

momentum



Dear Friends,

At the VCU School of Education, we're committed to the quality of our programs and the engagement of our students. Part of that commitment is ensuring the accessibility of our programs by those near and far, working full time or part time. In recognition of that, we were ranked #8 Best Online Graduate Education Program in the country this spring by *U.S. News & World Report*, as well as being ranked #16 Best Public Graduate Education School in the entire country.

We rededicated ourselves to recruiting passionate students who are committed to equity and social justice, evidenced by a five-fold increase in the number of students enrolled in our five new undergraduate programs this semester. This growth

recognizes our deepening commitment to addressing critical shortage areas in urban, high needs schools in the Richmond area while offering a new pathway to teaching licensure.

The School of Education was not alone as we faced increasing uncertainty during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in this country. Our faculty, staff and students responded to the challenge by pulling together and renewing our commitment to each other and to those we serve – all while ensuring that we completed the spring semester safely and on schedule.

Through it all, we remain committed to meeting the needs of the children, families and communities that we serve – whether it's in Richmond, across Virginia, or across the globe. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Andrew P. Daire, Ph.D.
Dean, VCU School of Education

Ashley Cox: Expanding the VCU RAMily into Austin, Texas

Ashley Cox, 2013 alumna from the VCU School of Education's M.T. in Secondary English Education program, says she's spent her career exploring different aspects of public education and childhood development. Last year, she started working at Austin Achieve High School, a small, tuition-free, open-enrollment public charter school in Austin, Texas and currently teaches geography, a challenge she said she welcomed.

"Teaching a new subject has been challenging in all of the best ways. Outside of my comfort zone, I have learned a lot about my strengths and weaknesses as an educator, and what makes a successful teacher, regardless of the subject," she said.

Cox is also paired with an advisory class at Austin Achieve, a group of students in their freshmen year she will continue to teach as they move through the grade levels. Their group name? The "VCU Rams," which Cox said she enthusiastically suggested.

Cox will advise her VCU Rams as they move through the grade levels toward graduation. Together, they play games, study and do restorative circles, and Cox said they have already expressed a lot of interest in VCU.

According to Cox, the benefit of having the advisory class is that, as an instructor, she's able to stay in her students' lives the entire time

SOE ranked #8 Best Online Grad Program by *U.S. News*

School also ranked #16 overall among public grad schools of education

The VCU School of Education was recently ranked #8 in Best Online Graduate Education Programs by *U.S. News & World Report*. The school was also ranked #16 among public graduate schools of education.

With 309 schools of education participating nationwide, only two Virginia schools of education ranked among this year's top 50 in either category, with VCU being one of them.

"We are committed to accessibility of our programs by those near and

they're at the school, and for the students, they have an adult in the building who knows them well, can advocate for them, provide mentoring, and hold them accountable if needed.

"It brings me so much joy to know my students on a deeper level and provide them with the mentoring and support they may not receive at home," she said.

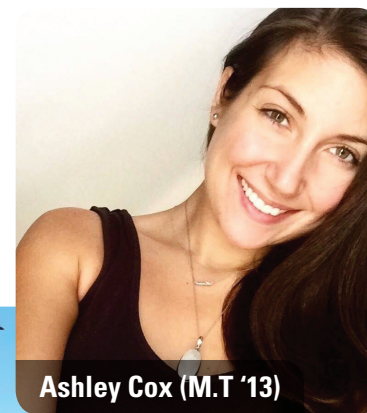
Cox acknowledges the subject of charter schools can be controversial, but Austin Achieve is "an example of a charter school that works."

"If not for Austin Achieve Public Schools, our scholars would be attending the lowest-performing schools in Texas," she said.

According to Cox, the students who attend Austin Achieve live in neighborhoods that were redlined as part of the city's "1928 Master Plan," a rezoning plan that included a coordinated effort to draw Austin's black population into a single district. The official 1928 report states this part of the plan would be "the solution of the race segregation problem."

Because of this, Cox said Austin Achieve accepts all students and uses a restorative model to help students deal with behavioral issues and show them areas where they can grow.

"As a teacher, I believe every scholar, regardless of their background, is one mentor away from being a success story," she said.



Ashley Cox (M.T. '13)



Ashley Cox and her students at Austin Achieve High School in Texas proudly display their VCU Rams spirit.

Travon Griffin: 'I want to help children succeed'

Undergraduate student likes VCU SOE's diverse community

Travon Griffin works full time as a field support specialist at Wells Fargo Advisors in Richmond. After first enrolling in VCU's Liberal Studies for Early and Elementary Education (LSEE) program in fall 2017, Griffin recently changed his major to the VCU School of Education's B.S. Ed. in Elementary Education and Teaching. When he completes the program, he hopes to teach first or second grade and find new ways to help children succeed in the classroom.

What drew you to the field of education?

