



Spring 2023 Issue

Greater Happens Here

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#### GREATER!

Relevant to business students in their capacity as members of the VSU Band, "We are honored and beyond delighted that members of our VSU Trojan Explosion Marching Band were afforded the opportunity to perform at the White House."

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

Relevant to business students offering free tax assistance, "Our College of Business is a major attraction and a point of pride for Virginia State University."

Dr. Donald Palm, Provost

Our students continue to demonstrate that Greater Happens Here at state-wide competitions by winning first prize in several business disciplines, "I am so proud, they lead!!!"

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean



## 2023: THE SPRING SEMESTER IN PICTURES



Christian Cozart is a leader and a scholar.



Thomasina Williams and Davon Bell share a laugh in Singleton.



Nylan Taylor joins Steve Farbstein from Blue Ridge Bank at a dinner in Richmond.



Andreanna Nembhard participated in a conference in New York.



Tyasia Williams joins Janet Brooks from Barton Malow for lunch in Petersburg.













Brandon Anderson is the consummate VSU ambassador. Destiny Henderson and Jonathan Young pose. Elianna Benavidez celebrates her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. Above.

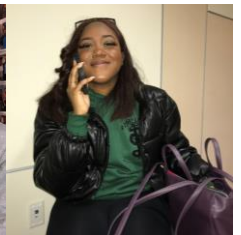
Jasmine and Mary hosted the Garners.

Tyasia and Josalyn hosted Vincent Vu.

Lahtiana is a constant. Below.



Naiya is amazing, Tania too, Alahna and Nigel are pals, Blaise is all dressed, Tony/Aaron/TaQuan are all about accounting, and Mia is on the phone. Below.



## VIP Audience

Chantice Fortune (Management major) has sung for a lot of people but now in her final semester she had her bigger audience ever, i.e. Governor Glenn Youngkin and First Lady Suzanne. Invited to perform for a VIP crowd at the Executive Mansion, Chantice and her colleagues on the Gospel Chorale wowed and dazzled everyone in attendance including His Excellency. Relevant to Governor Youngkin, The College of Business has now hosted then candidate Youngkin in the classroom to guest teach, visited the Executive Mansion a few times, and participated in multiple Partnership for Petersburg events with the Governor.





## Out of Town

From the Big Apple to Austin to just down the road in Gloucester, students again this semester were often out of town to participate in leadership opportunities. Relevant to Gotham, Emanuel Harris (Marketing major) joined his colleagues for NYC Fashion Week. In the capital of Texas, Dr. Aurelia Donald (Information Systems Professor) led a team of students at Battle of the Brains. In Gloucester, Jasmine Pierce (Marketing major) and Jaylen McPherson (Management major) learned civics.



## Partnership for Petersburg

Already preceding editions of this newsletter have informed readers of the College's participation in the Partnership for Petersburg and collaboration with Governor Glenn Youngkin and his administration. The efforts continued this semester including Kirsten Coghill (Management major), Justin Grandison (Management major) and Nylan Taylor (Marketing major) attending an event with His Excellency relevant to entrepreneurship. Also of note, Taylor Jordan (Management major) interned all semester relevant to a Women's Align Conference held at VSU for entrepreneurs to benefit the region including residents of Petersburg. Additionally, The College hosted a Leadership Conference for students that featured alumni aimed at lifting up the region including the City of Petersburg. Lastly, the College's Center for Entrepreneurship invested in Petersburg businesses and afforded entrepreneurs the opportunity to scale their businesses. Together, these initiatives along with others are providing invaluable support to the College's southern neighbor and in doing it creating learning opportunities for undergraduates intent on more than just earning a degree but instead on giving back. Up next, stay tuned for exciting new opportunities!!



## Civics 101

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business graduates young professionals invested in the private sector but often students convey an interest in public service and irrespective of career path commitment to public participation. Again this semester the College's partnership with VA21 afforded a team of students the opportunity to lobby legislators at the State Capital. Said Alahna Knight (Marketing major), *"I enjoyed spending the evening in Richmond with my colleagues and then visiting with members of the General Assembly. I learned a lot."* Helena Abu (Marketing major) added, *"It was fun to meet undergraduates at other institutions of higher learning in the Commonwealth."*

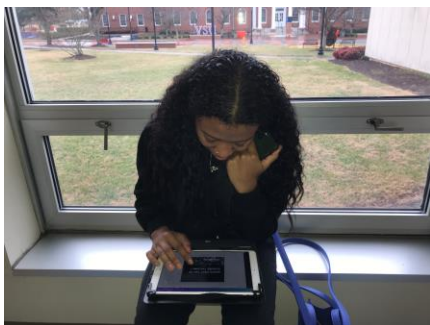
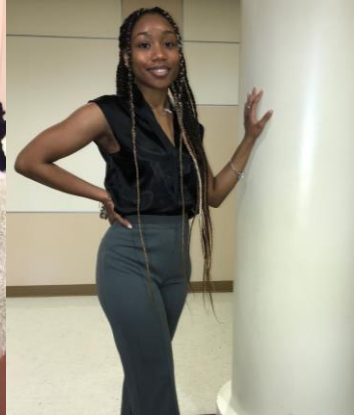
## Undergraduate Bridge

The College's commitment to K-12 again manifested this semester in hosting groups of high school students in Singleton for workshops, visiting more than a dozen schools, guest teaching in high school, attending K-12 shark tank competitions, and even a ballet performance with elementary students. Altogether, the College interfaced with hundreds of K-12 students this semester. The College understands that planting a seed as early as kindergarten bears fruit in immeasurable ways.

