

Meet the Fulbright-Hays GPA Fellows!

Geralyn Drayton • Sussex Central High School

Family, and more specifically a Christian mother, played a vital role in the life of **Geralyn Drayton**. Miss Drayton credits not only her mother but also three of her own great teachers in her decision to become an educator. First, she acknowledges her second grade teacher, Miss Gwendolyn Forrest, for showing her how to care for and nurture students. Secondly, her Virginia Tech professor, Virginia Fowler, was a perfect example of professionalism and English Department mentor. Finally, the world renowned poet, activist, and Virginia Tech professor, Nikki Giovanni, was especially inspiring and showed Miss Drayton how to make English fun. Miss Drayton states, “The motivating force in my career is to show my students how much fun English can be, and hopefully, at the very least, implant in them an appreciation for reading and writing. This is simply paying forward what I have received from my teachers.”



Miss Drayton received her bachelor's degrees in English and Communications from Virginia Tech in 1992 and 1994 respectively; furthermore she earned a Masters of Education degree from Virginia State University in 2011. Currently, she resides in Prince George County and teaches tenth grade English at Sussex Central High School, where she is also the yearbook sponsor. Like her mother, she is a single mom and quite proud of her daughter, Quettara Drayton. Her hobbies include reading, traveling, sports, board games, and spending time with her family—especially her nieces and nephews.

Email: gdrayton@vsu.edu

Joyce M. Edwards, Ph.D. • Virginia State University

Dr. Joyce M. Edwards is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at VSU. She earned graduate degrees in sociology from Howard University and a baccalaureate degree in sociology from Southern University (LA). She has more than twenty-five years of teaching experience in higher education and extensive experience in directing and developing international programs. She was recently Co-Director of a VSU Title VI Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Languages funded project entitled “Building a Community of Arabic Language Learners,” whose focus was internationalizing the curriculum through the infusion of content related to the Islamic world. She also facilitated a partnership between VSU and the University of the North, Limpopo, South Africa, where she conducted a faculty-led program for sociology majors. She has participated in faculty development seminars in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Ghana; conducted a faculty-led study abroad program in Costa Rica; and conducted workshops on developing partnerships with Africa. As a former faculty member at Savannah State University, Dr. Edwards assisted with a faculty development seminar in Senegal, West Africa, hosted by Université Chiekh Anta Diop and funded by a University System of Georgia Board of Regents Global Partnership Grant. Dr. Edwards has also served as coordinator and advisor for VSU student delegations participating in the Model African Union in Washington, D.C. She has been involved in curricular development at VSU for over ten years, having developed the curriculum for the sociology minor in her department and currently chairing the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.



Email: jedwards@vsu.edu

Joseph Elliott • Sussex Central Middle School



Joe Elliott is a product of Surry County, Virginia. He graduated from Surry County High School in 1978 but did not immediately go to college. When he did, he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Virginia State University in 1986 and began his career as an illustrator at Fort Lee, Virginia. During his time there he was eventually promoted to Supervisor of the Graphic Arts section in the Army Logistics Management College. His career shifted from commercial contracted services to education in 1994. In the capacity of an educator, he has taught in Surry County, the Virginia Department of Correctional Education, and is now employed as an Art Teacher with Sussex County Public Schools. He has had the opportunity to work with a wide and diverse range of students during this time. In addition to being an educator, Mr. Elliott was the owner and operator of his company Eye Catcher's Professional Presentation Services. This company produced custom silk-screening to custom parade floats. It was a very enjoyable experience. He is an Associate Minister at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Petersburg, Virginia. In his spare time, he enjoys doing light carpentry and minor home repairs.

Email: jelliott@vsu.edu

Sandra N. Evans, Ph.D. • Virginia State University

Dr. Sandra N. Evans is a native Virginian who resides in Chester, Virginia. She is the mother of three children and the proud grandmother of two beautiful grandchildren. Her hobbies include singing, listening to gospel and classical music, and watching old movies. She earned a BS degree in Business Education and two master's degrees from Virginia State University – one in Vocational and Technical Education and the other in Educational Administration and Supervision. She earned her doctorate degree from the University of South Florida, Sarasota Florida in Instructional Leadership, with a concentration in Higher Education.



Her teaching and administrative experiences reflect a varied career in secondary, post-secondary, adult and vocational education. She worked for 18 years at Virginia State University as an Assessment Specialist, in the School of Liberal Arts and Education, preparing teacher education candidates for meeting certification requirements, and Director of the Academic Success Center overseeing Academic Advising, tutoring, student support and first year student support program. She currently holds the position of Director of Strategic Learning in the Academic Center for Excellence Center at Virginia State University.

Dr. Evans is a member of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education; Phi Delta Kappa International Honor Society in Education; Pi Lambda Theta International Honor Society and Professional Association in Education; the National Academic Advising Association; the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; NAFSA: Association of International Educators; the Virginia Literacy Foundation; and the Virginia State University Powell Society. She is an active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

She has established two endowments at Virginia State University – the “Builder of Hope Endowed Scholarship Fund” to assist male students in pursuing a degree in education and “The Trojan Vocal Music Endowed Scholarship Fund” to assist students majoring in vocal music.”

