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2011

# Annual HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Conference 2011

The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University  
*Virginia Commonwealth University, gehli@vcu.edu*

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*Transforming Ourselves!*



*Transforming the World!*



HIGHER GROUND  
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
ANNUAL LUNCHEON & CONFERENCE  
RICHMOND MARRIOTT  
500 EAST BROAD STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

**2011 HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Development Program Luncheon**  
Richmond Marriott, Richmond Virginia  
January 21, 2011



**About HIGHER Ground**

The HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Development Program at Virginia Commonwealth University provides opportunities for personal and professional growth through leadership development, education, mentoring and networking. The program seeks to provide women in higher education, faith and community organizations with the skills and tools necessary to enhance their personal and professional leadership. HIGHER Ground seeks to offer intellectual and experiential opportunities for women in order to aide them in successfully combating and overcoming obstacles that prevent advancement in the workplace.

The HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Development Program is a dynamic five-month leadership development experience for current and emerging women leaders who exhibit the skills, potential and desire to lead organizations and themselves to a higher level. This training fosters collaboration across organizational settings, as well as among women from diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds. We seek women from higher education, faith and community organizations who are ready to transform themselves and their organizations. This highly rated program received initial funding support from the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund.

**About the Institute**

The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute was established in May 1999 by the Board of Visitors at Virginia Commonwealth University in honor of 32 years of service to the university by Grace E. Harris, Ph.D. While at VCU, Harris served as a faculty member, dean, vice provost, provost and vice president for academic affairs, and acting president. She was the highest-ranking woman and highest-ranking African-American in VCU's history. She currently serves as a distinguished professor at VCU.

The institute develops and implements programs based on principles of collaboration and partnership. Other unique features include its strong theoretical grounding in the concept of transformational leadership, its commitment to long-term relationships with clients and participants and its focus on leadership in academic and community settings. The institute also conducts research and disseminates knowledge on the best practices in leadership.



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### KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**GAIL LETTS** is President and CEO of the Central Virginia Region for SunTrust Bank, headquartered in Richmond, Virginia. A veteran banker, she joined the Bank in 1983 as Employee Relations Manager in the Maryland Region and has held a variety of positions including Director of Training (Maryland Region), Head of Retail (Maryland and Greater Washington Regions) and STI Head of Branch Banking (Atlanta).

Ms. Letts received her Bachelor of Arts in English from Wilkes University in Pennsylvania, completed the ABA Commercial Lending School at the University of Oklahoma, received her Certificate in Financial Planning and completed the National School of Finance and Management and the Executive Leadership Program, National Council of Savings Institutions at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

Ms. Letts is actively involved in the community, serving on the Board of Directors for the Greater Richmond Partnership, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, Virginia Bankers Association, CenterStage Foundation and the American Heart Association, Mid-Atlantic Affiliated Board, in addition to being a member of the VCU School of Business Board of Trustees. She has served as the 2008–2009 Vice-Chair for the Greater Richmond Partnership and served as Vice-Chair for the 2009 Heart Gala and is the 2010 Chairwoman for both the GRP & Heart Gala; she is on the Advocacy Board for Homeward, and a member of the International Women's Forum.

Ms. Letts was honored by Virginia Lawyers Media as one of Virginia's Most Influential Women for 2010. Ms. Letts was selected as one of the "Top 50 Women (Washington, DC) Who Mean Business" by the Washington Business Journal in 2004 and twice selected by the Baltimore Business Journal as one of the Top 100 Women in Business (1998 and 2000).

Ms. Letts is married with one daughter and one grandson. Aside from her professional and community passions, her hobbies include the piano and golf.

# Transforming Ourselves! Transforming the World!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 2011  
RICHMOND MARRIOTT



- 11:00 a.m.      **Registration**
- 12:00 p.m.      **Welcoming Remarks**      *Nakeina E. Douglas, Ph.D.*, Director  
The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute  
Virginia Commonwealth University
- 12:10 p.m.      **Greetings from an Alum**      *Anita Wynn*, Virginia State University  
HIGHER Ground Board Member  
HIGHER Ground Alumna, 2006
- Lunch-
- 12:50 p.m.      **Introduction of Speaker**      *Grace E. Harris, Ph.D.*, Distinguished Professor  
The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute  
Virginia Commonwealth University
- 1:00 p.m.      **Keynote Speaker**      *Gail Letts*, President & CEO  
SunTrust Bank
- 1:30 p.m.      -Break-
- 1:45 p.m.      **Afternoon Plenary**
- Session A- Managing Your Virtual Reputation: Facebook, Linked In, and other online tools, lol**  
*Tammy Berwanger*, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Session B- At the Intersection: Gender and Sexual Identity at Work**  
*Kathy Carmody*, Gay Community Center of Richmond  
*Sonali Gulati*, Virginia Commonwealth University  
*Zakia Mckensey*, Richmond City Health District
- Session C- Crossing the Border: Stories of Strength and Survival**  
*Anayancy Gamez*
- Session D- The Popcorn Forum: Transforming the Gender Dialogue**  
*Tawnya Pettiford-Wates, Ph.D.*, The Conciliation Project  
*Andrienne Wilson*, The Conciliation Project
- 3:20 p.m.      **Networking Session**  
Meet your fellow conference participants and win door prizes!



