



We see the future in you.

Academic Affairs Highlights

Spring 2026



IN THIS ISSUE

Grants.....	1
Publications	2
Conferences	6
Outreach and Community Partnerships.....	12



Academic Affairs Highlights

Spring 2026

Grants

The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology



Dr. Jamela Martin, Associate Professor of Nursing, has been awarded a \$1.85 million grant over 5 years from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) program for Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities for her proposal “Elevate Excellence: Establishing an Academic Success Program to Support NSU Pre-Nursing Students.”

The School of Social Work

Dr. Colita Fairfax, Professor of Social Work, co-founded the Barrett-Peake Heritage Foundation to preserve African American historic sites in the city of Hampton. Her project “Preserving Sacred Spaces of the Contraband in Public Memory” was funded by Outsider Preservation Initiative – Mellon Foundation at UVA’s School of Agriculture Center for Cultural Landscapes. The Foundation’s inaugural board intern, social work major La’Shanae Liggins, is mentored by Dr. Fairfax in qualitative research, nonprofit and administrative skills.



Publications

The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology

Dr. Messaoud Bahoura, Professor of Engineering and Director of the Center for Materials Research, published research in *Processes Journal*, titled “A Novel, Single-Step 3D-Printed Shadow Mask Fabrication Method for TFTs.” (*Processes* 2025, 13, 2976. <https://doi.org/10.3390/pr13092976>)



This research highlights the growing significance of pyrite (FeS_2) as a low-cost, earth-abundant, and high-capacity material for next-generation lithium-ion batteries, emphasizing the crucial role of electrolyte chemistry in determining its electrochemical performance. By systematically comparing ionic liquid, organic, and mixed electrolyte systems, the study seeks to overcome the long-standing challenge of polysulfide dissolution, which undermines capacity retention and stability in FeS_2 -based cells.

The innovative use of mixed electrolytes, combining the high conductivity of organic systems with the polysulfide suppression of ionic liquids, represents a promising pathway to optimize both ionic transport and electrode stability. Through comprehensive structural and electrochemical analyses, including XRD, Raman spectroscopy, cyclic voltammetry, and galvanostatic cycling, this work aims to establish a fundamental understanding of electrolyte-electrode interactions in FeS_2 systems. The expected results could lead to more durable, high-performance lithium-pyrite batteries, advancing sustainable energy storage technologies and expanding the practical applications of sulfur-based materials.

Dr. Nazir Barekzi, Associate Professor of Biology, along with a multidisciplinary team from nine universities, was part of a multi-university effort to assess and compare different undergraduate research experiences across different institutions of higher learning. Dr. Barekzi was the site director who coordinated and enlisted student participation at NSU, which was the only HBCU that was part of the assessment. Dr. Barekzi co-authored the publication titled “Unveiling Undergraduate Research: Employing Ecological Momentary Assessment to Characterize and Compare Undergraduate Research Experiences.” The study was published in *CBE-Life Sciences Education* and is available at <https://www.lifescied.org/doi/pdf/10.1187/cbe.24-11-0271>.





Drs. Philip de Melo and Marie St. Rose, Professors of Health Informatics with Norfolk State University's Master of Health Informatics Program and the Department of Nursing and Allied Health published an article in the *Advances in Bioscience and Biotechnology* journal titled “Accurate Classification of Diabetes via PM Generative AI.”



Dr. Suresh Subedi, Biology Assistant Professor, co-authored a peer-reviewed publication titled “Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) diet landscape: implications for conservation and management,” with Shivish Bhandari, Binaya Adhikari, Kedar Baral, and Hari P. Sharma. The article was published in *Oryx* (First View, Cambridge University Press, September 11, 2025, pp. 1–9). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0030605324001650>



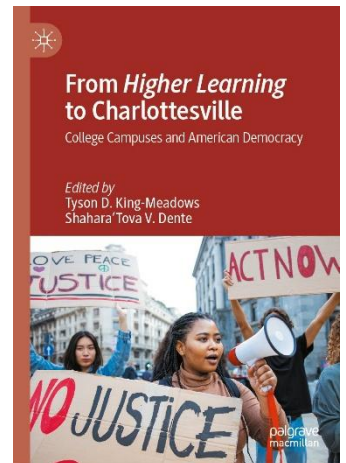
Dr. Suresh Subedi, Biology Assistant Professor, published another article titled “Mapping Oak Diversity and Habitat Suitability Using Multi-Species Niche Modeling” in *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change* (Vol. 8, page 1624716, November 4, 2025). The study integrates GIS and ecological modeling to support conservation and management of rare oak species under changing climate conditions. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ffgc.2025.1624716>

The College of Liberal Arts



Dr. Tyson King-Meadows, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, published his latest book, *From Higher Learning to Charlottesville: College Campuses and American Democracy* (Palgrave Macmillan), which he co-edited with Shahara'Tova V. Dente. The book presents John Singleton’s 1995 film *Higher Learning* as a prophetic warning to Americans about the most pressing controversies facing higher education today.