I've worked in banking for the past eight years. When I decided to go back to school to become a teacher, it was because I want to make a difference in the world and advocate for children and their education. I want to help children succeed and reach their goals, and meet the needs of my community.

Why VCU SOE?

I chose VCU SOE because of its diverse community. I want to be surrounded by different cultures and backgrounds to help me better connect to my students and the

community where I teach once I get into the classroom. I love how VCU SOE prepares you for the classroom of today and the future.

What impressed you the most about the program during your first semester?

When I first transferred to VCU in the fall 2017 semester, I appreciated the fact that all of my professors were elementary classroom teachers before teaching at VCU. They are able to give real life situations and examples, because they have experienced them.

What would be your dream job?

My goal is to become a reading specialist. I want to help children discover the joys and benefits of reading.

Any tips for students who are considering coming to VCU SOE for the B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education?

Start building your community of teachers now. Your classmates in this program now may be your co-workers later. Building long-lasting connections now can help make the difference when you step into your future classroom.



Travon Griffin

Instructional Design three-part online course sequence offered

In a time of rapid change to online learning, training and working, this instructional design and technology skills cluster will prepare corporate, non-profit and education leaders for the future. Beginning summer 2020, these classes are fully online!

Summer 2020: ADLT 640 – Theory and Practice of eLearning and Digital Media

Fall 2020: ADLT 643 – Advanced Instructional Design

Spring 2021: ADLT 642 – Design Challenges in Creating eLearning

The classes lead to the M.Ed. in Adult Learning, Instructional Design and Technology program.

Apply any semester, no testing required. Submit your non-degree application to start today!

Discounts available for summer 2020! Learn more at: go.vcu.edu/soe/non-degree

Momentum Spring 2020

Editor: Diana Burkett, APR
Designer: Michael Lay

Education Alumni Council Roster

Officers

Jared Crist, B.A. '14, M.Ed. '18 (President)

Ex-officio members

Andrew P. Daire, Dean; Edward G. Kardos, Executive Director of Office of Development, Alumni & Student Engagement; Meredith P. Melo, Development Specialist; S. Corey Humphrey, Leadership Annual Giving Officer

Members

Jose Alcaine, Ph.D. '16; Mary Allen, B.S. '80; Jenn Arce, BIS '13, M.T. '13; Donna Dalton, M.Ed. '00; Serra DeArment, Ph.D. '16; Anthony Faina, B.S. '67, M.Ed. '69; Madeline Goldman (Ph.D. '18); Amanda Hall, B.S. '06, Ph.D. '18; Shajuana Isom-Payne, B.A. '98, M.Ed. '03; Lisa Jordan (M.T. '95); Robert C. Lowerre, M.T. '95, Ph.D. '10; Brian A. Maltby, BFA '99, M.Ed. '07, Ed.D. '14; Sarah Marrs, Ph.D. '16; Joan Pellegrini, Ph.D. '08; Anita Prince, M.Ed. '89, Ph.D. '98; Elizabeth Roberson, M.Ed. '76, Ph.D. '10; Jacqueline Roberts, B.S. '78, M.Ed. '80; Antoinette Rogers, M.Ed. '99, Ph.D. '06; Robin Smith, M.Ed. '74; Carmen Ward, B.S. '88, M.Ed. '01, Ph.D. '12; Lisa Webb, M.S. '06, Ed.D. '15; Faith Wilkerson, B.S. '03, M.Ed. '05, Ed.D. '05; Ann Witthoeft, M.Ed. '94

VCU Alumni representative

Parks Smith, Director of Alumni Volunteer Programs and Professional Development

Advancement Council Roster 2020

Members

Mary Ann H. Wright (M.Ed. '84, Ph.D. '97), Chair; Dale C. Kalkofen (M.A.E. '76), Vice Chair; Kevin Bruny (M.Ed. '91); William H. Carter (B.S. '79); Daisy Greene (M.Ed. '89); Hattie W. Hamlin (B.S., Ph.D. '11); Stephanie Holt (B.S. '74); Robin Liesfeld (M.Ed. '85); Linda R. Melton; Anna Lou Schaberg (M.Ed. '70); Sandra A. Taylor (M.B.A.); Brian C. White

Emeriti members

Andrew P. Daire, Dean; Edward G. Kardos, Executive Director of Office of Development, Alumni & Student Engagement; Meredith P. Melo, Development Specialist; S. Corey Humphrey, Leadership Annual Giving Officer

Two SOE centers manage through global crisis

Child Development Center cared for children of health system employees, Partnership for People with Disabilities maintained contact during pandemic



In this photo taken before the pandemic started, assistant teacher Nakita Battle cares for children in the outdoor play area of the Child Development Center.

Two VCU School of Education centers stepped up during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing care for the children of frontline health care professionals, and by providing Virtual Lunch Hours so employees could maintain contact during a time of social distance.