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**➤AFTERNOON PLEANARY SESSION OVERVIEW➤**

**Session A- Managing Your Virtual Reputation: Facebook, Linked In, and Other Online Tools, lol**  
**Location— Salon V**

Women have the natural instincts to communicate, collaborate, and network. These qualities are coupled with the comfort of having support and making connections in both our personal and professional lives. Because of these reasons, women are better positioned to take advantage of the many uses of social media. By effectively building a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, users can share ideas, build networks, and market themselves to millions of potential clients. Come find out how to tailor your virtual presence to fit your professional goals.

**Session B- At the Intersection: Gender and Sexual Identity at Work**  
**Location— Madison, Jefferson**

In today's job marketplace, where the glass ceiling is giving way to the glass cliff, women learn to negotiate a labyrinth where more opportunities also bring more challenges and risks. But the maze is even more complicated for lesbian, bisexual, or transgender women whose sexual orientation or gender identity may represent a complicating factor in their career paths. How does the intersection of gender and sexual identity play out in today's workplace? What are the advantages and pitfalls of being "out"--and is it safe yet for any woman to step away from sexual norms? Join our panelists for a discussion about the complex interaction of these issues and their implications for working women

**Session C- Crossing the Border: Stories of Strength and Survival**  
**Location— Salon VI, VII**

Armed with the dream of building a better life for themselves and their families, women cross the border into the United States every day. But starting over in a new place is a great risk--with new opportunities also comes uncertainty and even danger. In unfamiliar territory, how do you navigate the challenges of finding work? How do you know whom to trust? In this session, immigrant women share their personal stories of courage, perseverance, and determination to be successful and create a home in their new homeland.

**Session D- The Popcorn Forum: Transforming the Gender Dialogue**  
**Location— Dominion, Commonwealth**

Just because they say the glass ceiling is shattered doesn't make it true! In our politically correct society, we often avoid sensitive subjects because we don't want to offend anyone or seem insensitive. These days, we are so afraid to say the wrong thing that we end up saying nothing. If someone brings up race, sexism, or religion in "polite company," they are often greeted with hushed tones and awkward glances. Instead, we save these conversations for our closest friends and associates —likeminded individuals who are more likely to reinforce our opinions than challenge them. Join us for an afternoon workshop based on work by The Conciliation Project's TCP in 3-D. Come see what happens when we use theater arts to "pop out" of our comfort zones and cross over into significant exchanges designed to inform, inspire and include everyone in open and honest dialogue to promote meaningful change.

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➤FEATURED SPEAKERS➤



**TAMMY BERWANGER** is the Social Media and Marketing Manager for the University Marketing department at Virginia Commonwealth University and has been employed by VCU since 2005. Tammy has developed and managed a variety of marketing and merchandising campaigns, coordinated various VCU events, and produced and advised on the Emmy award-winning "It's VCU" television series on NBC-12 as well as other VCU video projects. Tammy currently leads the social media efforts at the university. She also represents VCU as a speaker on social media within the VCU and Richmond communities. Prior to joining Virginia Commonwealth University, Tammy worked at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society – Maryland Chapter where she served as the Corporate Development Coordinator for the organization's critical events. From 1997 – 2003, she was employed by Allied Capital Corporation in Washington, DC as the Assistant Director of Marketing. Prior to joining Allied Capital Corporation, Tammy served as an Account Coordinator at Ogilvy PR Worldwide. Tammy is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University where she received her Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications.

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**KATHY CARMODY** resides on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and has worked in the Richmond area for over ten years. Currently employed by the University of Richmond as a Workplace Learning and Development Specialist, she is a member of the Human Resources department. With over a decade of experience in higher education, as well as a background in volunteer management and marketing, she previously owned her own company which provided consulting and design services for small businesses and not for profit organizations. She currently serves as Uof R's Institutional Representative for the Women's Network of Women in Higher Education, a facilitator/trainer with Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, mobility advocate for an advisory council for the Centers for Independent Living, uses basic sign language to communicate with her deaf dog, and is a certified parliamentarian through the League of Women Voters. Previous volunteer positions have included serving on the board of directors for Girl Scouts of the USA, the Volunteer Action Center, Susan G. Komen Foundation, Hospice of Pinellas County, and local Girl Scout Councils in both Florida and Virginia. Other volunteer roles have included chairing assorted fund development, volunteer/staff governance, search, program and nominating committees. She has served as an officer for local civic, advocacy, art and cultural organizations for the past thirty years. Her undergraduate degree was a bachelor of arts in counseling psychology and human resources from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg Florida and her graduate degree is a Masters in Human Resource Management from University of Richmond. Her activities outside of work include creative endeavors including SoulCollage®, an avid book reader, kayaker, beachcomber and wine taster – not necessarily in that order.

