

momentum

884 students placed in practicums in community schools

16,000 alumni

located in 50 states and 15 foreign countries

\$25 million



US News & World Report

26th best graduate school of education

115 teaching and research faculty



Dear friends,

So many opportunities lie ahead for the VCU School of Education – and all of them are connected to our highest priority: increasing our impact in urban and high-needs schools and communities. We are working to ensure that we are not only preparing teachers, counselors, administrators and other education professionals to be successful in these settings, but that we are thinking boldly, creatively and aspirationally to find effective ways of doing so.

To that end, we have begun a comprehensive strategic planning process for the school. This process will move our vision for the school forward while connecting our path to the new VCU strategic plan, which launches this summer. This process is helping us think about who we are and what we do today as well as where we want to be 5, 10 or 15 years from now. Education and our communities are facing complex challenges that cannot be met with average efforts. This is our opportunity to craft our path to the future, focused on meaningful impact and success.

To begin this process, we hosted three listening sessions open to faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of the community. These sessions were a great opportunity to come to the table and add your voice to this important process. One of the sessions was held at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School, ensuring access for our community members. Based on the feedback received, we are updating our vision, mission and values, and in the fall we will develop strategic goals, objectives and actions that will help us reach the next level of impact as a school.

We are also prioritizing the need to recruit passionate students: those who are dedicated to equality and aren't afraid to confront issues of social disadvantage. Once we find them, we need to get them into schools (particularly high-needs schools) as soon as possible, provide them with the necessary curricular and co-curricular experiences, and prepare them to be successful reflective practitioners. We are also prioritizing community-engaged research that is impactful in moving the needle for the most pressing issues in our schools and communities.

As always, we appreciate your support and your contributions to our work.

Andrew P. Daire - Dean, VCU School of Education

A perfect storm

Brittany Jones (M.T. '16) combines two loves: history and teaching



One of her master's classes was Exploring Historical Consciousness, taught by Dr. Gabriel Reich in the School of Education. Knowing her interest in teaching, Reich suggested Jones look into the school's Richmond Teacher Residency program. Unfortunately, no history positions were open at that time.

A year later, Jones received an email from Reich.

"There was one spot open for a history teacher in the [Richmond Teacher] Residency, and Dr. Reich said I should definitely apply," she said. "I looked into the expedited program and found that it catered to urban education, which I was interested in, having gone to Richmond Public Schools."

Jones was accepted into the program.

"It was a perfect storm. Thanks to Dr. Reich, everything fell into place."

Jones found that she liked the Richmond Teacher Residency program because it extended the normal six-week residency out to an entire year.

"I was able to experience what it's like to be a teacher from Day 1 of the school year all the way up to the last day of school," she said. "I got to see all the ups and downs, which was extremely valuable. Since it's an expedited program, you also earn your master's degree in one year."

"Above all else, it primarily appealed to me because it's specifically designed for urban education, and it produces teachers for high needs schools who will serve long term."

When she was a student in Richmond Public Schools, Brittany Jones (M.T. '16) assumed that all of her classmates had parents who made them do their homework. After all, hers sure did. Both were teachers who placed a high value on education.

Even from a young age, Jones herself was a history buff. As a child, she dreamed of being a history professor, so it's no surprise that she majored in history as an undergraduate student at Longwood University. She loved it so much that she decided to pursue her master's degree, studying American and African-American history at VCU.

To make ends meet, she got a job at a local school, tutoring students in history.

"That's when I realized how much I enjoy working with kids," she recalled. "I got more and more interested in becoming a teacher, in having my own classroom and having my own set of kids."

Today, Jones teaches World History I and Government to freshmen and seniors at John Marshall High School in Richmond. She recently took her students on a field trip to Monument Avenue. They talked about the controversy surrounding the monuments and the impact that public monuments in general have on our collective memories of the Civil War and Emancipation.



"Exposing my students to a larger world is my goal, and VCU and the School of Education have played a big role in helping me do that," she said. ♡

Dear VCU SOE alumni, what do you think about our new Momentum layout?

Share your input and your name at edualum@vcu.edu and get a chance to win a basket of VCU SOE branded items!

VCU Cognition and Learning Lab students developing broad skill sets

The VCU Cognition and Learning Lab is a place where psychology and education students, ranging from undergraduate to the doctoral level, are able to work together in a research environment.

"This lab is valuable because we are able to engage in important work through interdisciplinary teams of researchers and students," said Jason Chow, assistant professor in the Department of Counseling and Special Education. "We currently have undergraduate research assistants from education, psychology, HPEX, pre-dentistry, and more."

"Our Cognition and Learning Lab represents the work of faculty and students from diverse backgrounds, who hold a wide range of academic and professional interests," said Christine Lee Bae, assistant professor in Foundations of Education. "The different experiences and perspectives that each member brings to the projects supports exciting and high-quality work, and pushes us all to think about complex educational topics in innovative ways."

Bae and Chow founded and run the lab. Students assist them in research projects that focus on language, math, behavior and teaching. "This lab is a great thing for all students because it gives them the experience of interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as hands-on experience," said first-year doctoral student Erin Stehle.