The VCU Child Development Center served nearly 48 children of VCU Health System professionals who were able to go to work and contribute to saving lives. Following recommendations from Gov. Ralph Northam, Thomas H. Beatty, Ed.D., director of the center, and Dean Andrew P. Daire, Ph.D., asked the center's families who were working remotely to keep their children at home and afford space for the center to serve the children of VCU Health System employees during the crisis. Parents and the center's staff responded.

"One staff member said that she would rather be at the [center] taking care of the children of healthcare workers as opposed to sitting at home. Another said that because she is on the [Child Development Center] team, she wants to be at the [center] with her team," Beatty said.

Virtual Lunch Hours began at the Partnership for People with Disabilities in March, hosted on Tuesdays and Thursdays by Ira Padhye, a VCU School of Education doctoral student in special education.

"We're all in this profession to some degree because of the opportunity for human interaction. Now, life is different. We're working from home. That human contact is gone. I wanted to keep up that opportunity for contact," said Padhye, who works on the center's Virginia Project for Children and Young Adults with Deaf-Blindness. She said that the sessions, conducted via Zoom, were an important way to break up the day so everyone didn't talk about the coronavirus all the time.

"This is such a unique circumstance that we're all in. It's not like a snowstorm or anything like that. Mental health is so important right now. Doing something as simple as this is the least I can do for my co-workers and for myself," she said.



VCU School of Education doctoral student Ira Padhye



In one Virtual Lunch Hour Zoom session, a few participants from the Partnership for People with Disabilities showed off their pets.

Spotlight on SOE faculty research

Dr. Apugo looks at bias toward African American women

The amount of knowledge being generated by VCU School of Education faculty in published research goes beyond merely enhancing the school's reputation – it is helping to shape the future of education itself. One recent example of this is the study below, co-authored by Dr. Danielle Apugo, which looks at African American women's narratives of hair bias in schools. Apugo is an assistant professor and visiting iCubed scholar researching methods toward disrupting criminalization in education. The VCU iCubed initiative is a catalyst for creating collaborations focused on the welfare of urban populations.

Summary

Dr. Danielle Apugo, along with co-author Afiya Mbilishaka, explored hair discrimination experienced by Black and African American women in school. More than fifty Black and African American women were interviewed for the study and shared their negative interactions with their classmates or teachers.

Discrimination occurred in various ways, including teasing and bullying about hair appearance that often led to participants changing their hairstyles in damaging ways. Such hair bias also caused the participants to experience embarrassment and anxiety resulting in discomfort both in school and in interpersonal relationships. Young women often carry emotional scars from traumas related to appearance into their professional lives and womanhood.

This study uncovers the reality of Black and African American females' experiences of



Danielle Apugo, Ph.D.

oppression within their daily lives at school. The authors challenge pre-service and in-service teachers, school administrators and others concerned with the experiences of African American girls to explore their own biases and assumptions about hair and its impact on Black and African American girls and to put an end to the bullying and teasing that is so emotionally and physically harmful.

Citation:

Mbilishaka, A. & Apugo, D. (2020). Brushed aside: African American women's narratives of hair bias in school. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13613324.2020.1718075.

How you can help during the COVID-19 pandemic

Your well-being is our top priority.

With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, the School of Education pivoted from the final stretch of the Make It Real campaign to focus on how to provide the best support to our students. Together with VCU Health, we are working tirelessly to ensure the health and safety of all students, patients, faculty, staff and alumni.

As central Virginia's COVID response team, VCU's researchers and caregivers are working around the clock to provide resources and care to fight this pandemic. Meanwhile, faculty and students have transitioned to a completely online teaching and learning environment, which provides its own set of challenges.

To effectively respond to the unique challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've created two new funds — **VCU COVID-19 Response Fund** and the **VCU Student Life and Learning Fund**.

The **VCU COVID-19 Response Fund**, administered by the Office of the Senior Vice President for VCU Health Sciences and CEO of VCU Health System, supports research and clinical care related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes using new technologies to test for and diagnose the virus, and the financial and material needs of caregivers and patients. This fund will also help cover emergency services for patients, and support full-function treatment rooms for pediatric care.

The **VCU Student Life and Learning Fund**, administered by the Office of the Provost, provides unrestricted support dedicated to enriching the life and learning experiences of VCU students or student groups during this pandemic, and beyond. This includes things like emergency assistance for travel, housing, teleconference and experiential learning opportunities, tuition relief, academic and career advising and more.

To learn more about these new funds, visit: <https://www.support.vcu.edu/covidresponse/>.

If you have questions, please contact:

Edward G. Kardos
Executive Director, Office Of Development, Alumni And Student Engagement
Email: egkardos@vcu.edu

momentum

Spring 2020

Make it real.
CAMPAIGN FOR VCU

Return Service Requested
Box 842020
Richmond, VA 23284-2020