Email: snevans@vsu.edu

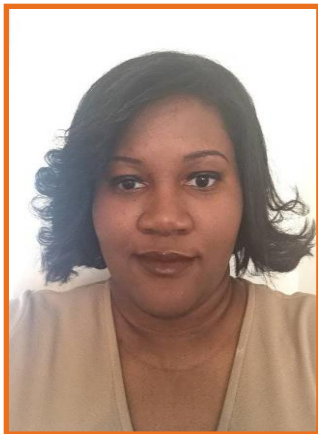
Deborah Goodwyn, Ph.D. • Virginia State University



Formerly Chair of the Department of Languages and Literature and a recent Presidential Fellow, **Dr. Deborah Goodwyn** is an Associate Professor of English at VSU. As chair, she began emphasizing the Less Commonly Taught Languages and was instrumental in getting the Arabic language sequence established as part of the University's foreign language options. Dr. Goodwyn holds a doctoral degree in English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania; a Master of Arts in Teaching (with a concentration in English Education) from Duke University; and a baccalaureate degree from North Carolina Central University. She has also completed additional graduate study in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Virginia. She assisted with the University's First Year Experience Abroad program and is developing a short-term program abroad for English majors. Dr. Goodwyn has been active in public education issues in the Commonwealth of Virginia and in Southampton County and has served on the Southampton County School Board for more than ten years, which she now chairs. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Virginia Governor's School located in Petersburg, Virginia. As co-Director of the Fulbright-Hays GPA Senegal, Dr. Goodwyn serves as Project Liaison to the school districts and the project's internal evaluator. She brings expertise on the challenges facing teachers in rural Virginia and their efforts to provide the global perspectives required by the Standards of Learning (SOLs) benchmarks for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Email: dgoodwyn@vsu.edu

Asia Gray • Highland Springs High School



Asia J. S. Gray is currently a Family and Consumer Science Teacher at Highland Springs High School in Henrico, where she specializes in teaching Introduction to Culinary Arts to 10th, 11th, and 12th graders. She is also the school advisor for Highland Springs High School F.C.C.L.A. Prior to this she worked as a Head Start Teacher Assistant in Hopewell, Virginia, at Woodlake Learning Center. She also worked for Dinwiddie Parks and Recreation as a Program Assistant for Sports, Programs, and the Tourism Departments. Ms. Gray attended John Tyler Community College, where she received her Associates Degree in Early Childhood Development. She went on to attend Virginia State University, where she received her Bachelors Degree in Individualized Studies with a concentration in Family Consumer Science. She went on to receive her Masters Degree in Art and Teaching for Special Education at Liberty University. Ms. Gray resides in Henrico County, where she enjoys traveling, fishing, and attended festivals with family and friends. She also enjoys trying new foods at local restaurants and abroad.

Email: agray@vsu.edu

Patricia Lynch, Ph.D. • Virginia State University



Dr. Patricia A. Lynch has over 35 years of food and nutrition experience working in various settings. She is currently the Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics housed in the Family & Consumer Sciences Department of the School of Agriculture at Virginia State University. Prior to coming to VSU, Dr. Lynch worked as a Renal Dietitian for Fresenius Kidney Care in NC. Other patient care venues include working in Long Term, Assisted Living, Acute Care, and Rehabilitative Care Services. She has worked in the food industry for top companies (Sara Lee Corporation, Kraft Foods, Inc., Miller Brewing Co., and Ball Corporation). Dr. Lynch also has experience working with food & nutrition programs, policies, monitoring and compliance at the state level. She was a former DPD Director at NCA&T State University and program reviewer for the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (ACEND). Dr. Lynch is a registered and licensed dietitian and continues to work in an outreach capacity in the communities she serves. Dr. Lynch received her B.S. and M.S. from North Carolina A&T State University and Ph.D. from the

University of Nebraska in Lincoln. In her spare time, Dr. Lynch enjoys her hobbies of food photography and recipe development.

Email: plynch@vsu.edu

Katie O'Kennon • Sussex Central High School



Katie O'Kennon found her calling in her tenth grade World History II classroom, when history finally became interesting. After graduating from Longwood University, Katie returned to Prince George teaching World History I for four years. She moved to Sussex Central High two years ago, where she teaches her favorite subject World History II as well as three others. She regularly spends time outside the school day tutoring and attending school events. Katie has a passion for world history. She hopes her students become more active citizen leaders in their school, community, and the world. Outside of teaching Katie is constantly busy with her other loves: church and music. Katie is a lifelong United Methodist and serves her church by helping with the youth group. She also ministers through an outreach center in Richmond, working with the kids and singing with the worship band. Katie is an avid concert goer, regularly traveling hours to see a favorite band, like the Backstreet Boys or Home Free.