Book Link:
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-61827-7>



The School of Business



Dr. Philip Chung, Assistant Professor of Accounting, and **Dr. Thomas Lewis**, Associate Professor of Accounting, have their paper titled “The Temporal Effects of Accounting Conservatism on Changes in Accounting Estimates” accepted for publication in the journal *Pacific Accounting Review*, which has an ABDC ranking of B. This research was a collaborative effort with Anthony Chen at CSU Fullerton.



Dr. Sidika Colakoglu, Associate Professor of Management, **Dr. Omer Gokus**, Associate Professor of International Business and Marketing, and **Dr. Jim Chen**, Professor of Management Science, published an article titled “Globalization Versus Regionalization as a Strategy Choice for Global Companies” in the *Journal of Academy of Business and Economics*. The authors also presented this research at the International Academy of Business and Economics (IABE) Annual Conference, December 12–14, in Las Vegas, Nevada.



The School of Education



Dr. Cynthia Burwell, Professor of Education, co-authored a book chapter titled “Well-Being Leadership at Historically Black Colleges and Universities” in *Well Being Leadership in Higher Education: A Guide for Successful Well Being Programs* published by NASPA in January 2026.

The School of Social Work

- Fairfax, Colita Nichols. (Revision). "Examining the Political Opportunity Structure through a Case Study of Willie Dell, African American City Councilwoman." *Journal of Black Studies*.
- Fairfax, Colita Nichols. (Submitted). "Environmental Justice in Preserving the Memory of the Contraband." *Planning Theory and Practice Journal, Interface Section – Outsider Preservation: The Field Beyond Regulations and Lists*.
- Sophia A. Nelson and Colita Nichos Fairfax, November 5, 2025, "The Meaning and Duty of a First" *Virginia Mercury*, <https://virginiamercury.com/2025/11/05/the-meaning-and-the-duty-of-a-first/>. Also printed in *The Richmond Free Press*, November 6, 2025, <https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2025/nov/06/winsome-earle-sears-candidacy-a-missed-opportunity-by-sophia-a-nelson-and-colita-nichols-fairfax/>.
- Fairfax, C. N. (2025). Williams, H. V., & Ziobro, M. (Eds.) *A seat at the table: Black women public intellectuals in US history and culture*. Univ. Press of Mississippi, *Journal of African American History*, 110(4).
- Fairfax, C. N. (2025). "A Place Called Ilda: Race and Resilience at a Northern Virginia Crossroads by Tom Shoop." *Journal of Southern History*, 91(1), 176-177, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/soh.2025.a950539>.
- Livingston, V., Jackson-Nevels, B., Mitchell, B. D., & Riddick, P. M. (2025). "Resilience, Adversity, and Social Supports During Childhood and Adolescence." *Encyclopedia*, 5(3), 108.
- Livingston, V., Jackson-Nevels, B., Davis-Wagner, D., Jameson, D., & Joyner, C. (2025). "Dignity in Mental Health: Examining the Dynamics of mental health Stigma." *Academia Mental Health & Well-Being*, 2(3).
- Livingston, V., Jackson-Nevels, B., Brown-Meredith, E., Campbell, A., Mitchell, B. D., Riddley, C., Tetteh, A. O., Reddy, V. V., & Williams, A. (2025). "Poverty, Allostasis, and Chronic Health Conditions: Health Disparities Across the Lifespan." *Encyclopedia*, 5(1).
- Tetteh, A, Richardson, L., Carter, D. Myrick, M. (2025)." Ain't I A Mother." *PHILLIS The Journal for Research on African American Women*. <https://deltafoundation.net/phillis/>.
- Tetteh, A, Smith, K. (2025). "Enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the social work licensing and credentialing process." *Advances in Social Work*. DOI: 10.18060/28625.
- Tetteh, A. (2025). "Black Myths and Suicide Deaths." *Psychdiscourse*. <https://www.psychdiscourse.com/blackmythssuicidedeaths/>.
- Tetteh, A. (2025). "Where is my Voice." In M. Constance-Huggins, & E. Pate (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory in Action: Knowledge and Application in Social Work Practice*. Cambridge University Press & Assessment.
- Williamson-Ashe S R. (2025). "Considerations for Andragogy in Leadership Education at HBCUs." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Leadership Studies*. 6(3), 143-154. doi:10.61882/johepal.6.3.143
URL: <http://johepal.com/article-1-1432-en.html>.