## More Pictures









## In anticipation of Graduation

In the weeks immediately preceding commencement, Cristy Hinton (Accounting major) said, *“I am excited to graduate from the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business and proud of what I have achieved and who I have become. I am thinking about relocating and am enthusiastic for my future.”* Elianna Benavidez (Accounting major) agreed. *“I too am excited partly because of everything that I overcame. I had to take time away from school to run the family business after my father passed away because of cancer. Shortly after our loss, I was diagnosed with cancer. Still, I am here to finish and to celebrate my father and to resume my work for our family business.”*



### Certifications

This semester eighty-three students earned certifications relevant to SAP Suite. Congrats to them all on their accomplishment!

### Real Estate

Students this semester on multiple occasions participated in real estate networking with Ray Ferguson and a group of often sixty entrepreneurs learning the trade.

## Most Outstanding

It shouldn't have surprised anyone that the College's own Blaise Davenport (Information Systems major) accrued but another accolade when she was named the Most Outstanding Senior of the Year for all of Virginia State University. Also of note, Blaise delivered the keynote address at both the University's and College's Honor's and Awards shows.



## NFL Draft

Davon Bell (Management major) is now the third student in the College of Business to participate in learning opportunities with the National Football League joining Donnasia Harper (Marketing major) and Addison Adams (Marketing major and 22 grad). Davon participated in the NFL 2023 Draft.

## Voted the Best

Nylan Taylor (Marketing major) and Christian Cozart (Marketing minor) joined Bernard Robinson (CEO) from NTS for the Metropolitan Business League (MBL) annual awards show where Bernard was recognized as Most Outstanding Entrepreneur of the Year. Attended by over four hundred persons, Bernard celebrated his company, Networking Technologies and Support (NTS); his leadership of the College's Industry Council(s) was cited at the dinner.





## Taking Inventory

The Reginald F. Lewis College of Business celebrated another successful semester relevant to entrepreneurship and specifically the Minority Small Business Launch Center. Altogether since 2021, *“the Center helped over 154 entrepreneurs launch and another 531+ expand and/or enhance their businesses. Additionally, hundreds of other prospective entrepreneurs who are still preparing for launch and are planning or informally operating were assisted. The program has been recognized on local media, and received a Richmond Community Transformer Award for the financial impact of our program on minority communities in 2022. In the Spring of 2023, it was selected as a top 5 finalist for the Triple E International Award for Entrepreneurship Excellence in Higher Education for the impact of our Minority Small Business Launch Center program. It hosted 5 student & community pitch competitions and awarded over \$20,000 to students and entrepreneurs in the community from generous private partners/donors. The Center had 5 Fall and Spring small business training cohorts with over 250 participants who completed a comprehensive training program that includes webinars and in-person sessions offered by many of our partners and other subject matter experts on topics ranging from business concept ideation to financial statement development. The Center hosted 2 and paid for our entrepreneurs to participate in 3 bazaars or other events allowing them to showcase and sell their merchandise or services to the public, including the Homecoming Entrepreneurship Bazaar help at VSU during Homecoming 2022.”*

*“In 2023, the Center awarded 40 small business credentials/certifications, trained 83 community and student entrepreneurs, and delivered 3108.5 training hours to small businesses and entrepreneurship students through VSU's programming. (This does not including the separate training events offered by partners and advertised on the Center's site).”*

*“Also of note, on April 18, 2023, the VSU Center for Entrepreneurship's Minority Small Business Launch Center program also held a Graduation Ceremony for the Spring 2023 Cohort. 24 enrollees graduated this semester and we presented certificates of completion to those who attended.”*

*“One of the Spring 2023 cohort graduates, Regina White-Kee of See Her Evolve, whose initial license was obtained as part of our program, is a recipient of the Governor's \$25,000 seed funding award administered by the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation. Another enrollee in our program, Candace Nichols of Another Level Barber and Beauty College, is also an award recipient of the Governor's \$25,000 Petersburg Founders Fund award.”*

*“Four diligent, regional entrepreneurs were awarded our first \$2000 VSU Seed Funding Grant Awards. These entrepreneurs fully completed our Business Launchpad Certification program which required them to produce a formal, preliminary business plan including a target market analysis, and financial projections. This seed funding award has been made possible via a generous donation from Alfred Street Baptist Church.”*

*“As a finale, on April 18, 2023, the VSU Center for Entrepreneurship's Minority Small Business Launch Center program held a Tri-Cities "Spring Into Action" Pitch Competition. The competition was judged by experienced entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship support organization leaders who donated their time and expertise to benefit our students.” This story was first reported at the Center for Entrepreneurship.*