Email: kokennon@vsu.edu

Osayimwense Osa, Ph.D. • Virginia State University



Dr. Osayimwense Osa is the founding editor of the *Journal of African Children's & Youth Literature* (JACYL) and a professor of English at Virginia State University in the United States. Osa has been a fellow at the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany, and at the International Institute for Children's Literature, Osaka, Japan. He is the author of *African Children's and Youth Literature* in the Twayne's World author's series, and the editor of *The All-White World of Children's Books* and *African American Children's Literature*. Osa has published numerous essays and reviews on traditional and contemporary African Literatures, and African and multicultural children's and youth literatures in various professional journals. He serves as a patron of *Golden Baobab*, an African Children's Literature non-profit organization.

Email: Oosa@vsu.edu

Tasha Ricks • Meherrin Elementary School



Tasha Ricks is a long-time resident of Newsoms, Virginia. She has one daughter and one granddaughter. She earned a Bachelor's Degree from Norfolk State University in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master's Degree from Old Dominion University with an endorsement in Administration & Supervision. She is currently a dissertation away from a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She has been an educator in Southampton County for 16 years where she served 12 years at Nottoway Elementary School as a first and second grade teacher. She was an Administrative Assistant at Riverdale Elementary School and is currently the principal of Meherrin Elementary School where she grew up in Newsoms, Virginia. Her hobby is helping others. She has a deep passion for teaching and has always wanted to travel to teach abroad. Her purpose in life is to serve others; more specifically, to find a way to make learning easier for those that struggle, to build others' self-esteem, to assist

others with reaching their destiny and to make a positive impact in the people's lives that she comes in contact with.

Email: tricks@vsu.edu

Maxine Sample, Ph.D. • Virginia State University

Dr. Maxine J. Sample is Professor of English in the Department of Languages and Literature and Director of International Education at Virginia State University. She currently assists in coordinating university-wide international education initiatives, including curriculum internationalization, study abroad and exchanges, policy development, international institutional partnerships, visiting international scholars and sponsored students, and international campus programming. Dr. Sample is also campus advisor for the Fulbright, Boren, Gilman, Rangel, and other competitive international award programs. A former U.S. Visiting Fulbright Scholar (Kenya 1995, Zimbabwe 2005), Dr. Sample was also a Japan Studies Institute Fellow (San Diego State University), China Studies Institute Fellow (China), Japan Studies Seminar Fellow (Japan), and Fulbright-Nehru International Education Administrators Program Fellow (India). She has traveled extensively internationally, including traveling with students and faculty groups to Morocco, Kenya, Ghana, Greece, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Jamaica, China, Japan, Costa Rica, and Brazil. She is a former member of the American Council on Education's Commission on Internationalization and Global Engagement and currently a member of the Council on International Education Exchange's Academic Consortium Board. Dr. Sample holds a master's degree in African American Studies from Clark Atlanta University, a doctoral degree in Comparative Literature from Emory University, and has completed additional post-graduate study in



International Relations at Troy University. Dr. Sample loves to travel and explore diverse cultures. Her hobbies are playing Scrabble and visiting international craft markets.

Email: msample@vsu.edu

Gwendolyn Shannon, Ph.D. • Southampton County Public Schools

Dr. Gwendolyn Page Shannon, currently serves as Division Superintendent for Southampton County Public Schools. She was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Mississippi State University in Education Administration. She received an Educational Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership and a Master of Science Degree in Biological Science from Delta State University. She obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Microbiology and a minor in Chemistry from Mississippi University for Women. Dr. Shannon graduated from Mississippi Delta Community College with an Associate of Science Degree. She recently graduated from AASA and Howard University Urban Superintendent's Academy. She was granted a Certificate in Executive Leadership from Vanderbilt University and a participant of Harvard's Leadership Institute for Superintendents. Her love for children, education, and science can only be topped by her love for God and her family. Dr. Shannon is married and the mother of three beautiful children. Her hobbies include crocheting, sewing, traveling, and having fun with her family. Dr. Shannon is a graduate of the Meridian Public Safety Law Enforcement Training Academy and is a Certified Part-time Law Enforcement Officer. The highlight of her program was being tazed and she never wants to do that again!



Email: gshannon@vsu.edu

Badiyyah Waajid, Ph.D. • Virginia State University



Dr. Badiyyah Waajid has served families and children in Virginia for over 40 years, first as a City of Richmond social worker, then as an early childhood policy analyst and grant specialist for the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition to serving as adjunct professor at John Tyler Community College, she held the position of Assistant Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) where she first served as the School of Social Work's Head Start Education Coordinator and later as Assistant Professor in the School of Education where she taught and directed the Child Development Center. Currently Associate Professor at Virginia State University (VSU), she coordinates the Family, Child and Community Services Program. She has also served as Study Abroad Advisor with the George H. Bennett Office of International Education, having conducted faculty-led study abroad experiences for students. Dr. Waajid especially loves spending time with her family, gardening and practicing *Mindfulness* in the various forms. She enjoys creating arts and crafts, bicycling and travelling to places such as Africa, Asia, Cuba, Central America, the Caribbean and Mediterranean. She holds a Master's degree in Elementary Education from VSU, and a Bachelor of Social Welfare and Ph.D. degree in Early Education from VCU.

Email: bwaajid@vsu.edu
