The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business Honor's Program and Beta Gamma Sigma ceremonies. We would be remiss if we failed to congratulate the thirty students that won \$1,000 scholarships from the College. Let us not fail to acknowledge Jhadee Gordon (Accounting major) who was recognized as Most Outstanding Junior of the Year at VSU or Chris Dow (MISY major) and Lawrence Fitch (MISY major) on earning the Future Business Leaders of America collegiate award. Nor can we do this news-brief any justice without congratulating James Cheives (Accounting major) on earning the Reginald F. Lewis Prize for making the most progress from his sophomore through senior years.

For a cumulative list of student accomplishments for the semester, please consider clicking here: <http://business.vsu.edu/news/2016/05/spring-2016-student-accomplishments.php>

Last but not least, congratulations to our terrific faculty on another job well done this semester. In particular, your research and publications along with your service and teaching were exemplary.



## Alumni & Alumni Advisory Board support

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business is eternally grateful for all of the extraordinary support that our alumni provide us. From hiring our students, to guest teaching, to providing financial support; alumni contributions constitute invaluable resources.

One particular resource regards the College of Business Alumni Advisory Board. With responsibilities to provide informed and actionable input on curriculum and programs, to support activities related to the maintenance of accreditation standards, to secure financial resources and other support, to expand career development and mentoring opportunities, to develop and augment relationships, to develop a culture of philanthropy among other duties the board has been active in the College's reaffirmation of accreditation process. A particular thank you to the group is appropriate for investing so much time in reviewing the curriculum and identifying opportunities for improvement.

For information regarding the Alumni Advisory Board, please contact Mario White at either [mwhite@vsu.edu](mailto:mwhite@vsu.edu) or at 804-524-5387.



The roster of the board includes Marvin Allmond, William L. Allen, Jr., Martha Williams Brown, Frasier Brickhouse, Eldon Burton, Du'Neika Easley, Beverly Everson-Jones, Kara King Bess, Stephanie Hayes, Wanda Hobbs Moore, Lester Reynolds, Joni Robinson, James Simms, Lanita R. Thweatt, Gregory A. Whirley, and V. Vanessa Williams.

## Department name change

Effective July 1, the Department of Management Information Systems will be known as the Department of Computer Information Systems as approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

## Message from the Dean

It has been a very busy semester in the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business. We are working hard towards achieving the reaccreditation of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, International (AACSB). We continue to engage our students in and out of the classroom; innovative in our teaching, research and services; and yield positive impact on our students and the community. We are very proud of our accomplishments.

First among those accomplishments are our students' achievements. For example, this semester alone our students hosted over one hundred companies in Singleton Hall to guest teach and/or mentor, earned scores of internships and jobs, were awarded tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships, participated in dozens of off-campus networking events with industry, spent countless hours volunteering in the community, attended professional conferences, and were featured in a coming soon to TV commercial and film.

Our faculty and staff this semester were busy at work investing in our students teaching and advising. They authored new and important articles that were published in academic journals and provided source content for newspapers. Our faculty attended and presented papers at national and international conferences.

Our alumni continue to demonstrate excellence. Our Alumni Advisory Board contributed material support to include providing financial resources, hiring our students, and managing curriculum consultation. All semester our alums updated us on their new careers and their families.

Our student-run clothing store made a profit for the year, our Center for Entrepreneurship was filmed for a coming soon to TV special, our Cyber Security and Trading Laboratories constituted centers of excellence, and our faculty, staff, and students together volunteered hundreds of hours in the community.

Perhaps it's because of all of the preceding that when President Makola Abdullah joined faculty in Singleton for a conversation regarding his vision for Virginia State University he spoke to how proud he was of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business.

Finally, to everyone that made this semester a big success, please accept my thank you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun  
Dean

Faculty in the College of Business  
join President Abdullah for a  
photo.