## Yet More Pictures

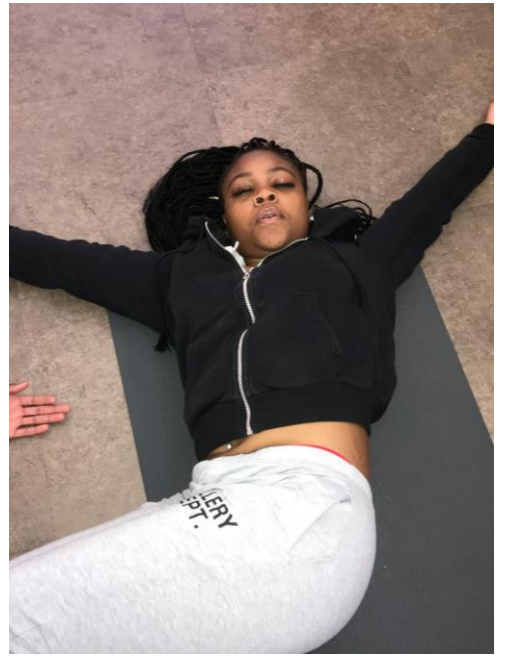


The ladies are all smiles. Above.

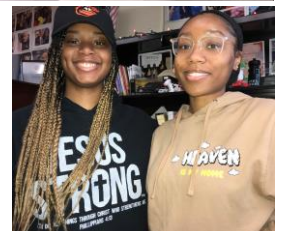


Jovante White, Tony Tucker and Alex Dayle joined Vatell Martin at KPMG relevant to interest in accounting. An alum, Vatell was all too pleased to host his successors. Below.

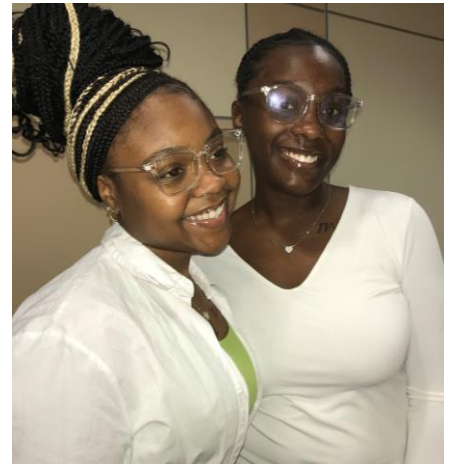














## Golden Arches

Known for their hamburgers and golden arches, McDonald's invested \$20,000 in Aaliyah Duah (Management major) and her business. The Fortune 200 company said of Aaliyah, *"This Virginia State University business major believes the revolution can be taught. Fueled by her passion for helping Black communities build generational wealth, Aaliyah founded Financial Revolutionn, a social media platform designed to teach basic financial literacy terms, concepts, and investing tips. She has also self-published "The Blueprint for Investing Vol. 1", which educates readers on the fundamentals of investing and financial literacy, and launched the "Young & Dumb Show," a podcast about entrepreneurship."* Aaliyah added, *"You need people around you who don't just believe in you, but they believe in your mission. Because when they believe in your mission, it becomes bigger than you."*

Aaliyah's story is representative of recognition accrued by the College's Center for Entrepreneurship; specifically being named a Top 5 Finalist for the 2023 International Triple E Awards on Entrepreneurship and Engagement Excellence in Higher Education relevant to social impact. Dr. Patrice Perry-Rivers (Management Professor and Center Director) congratulated Aaliyah, *"Ms. Duah's accomplishments speak volumes first and foremost about Aaliyah but also for the support being afforded entrepreneurs because of the VSU Center for Entrepreneurship and Minority Small Business Launch Center"*.





## NBC Today Show

It's not every day that you earn a spot on the Today Show but that is precisely what Indacia Turner (Accounting major) achieved this semester when she was celebrated on NBC for her achievements in the VSU Band and in the classroom. A senior, Indacia will intern this summer for PricewaterhouseCoopers and resume one final season as a twirler in the marching band.



## Growing

The College's support for growing the region includes partnering with the Virginia's Gateway Region. For a decade and a half, the College of Business has provided support to the economic development organization paying big dividends for the region.



## Message from the Dean

I have heard some of my faculty/staff describe this academic year the best in a long time and perhaps that is true but irrespective of the veracity of the claim I can share that indeed both this semester and the academic year in full constituted a banner performance not just by our students but also faculty and staff, alumni, industry, etc. Though this newsletter is sixteen pages, the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at Virginia State University would probably need another sixteen pages just to the semester justice.

Perhaps because I have had the good fortune of being here so long I can affirm that it seems as though our students only keep getting better year over year. I attribute that to our students but also to the outstanding work done by faculty and staff, the unending support from alumni, unwavering commitment from industry, and the indelible investment from the Virginia State University administration.

Relevant to faculty and staff, the College continues to do big things. From helping entrepreneurs to hosting Fortune 500 firms to leading student volunteers in preparing taxes to training for marathons to facilitating intercollegiate competitions to winning grants to holding elected office, we are blessed to have such dedicated professionals.

Lastly, I would be remiss to not acknowledge that our students in their capacity in the VSU Band performed for President Biden at the White House!! Now that is special!

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean

