

MAY/JUNE 2026

VSU GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Spring

Has Sprung and New Chapters have Begun



We Finished Strong • We're Stepping Forward • Graduation Is Here



🌸🎓 SPRING 2026 COMMENCEMENT CELEBRATION 🎓🌸

🌟 Your big moment is almost here 🌟

📺 [Live Stream Link for Both Ceremonies](#)

👉 [Click Here](#)

🎓 The Graduate School Spring Commencement

📅 Friday, May 8, 2026

🕒 Ceremony Begins at 5:00 p.m.

📍 The Complex
401 Baytree Road

🕒 Event Timeline

📅 3:00 p.m.

Doors open and guests begin arriving

🎓 3:30 p.m.

Graduates arrive for check in

🌟 5:00 p.m.

Ceremony begins

🌟 Pyrotechnics celebration immediately following the ceremony



Caps Off! Meet the Future Graduates



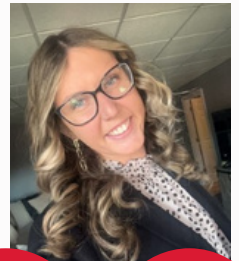
Corinne Gibson is graduating this Spring 2026 with a Master of Public Administration (MPA). Corinne currently serves as an Administrative Coordinator for the Valdosta Fire Department, supporting operations, budgeting, and key administrative functions. After graduation, she plans to continue growing in public service and pursue leadership roles in local government and public safety. Corinne is most proud of reaching this milestone while balancing full time work, graduate school, and personal responsibilities. ✨



Kayla Craft is earning an Ed.S. in Educational Leadership with Dual Teacher Leadership. After graduation, she plans to pursue a leadership role such as an instructional or literacy coach at her current school. Kayla is also excited to celebrate by taking her Chicago-born husband to Wild Adventures. Most of all, she is proud to complete this journey alongside her students while showing the value of lifelong learning and always sharpening your craft. ✨



Tara Adams is graduating with an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership. She currently serves as an Associate Director of Operations for Facilities Management Services, overseeing daily campus operations and facility management. Tara plans to continue her career in higher education while using the leadership skills and strategies she gained through the program to lead teams, improve processes, and better serve students, faculty, and staff. She is most excited to apply what she has learned, continue growing as a leader, and make a meaningful impact in higher education. ✨



Alexis Wallraven is earning a Master's in Education with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction. After graduation, she plans to continue growing as an educator by creating engaging and effective curriculum that supports all students. Alexis is especially excited to use her technology endorsement to enhance STEM learning through hands on, interactive experiences that prepare students for the future. She is most proud of reaching this milestone and applying her new knowledge to make a lasting impact in her classroom and school community. ✨

Kayla Craft
Ed.S. in Educational Leadership with Dual Teacher Leadership

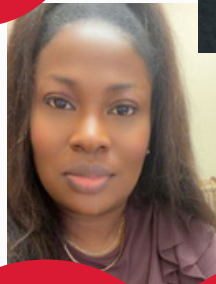
After graduation, I plan on seeking promotion into a leadership position, such as an instructional or literacy coach, in my current school where I work. On the leisure side, I finally want to take my Chicagoan husband to Wild Adventures as he loves animals and theme parks. I am most excited about closing this journey with my students, proving that you can always sharpen your craft (pun intended) and be a lifelong learner!



Daniel Marcos Rodriguez is graduating with a Master's in Music Performance in Orchestral Conducting. After graduation, he will attend the University of Georgia to pursue his doctorate in conducting. Daniel is most excited for his family to watch him walk across the stage after supporting him throughout his journey. And after graduation, he is looking forward to celebrating with a trip to the beach. ✨🌊



Cally Rodgers is graduating with her Master of Education and is excited to continue her journey in educational leadership. After graduation, she will begin the Doctoral Program in Curriculum and Instruction at Piedmont University in May 2026. Cally's long-term goal is to become an Assistant Principal of Instruction and eventually a school principal so she can support teachers and students on an even greater scale. She is most excited about taking the next step in her professional journey and expanding her impact beyond the classroom through instructional leadership. ✨