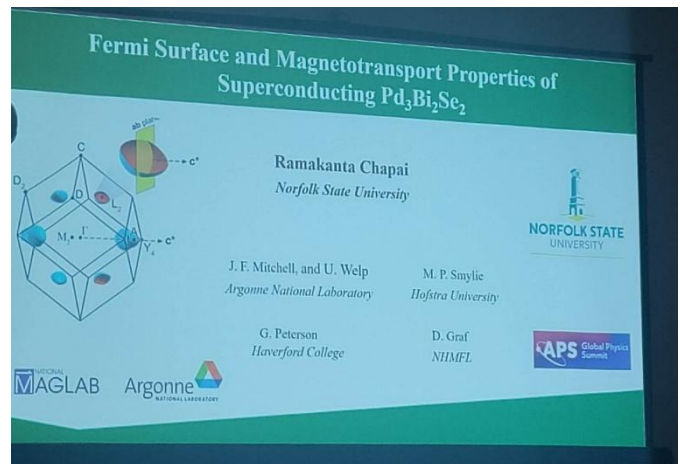
Conferences

The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology



Dr. Ramakanta Chapai, Assistant Professor of Physics, delivered a talk titled “Fermi Surface and Magnetotransport Properties of the Superconducting Quantum System $\text{Pd}_3\text{Bi}_2\text{Se}_2$ ” at the APS Global Physics Summit 2026, which was held in Denver from March 15 to 20. The summit is one of the largest international conferences in physics, with over 14,000 participants from around the globe. Led by Dr. Chapai, this work is a collaborative project between Argonne National Laboratory and Norfolk State University to demonstrate how open electronic orbits in a semimetal can give rise to pronounced, non-saturating magnetotransport behavior. During the meeting, Dr. Chapai also visited several quantum research instrumentation booths,

identifying potential vendors to support his ongoing research program on quantum materials at Norfolk State University. “It was a privilege to represent NSU at this global conference,” expressed Dr. Chapai whose travel, registration, and accommodation were supported by a travel award from NSU’s Center for Teaching and Learning. Dr. Chapai’s presentation abstract can be accessed here: <https://summit.aps.org/schedule/people/?q=Ramakanta>



Clifford Denize, a doctoral student at the Center for Materials Research and a member of **Dr. Bahoura’s research group**, has received a travel award to present his research titled “*Effect of Organic, Ionic, and Mixed Electrolytes on the Electrochemical Performance of Li/FeS₂ Cells*” at the 2026 Emerging Researchers National (ERN) Conference in STEM, which will be held March 19–21, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Department of Mathematics hosted the NSU Applied Math and Data Analysis Conference 2025 on November 8, 2025, in the Nursing and General Education Building. The event brought together faculty, students, and researchers from multiple institutions to share innovative work in applied mathematics, data analysis, and computational science. The conference featured invited talks, contributed presentations, and student research sessions, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and professional development. **Dr. Michael Keeve**, Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, delivered the opening remarks, highlighting NSU's commitment to advancing research, innovation, and student success. The event provided valuable opportunities for students to engage with experts, expand their academic network, and showcase their research.

Mrs. Maureen Scott, Mrs. Kierra Dillard-Wilkins, and Dr. Nazir Barekzi of the Norfolk State University Biology Department served as conference judges and 13 NSU Biology undergraduate students presented their research at the 2025 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS) in San Antonio, Texas, on November 19–23, 2025. The NSU students who presented were **Jaela Hairston, Raven Jackson, Arington Howard, Sonia Koech, Janae Brown, Sandra Owusu, Shenika Allen, Shonte Veal, Julia Raveneau, Cameron Moody, Zavion Dawson, Keyera White, Brishai Williams**. CSET is proud to announce that **Sandra Owusu** won an award for her research presentation in Biochemistry.



