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Working Collaboratively to Fully Integrate Our Campuses

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CONNECTING LEADERSHIP: HANDS ACROSS CAMPUS

TEAM MEMBERS: Kristin Caskey, School of the Arts; Danielle Edgley, Children's Hospital of Richmond; Mitzi Lee, Real Estate Services; Samantha Marrs, Development and Alumni Relations; Shajuana Payne, University College; Scott Oates, Office of Assessment.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: Our team identified a challenge for Virginia Commonwealth University which, at first, seemed intrinsic to a multiple campus system, created by a physical divide between the Monroe Park and MCV Campuses. However, upon greater reflection and interview, the team determined that there are divisions throughout the University that exist between faculty and administrative staff, between siloed schools and administrative units, and between undergraduate and professional programs. Using the Grace Harris model the Team proposes a project to address a need to connect and engage individuals, thereby strengthening our University.

TEAM PROCESS: The initial challenge for our Team was to develop a mission statement that would adequately describe the purpose of our project. After a mind-mapping process and an analysis of the desired outcomes, the Team finalized the mission of our project: **To foster opportunities and provide support for VCU's communities to connect, communicate, and collaborate**. The Team met with our mentor, Cindy Andrews, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, to talk about the possibilities of building a leadership program to which departments and organizations could nominate candidates. After consulting with her about our goals, we developed a list of university constituencies to interview about a plan to build networks across units and campuses. Additionally, we worked to distill the elements of the networking project that we felt were realistic and beneficial to the university environment.

The team members divided a list of university constituencies to interview in order to gather feedback and input on the proposed project that was developing into two parts.

A majority of those interviewed agreed that there are divides between units and campuses. Only those interviewed at the most senior positions felt that there was healthy understanding and partnership across the campuses of VCU. Feedback that was received from those interviewed gave us counsel on how to structure a short leadership program that would become an incubation center for those who want to work together on projects.

The team met approximately 10 times to review the purpose and priorities of the project, to plan the project management process, to assign duties, and to share ideas on what would be a reasonable scope for a Grace Harris project to benefit the University.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: **Connecting Leadership: Hands Across Campus** will be a program housed within the Grace Harris Leadership Institute. Selected candidates from across

the University will be invited to meet for networking lunches where there will be guest speakers and guided activities. At those meetings, the participants will be offered the opportunity to work in small teams to create multi-unit projects. The **Connecting Leadership** program will serve as an incubator for projects, to include mentorship and technical assistance. Initial partners in implementing the program are the Center for Teaching Excellence, University Human Resources, the Division of Community Engagement, and the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute (GEHLI).

HOW IT COULD WORK: It is envisioned that one small group of participants would go through the program per semester. Participants could apply or be nominated by colleagues. There would be no cost to the unit. Mentors will be drawn from the list of GEHLI alumni.

Month 1: applications and nominations to finalize a team of 12-20 participants
Month 2: lunchtime meeting set up with one leadership speaker, one team networking exercise (Network RAMpage), and Quest for Distinction discussion time
Month 3: second lunchtime meeting with one speaker, project incubation time

OUTCOMES: Measurable results of a structured mini-leadership program

- Increased cross-departmental collaboration
- Increased efficiency of communication
- Strengthened support of Grace Harris by the university
- New opportunities for professional development
- Increased Self-Esteem, motivation, and engagement
- New Projects

Connecting Leadership: Hands Across Campus will encourage VCU stakeholders to work together outside their daily routines and disciplines:

EVENT TO ANNOUNCE NEW PROGRAMS: **Hands Across Campus Human Chain**

The Team developed a plan to physically announce the commitment that Virginia Commonwealth University has to its many communities that include the alumni, businesses, and neighbors that share our space. The Team would sponsor an opportunity to create a human chain of students, faculty, and staff reaching from the heart of the Monroe Park Campus to the center of the MCV Campus. This would be a great media opportunity for VCU to explore its strength in numbers and its commitment to the future of downtown Richmond, as well as to ensure a diverse and interdisciplinary presentation of connecting people across the campuses.