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**ANAYANCY GAMEZ** was born and raised in San Salvador, El Salvador in a little town called El Ayutuxtepeque. Gamez came to the United States on September 27, 1987. She lived with her mother in Los Angeles, California. Gamez is married and has two children.

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## ➤FEATURED SPEAKERS➤



**SONALI GULATI** is an Associate Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Photography & Film. She has an MFA in Film & Media Arts from Temple University and a BA in Critical Social Thought from Mount Holyoke College. Ms. Gulati has made several short films that have screened at over two hundred film festivals worldwide including Canada, United States, Europe, Australia, and Asia. She has won awards and grants from foundations such as the Third Wave Foundation and the World Studio Foundation, including the Theresa Pollak Award for Excellence in the Arts in Film. Ms. Gulati is also an activist and has been involved in organizing the South Asian queer rights movement for over a decade. Her latest film *I AM* is a personal documentary on gay and lesbian families living in India.

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**ZAKIA MCKENSY** is a native of Richmond, VA. She has been in the field of HIV Prevention and Education since December of 2001, where she was employed by Fan Free Clinic. During her time with Fan Free Clinic, she was active in Street Outreach, Testing events, HIV Testing and Education as well as implementing the 1<sup>st</sup>. Transgender Clinic, a clinic specifically for M-F and F-M Transexuals. Offering primary care and Hormone Replacement Therapy as a perk. Zakia has had the opportunity of presenting at State and National Levels as well as educating many on Transgender Issues and Sensitivity Trainings. In October of 2009, she left Fan Free Clinic and began a new career with Richmond City Health District, where she is a Disease Intervention Specialist.

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**TAWNYA PETTIFORD-WATES Ph.D.** Artistic Director & Conceptualist for The Conciliation Project is on the faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University. She served for 17 years as Head of the Drama Department at Seattle Central Community College. Dr. T has enjoyed being a Scholar in Residence at numerous colleges and universities around the United States as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa and West Africa. She has received the Dan Evans Award for Outstanding Faculty for her pioneering work "**uncle tom: deconstructed.**" This is the groundbreaking work that inspired the creation of The Conciliation Project. [www.theconciliationproject.org](http://www.theconciliationproject.org) She has appeared in the Broadway production of "**For Colored Girls...**" and in both National and International Touring Companies. Her television, film, industrial, voice over and commercial credits are extensive.

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**ANDRIENNE WILSON** Community Outreach Coordinator A lifetime of music has enabled Wilson to span the disciplines of theater, acting, recording, concert touring, and composing. She has recorded and toured with Diane Schuur, George Cables, Mulgrew Miller, Stephen Scott, Bobby Watson, and Norman Hedman's TROPIQUE. Since relocating to Richmond in 2008, Wilson has performed dual roles as Community Outreach Coordinator and Music Director. Wilson is active in and around Richmond through her extensive vocal coaching in both theatre and jazz workshops as well as acting as Music Minister for Unity of Richmond.

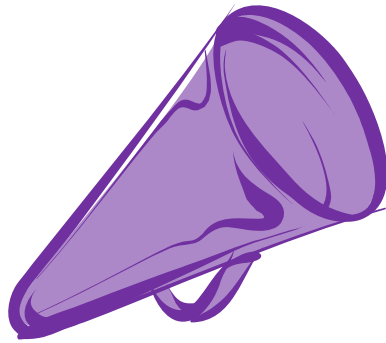


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# Changes are Coming to the HIGHER Ground Luncheon

**We're Moving.** Mark Your Calendars The HIGHER Ground Women's Luncheon is moving to the last Friday of the Month.  
*Save the date for January 27, 2012.*

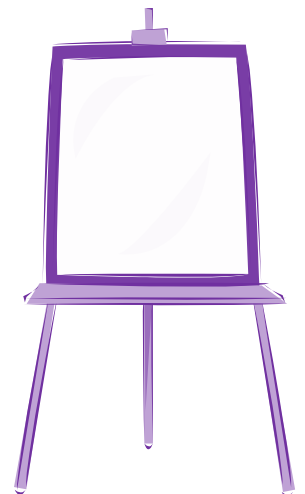


**We've heard you, and We've Listened!** Over the last few years we have received plenty of feedback from our participants. We are working hard to enhance our current programming based on your comments. Beginning in 2012, the HIGHER Ground will move to a full day agenda.

## Planned Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:30 a.m. Welcome
- 9:45 a.m. Break
- 10:00 a.m. Morning Workshops
- 11:15 a.m. Break
- 11:30 a.m. Keynote Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Break
- 1:15 p.m. Afternoon Workshops
- 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:45 p.m. Networking Session

**Share your Knowledge and Experience.** Submit a presentation proposal for consideration at the 2012 HIGHER Ground Conference. The purpose of this conference is to provide high-quality education and networking opportunities for women. Our one day, multiple track format offers a self-directed, facilitated learning environment with education sessions and interactive forums. Presentations, designed to transcend all job sectors, focus on current and emerging issues, best practices, and challenges facing women are welcome. Presentations should be designed for all levels of experience. To submit a presentation for consideration, please visit our website at [www.vcu.edu/gehl](http://www.vcu.edu/gehl) beginning June 2011.



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