Dr. Hedieh Sirjani, Assistant Professor and HSM program coordinator of the Department of Nursing and Allied Health, and her graduate MHI program student research assistant Ms. Mildred Jackson presented a poster at the Virginia Public Health Association on September 25, 2025, in Richmond, VA. The title of the study was “Formative Evaluation and Pilot Testing of the Social Privilege Index for Health and Healthcare Disparities (SPIHD).” Dr. Hedieh Sirjani also presented a table discussion at the American Public Health Association Conference on November 2, 2025, in Washington DC. The title of the study was “Resilience and Reward: Exploring Life Satisfaction in Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.”

Dr. Suresh Subedi, Biology Assistant Professor, recently shared his research at the Plant-Microbe Interface (PMI) Meeting held at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, TN, on Wednesday, August 20, 2025. His presentation, titled “Deciphering Genetic and Microbial Synergies to Enhance Abiotic

Stress Resilience in Poplar,” highlighted innovative work on plant-microbe interactions and stress tolerance mechanisms.

The School of Business

Dr. Anh Ngo, Professor of Finance, co-presented a research paper with an undergraduate student at the International Academy of Business and Economics (IABE) Conference in Las Vegas, Dec 12-14, 2025, providing a powerful high-impact research experience for the student.

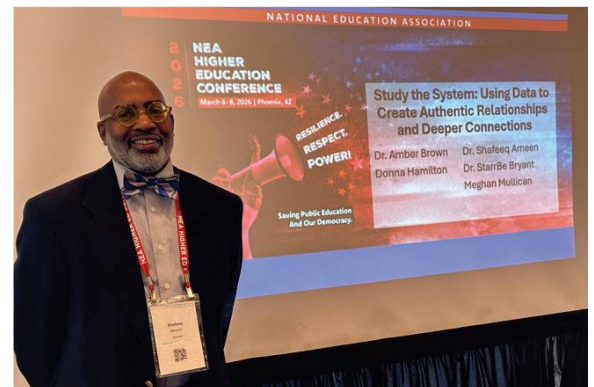
The School of Education

Dr. Shafeeq Ameen, Director of the Office of Clinical Experiences and Student Services, represented NSU at two National Education Association (NEA) Conferences.



Dr. Ameen was a co-presenter at the NEA Leadership Conference in Chicago, Illinois. His group’s presentation was titled “Precision Organizing: Moving Beyond Assumptions for Real Growth.”

Dr. Ameen was also a co-presenter at the NEA Higher Education Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. His team’s research

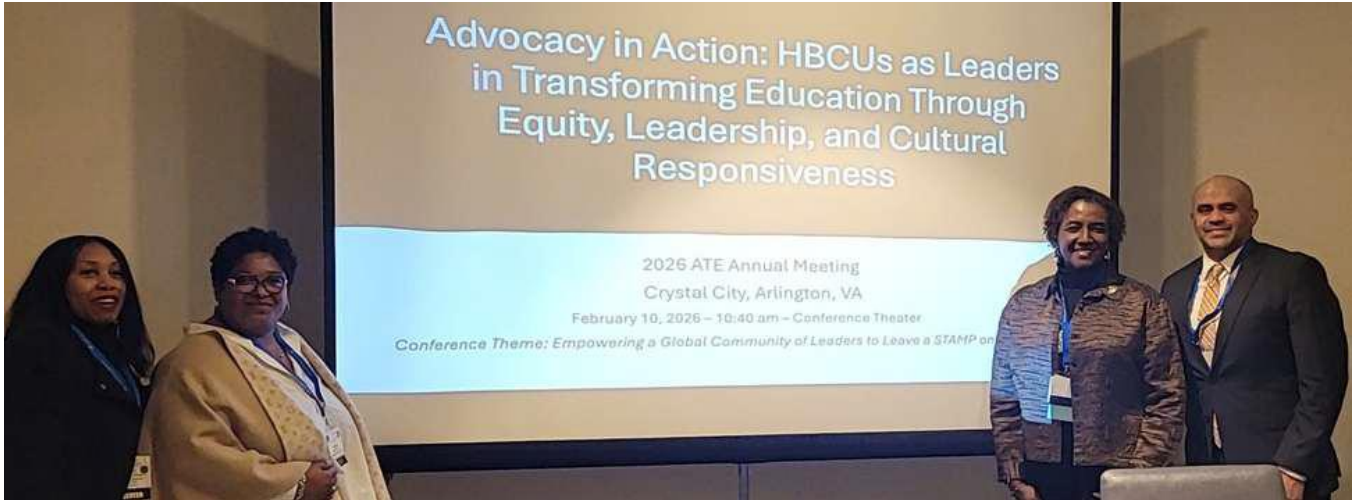


topic was titled “Study the System: Using Data to create Authentic Relationships and Deeper Connections.”