Connecting Leadership

Working Collaboratively to Fully Integrate Our Campuses

Hands Across Campus

Mission:

VCU Connecting Leadership fosters nurturing opportunities and provides a conduit for the people of VCU's communities to connect, communicate, and collaborate to experience leadership in workplace and community environments

Delores Taylor

Sybil Halloran

Paul Jez

Mary Cox

Sheryl Garland

Listening

Robbie Robinson

Cathy Howard

Reuben Rodriguez

"This is an excellent idea and aligns nicely with the Quest for Distinction" Gordon McDougall

Napoleon Peoples

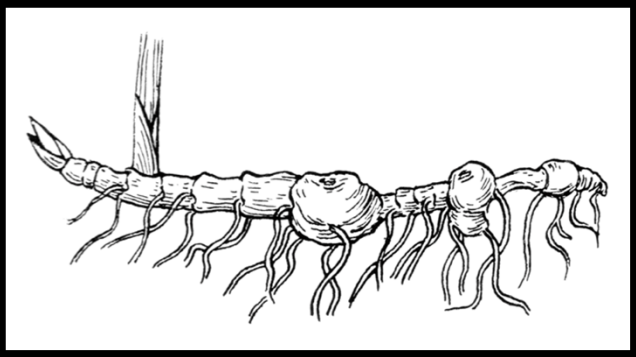
Chuck Klink

Zach Goodell

"I think it's a great idea," Brian Ohlinger

David Benedict

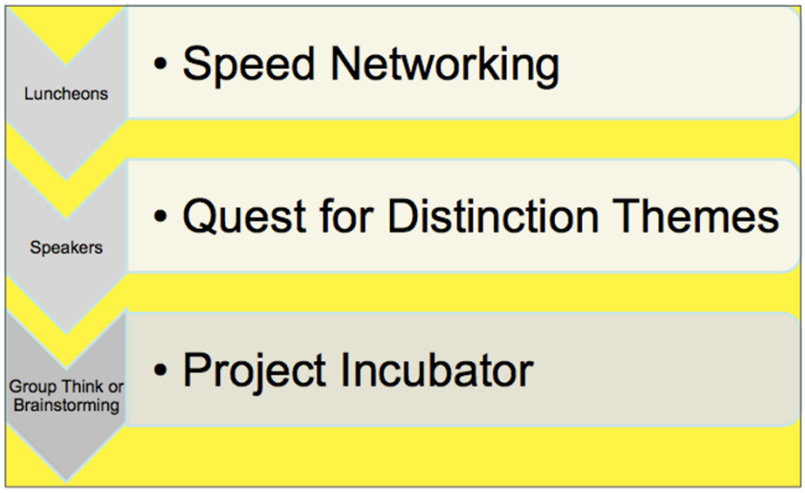
Kevin Harris



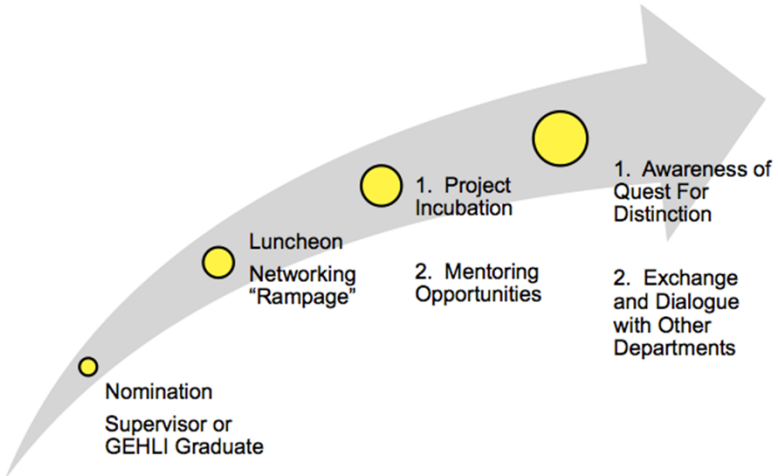
Rhizome

Programs and Services

Connecting Leadership Programming



Connecting Leadership



support

grow

strengthen

encourage

instill

motivate

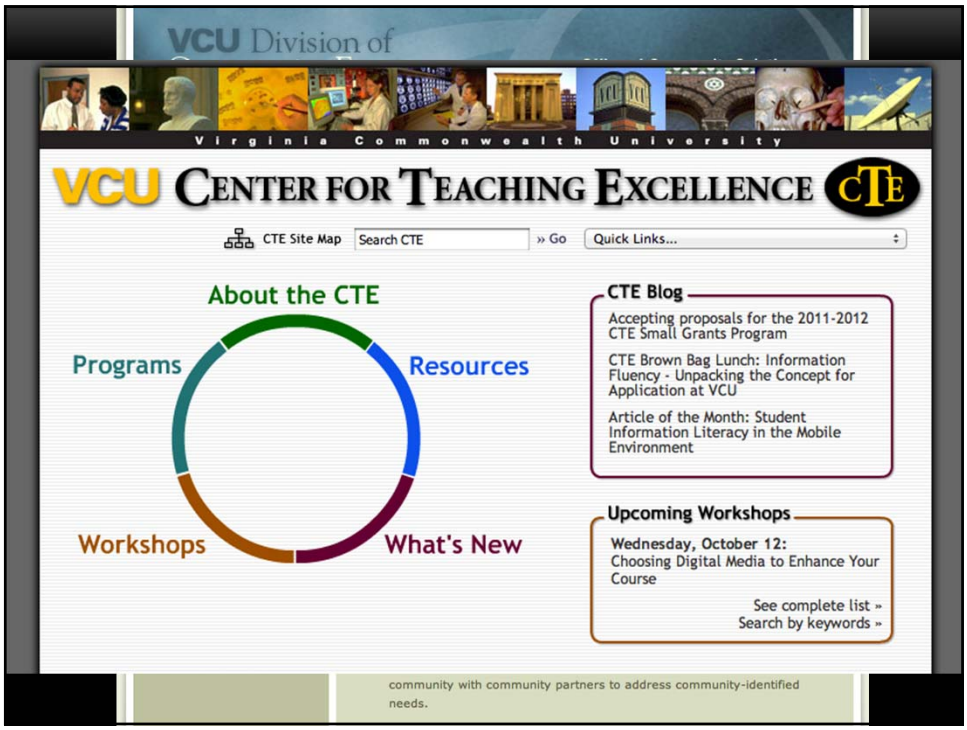
engage

foster

create

nurture

collaborate