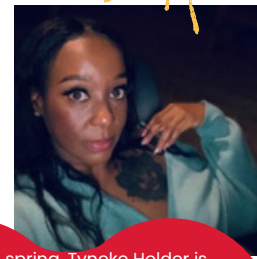
Sacha Fields is graduating from the Master of Public Administration program. After graduation, Sacha plans to continue serving the community at the City of Cordele while pursuing further education through the Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) program. Sacha is most proud of reaching this milestone after overcoming personal challenges along the way. Earning this degree represents perseverance, growth, and a strong commitment to public service and continued success. ✨

Caps Off! Meet the Future Graduates



◆ April Eldridge is completing her Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) at Valdosta State University with a focus on becoming a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. After graduation, she plans to advance her career by providing compassionate, evidence based mental health care to diverse patient populations. April is most excited about stepping into this new role, expanding her impact in mental health, and beginning a purpose driven career where she can truly make a difference in the lives of others. ✨

My name is James Collier and Clinical Mental Health is my major. After graduation, I plan to remain in public education as a Career Technical Instructional Coordinator, as well as, growing my counseling experience within my community. I'm excited about graduation because my daughter gets to see me walk across the stage and hopefully be inspired to do the same next year.



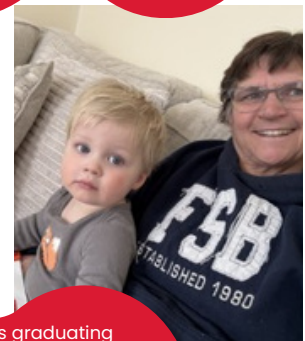
◆ This spring, Tyneke Holder is celebrating earning a Master of Arts in Teaching from Valdosta State University. After graduation, they plan to continue teaching at their current school while building on the meaningful connections made with students and colleagues. They also look forward to traveling and exploring new experiences that inspire personal and professional growth. Most of all, this milestone represents dedication, resilience, and the accomplishment of a goal achieved through hard work and perseverance. ✨



◆ Rasheedah Flowers, a dedicated 5th grade lead teacher with Atlanta Public Schools, has earned her specialist degree from Valdosta State University, marking her third advanced degree. She credits Dr. Kathy Nobles for making the program an exceptional experience and leaving a lasting impact on her graduate journey. Originally from Jackson, Mississippi, Rasheedah plans to celebrate this milestone with a backpacking trip across Europe, exploring Budapest, Prague, Berlin, and Vienna. 🌍 ✨



◆ Rose M. Brown is graduating with her Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. After graduation, she will continue her work within the University System of Georgia at Middle Georgia State University, supporting student engagement and student affairs initiatives. Rose also plans to continue in program coordination and community based services while pursuing her Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) credential. She is most excited to apply the knowledge and skills gained through the MSW program in real world practice while continuing to grow professionally. ✨



◆ Amy A. Elkins is graduating with a Specialist in Teacher Leadership/Tier One. After graduation, she will continue serving Richmond Hill High School in Georgia as a PLC leader and Math Teacher. Amy hopes to take her leadership skills to the next level in the future as an assistant principal or principal. She is most excited to share what she has learned through this degree with her math team and beyond while continuing to grow in teacher and school leadership. ✨

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◆ Jeffrey Pham is graduating with his MBA, building on his undergraduate background in marketing and finance. During his time at VSU, he served as a Graduate Assistant for the Office of Career Opportunities and Volunteer Services, while also gaining hands on experience through internships with PepsiCo, leadership as President of VSU Enactus, and involvement as a Student Dean Board member and Aramark Student Ambassador. After graduation, Jeffrey plans to pursue a full time role in marketing, consumer insights, or strategy. He is especially excited to travel to the Philippines and Japan this summer before stepping into his next chapter, where he looks forward to applying his skills and continuing to grow both professionally and personally. 🌟🌍

◆ Brittany Davis is earning her Specialist degree in Teacher Leadership with a concentration in Tier I Education Leadership. After graduation, she plans to continue serving as an educator while gaining additional leadership experience and preparing for the next step in her career. Brittany aims to become an assistant principal by the end of the 2026–2027 school year and will pursue her Tier II Educational Leadership certification to further strengthen her skills. She is focused on making a lasting impact on school culture, student achievement, and staff development through effective leadership. 🌟