Dr. Jennifer Perry, Assistant Professor in the SESL Department, chaired the 25th Annual National Cross-Cultural Counseling & Education Conference for Research, Action, & Change, which was held March 12-13, 2026, on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition to chairing the conference, **Dr. Perry** co-presented two sessions. The first session was titled “Doing it Differently: Supervision That Guides and Leads.” This session focused on sharing the experiences of BIPOC counseling supervisory relationships and providing tools to support those on their supervision journey. The second session was a roundtable discussion titled “The Power of Us: Unity in the Fight for Justice.” Dr. Perry and colleagues led a discussion surrounding the state of the counseling profession, counselor education, and continuing the work of social justice advocacy.



Dr. Cynthia Nicholson, Associate Professor and Associate Dean of the School of Education, and **Dr. Todd Davidson**, Instructor of Education, moderated an impactful session at the 2026 Association of Teacher Educators Annual Meeting. The session focused on the intersection of advocacy, STEM inclusion, and literacy justice. **Dr. Nicholson** emphasized the importance of fostering a “culture of care” and utilizing research-driven best practices to ensure student success while **Dr. Davidson** presented vital findings on improving educator recruitment and retention, contributing to the discussion on how HBCU-led research and experiential learning are shaping the future of global education.



Dr. Denelle Wallace-Alexander, Dean of the School of Education, was invited to serve as a panel expert for the Hunt Institute Virginia Education Summit held on December 16, 2025, at the Library of Virginia in Richmond. The panel session was titled “Rethinking Literacy Reform Implementation: Results, Pressures, and Innovations.” The Honorable Ghazala Hashmi, Lieutenant Governor, served as the Summit Co-Chair and introduced the session.



On Saturday, March 28, 2026, **Dr. Denelle Wallace-Alexander** served as a panelist for Lincoln University’s series on issues impacting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This virtual event brought together education leaders, policymakers, scholars, and practitioners for a timely discussion focused on innovation, equity, and accountability in education. **Dr. Wallace-Alexander** accompanied other panelists to explore the evolving accreditation landscape impacting programs. A robust discussion focused on accreditation challenges, federal and state policy shifts, funding implications, and strategies to strengthen and sustain the HBCU teacher pipeline.



Dr. Maria Lawson-Davenport, Assistant Professor in the SESL Department, and **Dr. Jonita Shabazz**, Assistant Professor in the EESE Department, focused on literacy during Spring Break. Hosted on the campus of Norfolk State University March 11-14, 2026, Drs. Lawson-Davenport and Shabazz presented a session titled “Building Literacy from the Ground Up.” This session focused on a research-based, culturally responsive 2–4 week pre-kindergarten readiness program

that can be implemented in schools and community organizations such as churches, civic groups, and social clubs. Grounded in the Science of Reading, the program equips families and communities with practical strategies to build phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, oral language, and print concepts in culturally affirming ways. Attendees were provided with a ready-to-use toolkit of sample daily lesson routines, family engagement activities, and adaptable literacy supports for libraries, community centers, and faith-based organizations.

During Spring Break, **Dr. Tamara Smith-Moyler** and **Dr. Priscilla Spencer** represented Norfolk State University at the Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah where they presented a session titled “Changing Mindsets, Changing Classrooms.” Their presentation highlighted the design and impact of the Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) course they developed and delivered to 80 general education teachers across the Commonwealth of Virginia last summer. This innovative course was made possible through grant funding from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the utilization of school-university partnerships. The session drew an audience of more than 100 participants and generated significant interest nationwide. Following the presentation, special education leaders from across the country engaged with Drs. Smith-Moyler and Spencer to learn how the model could be replicated in their own states through similar collaborative partnerships.



The 2026 HBCU Coalition Summit was held at Howard University in Washington DC, March 26–27, 2026. Under the leadership of **Dr. Cynthia Burwell** and **Dr. Sheila Ward**, the NSU Health Ambassadors were able to shine during this summit. The Ambassadors impressed session participants during their presentation titled “For Students, By Students: Student Health Ambassadors Promoting Campus & Community Wellness on an HBCU campus.” This summit was the perfect opportunity for NSU’s Health Ambassadors to network with fellow student health leaders, faculty, clinicians, researchers, and partners with a focus on improving health outcomes on HBCU campuses.