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– Grace E. Harris, Ph.D.
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News and events
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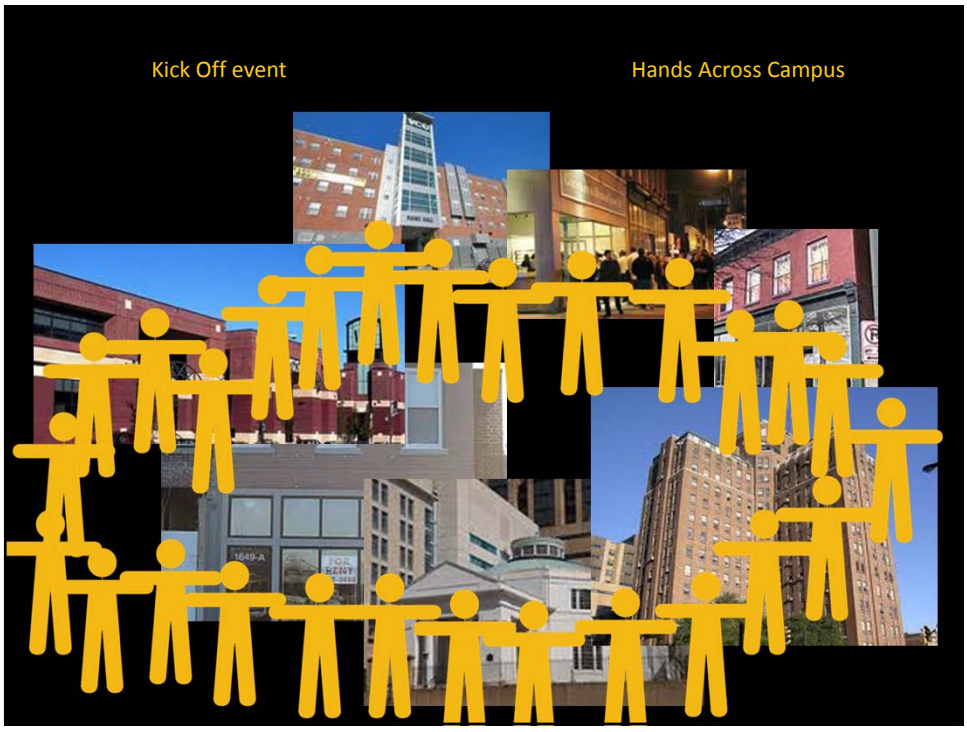
2012 VCU Leadership Application Now Available
2012 HIGHER Ground Application Now Available
2012 MPLI Application Now Available
The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University promotes the development of current and emerging leaders in academic institutions; public, private and nonprofit organizations; and in the community. Leadership programs are based on the principles of collaboration and partnerships, with a strong commitment to long-term relationships between clients and participants. Additionally, the institute researches and disseminates knowledge on the best practices in leadership.
Through its training and public policy research, the institute is committed to identifying and nurturing the next generation of leaders.


Kick Off event
Hands Across Campus

VCU
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