◆ Kayla Sledge is graduating with an M.Ed. in Instruction and Curriculum. After graduation, she plans to celebrate with a week in Puerto Rico before beginning her new role as a Curriculum Evaluator. Kayla is most excited about completing her academic journey and starting this exciting new chapter in her career. 🌟🌴

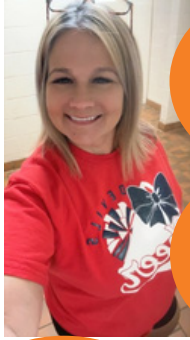


◆ April Washington, MSN, APRN, FNP-C is completing the MSN-DNP Graduate Program. After graduation, she will continue her journey at VSU by pursuing her Psychiatric Mental Health Certification while also continuing to work with her current employer. April is most excited about advancing her career in mental health and expanding access to high quality care within her community. 🌟



I am ◆ Savanna Sanders, and I am a mother, wife, teacher, and student. After Graduation, I plan to pursue a specialist degree in Teacher Leadership! I am excited to be able to continue my educational career at VSU! The professors have made the classes very interesting. I have gained so much knowledge through VSU! Go Blazers!





◆ Kimberly Sparrow is graduating with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) with a concentration in English. She will soon begin her second year teaching ELA and Georgia Studies at her hometown middle school. Kimberly is especially excited to celebrate earning her second degree in one year and looks forward to continuing her education with Valdosta State University. ✨

◆ Desirae Shantell Roberts is graduating in Social Work. After graduation, she plans to launch a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting at risk adolescents through mentorship, mental health resources, life skills development, academic assistance, and community involvement. Desirae is most excited to turn her education and experiences into meaningful action by advocating for youth and making a lasting impact in her community. For her, graduation represents hard work, growth, and the beginning of an inspiring new chapter. ✨



◆ Kiley Amico Olchaskey is graduating with a degree in English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition. This fall, Kiley will begin an English PhD at the University of Reno, Nevada. She is most excited to continue her research in First-Year Writing and take the next step in her academic journey. ✨

◆ These Flowers is a graduate of the Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Program with a concentration in Healthcare Administration. After graduation, she plans to continue working full time while studying for her Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification. These also looks forward to growing Flowers Consulting Services, LLC, helping organizations reach their goals and full potential. She is most excited to celebrate with travel, family, and friends and finally enjoy time away from the computer now that her dissertation is complete. ✨



🌟🎓 Grad Life Tips for Future Grads 🌟🎓

💤 Sleep is Productive Too

Rest is not laziness. A clear mind performs better than an exhausted one.

📅 Protect Your Time

Not every invitation needs a yes. Guard your schedule and focus on your goals.

💧 Drink Water and Mind Your Business

Hydration and boundaries will take you far.

🧘 Take Breaks Without Guilt

Stepping away can help you come back stronger and more focused.

📊 Budget Early

Track spending now. Future you will appreciate less stress later.

📵 Put the Phone Down Sometimes

Social media can wait. Your peace and priorities come first.

👥 Network Before You Need To

Build relationships with professors, classmates, and mentors now. Opportunities often come through people.

🌱 Growth Feels Uncomfortable

If it feels challenging, you are probably leveling up.

🏃 Stop Comparing Timelines

Someone else's pace has nothing to do with your path. Stay in your lane.

🗣️ Learn to Speak Up for Yourself

Ask questions, request help, and advocate for what you need.

🎉 Celebrate Small Wins

Finished an assignment? Survived the week? Progress counts.

🚪 Some Doors Closing Is a Blessing

Redirection can be protection. Keep moving forward.

🌟 Confidence Comes From Doing

You do not need to know everything before starting. Begin anyway.

🎓 Your Degree is Important, But So Are You

Take care of yourself while chasing success.

🎉 What's Happening

Peach State Summer Theatre

June 5 - July 4

Valdosta State University presents "Anything Goes" and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" at the Sawyer Theatre.

Wild Adventures LIVE!

Concert Series:

June: Starship featuring Mickey Thomas, LOCASH, and Parmalee.

July: The Beach Boys (July 18) and The Australian Pink Floyd Show (July 25).

August: Skillet (Aug 1) and FOR KING + COUNTRY (Aug 8).

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