Outreach and Community Partnerships

The School of Education

On Saturday, March 7, 2026, School of Education Student Ambassadors **Anya Barnes** and **Kadriya Covington** participated in the Educators Rising Virginia 2026 Leadership Conference in Glen Allen. During the conference, both ambassadors served as judges for education-focused competitive events. Anya and Kadriya also served as presenters for the Freshman 101 session designed for high school seniors from across the Commonwealth. During this interactive session, they shared practical guidance to help students successfully transition from high school to university studies. Their presentation provided aspiring educators with valuable insight into college life and the expectations of teacher preparation programs. In addition, both students served as featured speakers on the College and Young Professionals panel, where they shared insights about the transition to college and the teacher preparation experience.

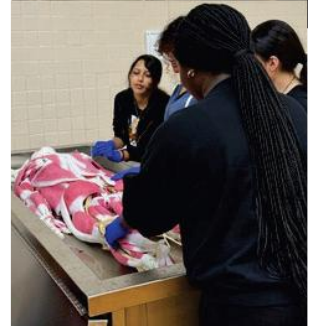


Anya Barnes and **Kadriya Covington** represented Norfolk State University and the School of Education with exceptional professionalism and enthusiasm, demonstrating the leadership and commitment to the teaching profession that characterize the next generation of educators.





HPEEX Department Chair, **Dr. Kathy Thomas** introduced a new group of Bayside High School students to the syndavers during the NSU Spring Break. These visits are engaging and provide hands-on experiences with the equipment and resources associated with the Exercise Science degree.



The School of Social Work

On November 14, 2025, the **School of Social Work** celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Social Work PhD Program. The celebration was held in the Student Center and was well attended by faculty, staff, and students. The event was organized by Dr. Viola Vaughan-Eden, PhD Program Director, who delivered the opening remarks. Dr. Aurelia Williams, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, delivered the welcome remarks on behalf of Academic Affairs and President Javaune Adams-Gaston.





Several students from the **School of Social Work** participated on March 3 in the *Spartans for Change; Campus to Capitol* visit to the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond. Spartans for Change is a new organization that empowers NSU students to engage in advocacy, reform, and solutions to enhance the quality of life for diverse populations by taking political action. The hands-on experience gave students an opportunity to learn more about how state government works and how student advocacy can translate into meaningful civic engagement. They were able to watch a live session, meet Delegate



Glass and Ms. Callicutt (Chief of Staff for Delegate Anthony who is over Norfolk State’s district), tour the capitol, and ask questions that enhanced their understanding of the legislative process so that they can influence systems-level change.

Experiences like this are invaluable in helping students connect their academic learning with real-world advocacy and leadership. The following students participated in this event: Ramar Thomas, Ceomas Green, Destinee Evans, Trinity Wilson-Cobb, Ania Hill, Makayla Thomas, Destiny Scruggs, Serena

Myers, Nikia Downer, Jamiah Duncan, Amina Cedeno, Shyanne Venable, LaTanya Edwards, Aleeya Peterson Sampson, Imanie Davis, and Krystal Stephen.



On March 3, 2026, the **School of Social Work** welcomed **Dr. Kim Downing**, BSW Program Director at Elizabeth City State University, as the Lunch and Learn Speaker. Dr. Downing, a Norfolk State Social Work Doctoral Alum, provided a wonderful presentation on Rural Social Work Practice. In the near future, Dr. Downing will return for a book signing.



Calvin Cooper (l) was installed as the Vice President and **Dr. Phillip Riddick** (r) as President of Hampton Roads Chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers. Congratulations to the School of Social Work for having two of its members serving the community and the field.



Academic Affairs Highlights is a newsletter published twice a year by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to promote the accomplishments of faculty, staff, and students in the areas of research, scholarship, professional development, and service. The submission deadline for the fall issue is November 10, and the submission deadline for the spring issue is April 10. Please submit good news items, and any accompanying pictures, in a Microsoft Word document via email to the newsletter editor, Dr. Lamiaa Youssef @ lyoussef@nsu.edu.

To view all issues, click [here](#).

[Academic Affairs Website](#)