Stehle's background as a speech language pathologist led her to working with Chow at the VCU Child Development Center (CDC).

"Right now for the CDC, we are assessing children ages 3-5 with the hope that we will be able to test them at 3, again at 4 and again at 5,"

Stehle said. "We are looking at language and math ability and the relationship between the two."

With Bae's research interests being science learning and teacher development, and Chow's being language and behavior, students are exposed to a wide variety of opportunities. The two faculty members typically have four or five projects going at once, so they try to align student interests with their current work.

"It's nice to be involved with so many different types of projects," second-year educational psychology doctoral student Eric Ekholm said. "They range from traditional research, to hands-on research, to reading and analyzing data. Between all of these, you develop a broad skill set because you are never doing the same thing twice."



All students who enter the lab leave with a vast array of skills, ranging from writing literature reviews to giving poster presentations. These skills will push them to become better researchers and set them apart from others as they continue down their future path. ♡

Momentum Spring 2018

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Make it real.
CAMPAIGN FOR VCU

Solutions that transform — Make It Real Campaign for VCU School of Education

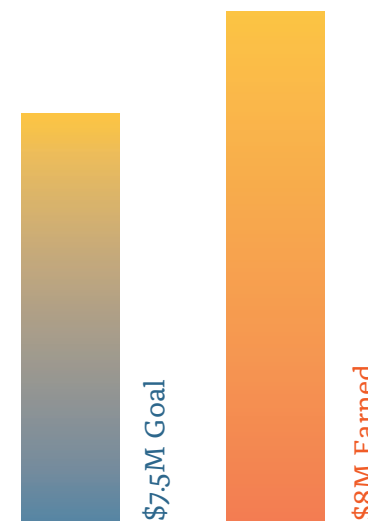
Last year was an exciting year for the VCU School of Education, as a record number of donors provided a financial foundation for the school's future.

"We're just getting started," the school's dean, Dr. Andrew Daire, said. "Reaching our Make It Real campaign goal two-and-a-half years ahead of schedule tells us that our alumni and friends are truly invested in the school and our success. They believe in the impact we can make in our communities."

The school has seen a sharp increase in both contributors and contributions over the last two years. A key factor driving these donations has been the Make It Real Campaign for VCU—the largest university-wide campaign in VCU's history, which publicly launched in September, 2016 and runs through June 30, 2020. After a record setting fundraising year in 2017, the School of Education has already surpassed last year's total in 2018, with a few months still to go.

This sends our students, faculty and staff a strong message that we are on the right path with our approach to education that will transform communities. Our goal is simple: to support our students and our faculty as they work toward transformative solutions to complex educational challenges. Philanthropic dollars provide much-needed resources to drive our efforts in an exponential way. Your investments are critical as we search for, test and put into practice solutions that advance our region and our world. Here's how financial contributions are making an impact on our faculty and students.

Our progress in the Make It Real Campaign:



We are grateful to our donors and to all who will participate in this very important campaign over the next two years. Please contact Ed Kardos, senior director of development for the VCU School of Education at egkardos@vcu.edu or (804) 828-4692 to discuss how you may be more engaged with the School of Education and the Make it Real Campaign. ♦

Your gifts at work...

Transforming People

- Scholarships, fellowships and assistantships
- Chairs, professorships, faculty development funds and an endowment to help address the needs of schools in the area

Transforming Communities

- Richmond and beyond

Transforming Classrooms

- Development of globally innovative educational products such as digitally fabricated learning products that teach children mathematics; mobile applications to help children learn to read and write; 3-D printed artifacts that provide a unique insight into history.

Did you know we have doctoral, master's and certificate programs online?

If you are interested in furthering your education on your own time, visit soe.vcu.edu/programs/online-programs or email soeinfo@vcu.edu.

2018 Scholarship and Awards Ceremony



Six VCU SOE students named Holmes Scholars

Six doctoral students in the School of Education's Ph.D. in education program have been named Holmes Scholars. The honorees and their respective concentrations are:

- Melissa Cuba: Curriculum, culture, and change
- Kendra Cabler: Urban services leadership
- Tonya Gokita, Weade James, Evandra Catherine and Cassandra Willis: Special education and disability policy



The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Holmes Scholars Program supports underrepresented doctoral students from diverse backgrounds who are pursuing careers in education. By supporting students early in their careers, the Holmes Program offers mentorship, professional development and peer support.

The recent inductees also attended the 70th annual meeting of the AACTE in Baltimore this March, where educators from across the country came together for discussions, to share research and practices, and to connect with over 2,000 education leaders and suppliers.

James explained why the program appealed to her.

"I wanted to receive a rich and culturally relevant doctoral experience that will adequately

prepare me to contribute to the education field," she said.

James has taken full advantage of the opportunities the program has to offer. She currently participates in a research and writing group that includes former Holmes Scholars. Through the group, she is able to learn from current researchers in her field. She also presented on effective practices to attract and retain minority pre-service teachers at the AACTE pre-conference.

"I was honored to participate as a Holmes Scholar and represent VCU as a university that is invested and committed to supporting its students in inclusive programs," Gokita said. "I was excited to have the opportunity to further extend diverse perspectives in higher education and academic research." ♦