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15th Annual HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Conference Booklet

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15th Annual HIGHER GROUND Women's Leadership Conference Pivoting Forward: The LeaderSHIFT

November 5, 2021 | Richmond, Virginia

PRESENTED BY



VCU The Grace E. Harris
Leadership Institute





ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

ANNUAL HIGHER GROUND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The Annual HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Conference provides high-quality education and networking opportunities. Each year, participants come together to share ideas, illuminate innovative leadership practices and explore factors that influence their effectiveness at work, at home, and in their communities. This conference provides participants with a tremendous opportunity to grow, develop, and learn with practical solutions for success in their personal and professional lives. Our one-day conference offers a facilitated learning environment with regional and national speakers highlighting timely issues of importance to women.

This event celebrates who you are as a woman in all aspects of your life. We embrace the fullness of womanhood in all its inclusive paths, intersectional journeys, and for all interested in how womanhood has shaped their leadership journey. The conference will provide you with a tremendous opportunity to grow, develop, and learn with practical solutions for success at home and at work. Guided by The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute, participants will explore the latest and innovative practices in leadership excellence. Spend a day with great leaders, find what motivates you, and build leadership skills that last!

2021 CONFERENCE

PIVOTING FORWARD: THE LEADERSHIP SHIFT

The practice of leadership is most often understood within the context of relationships inside organizations and institutions. The boundaries that dictated our lives months before have all but dissolved, prompting the need to reconsider our definition of leadership, where it takes place, and who controls it.

Circumstances and opportunities have required women to readjust their expectations and what is expected of them. While the past 18-months took a physical, emotional, social, and political toll on many families, it has also provided a moment for reflection, resignation, recovery, and reimagination of what our lives could be beyond this moment. It has forced a shift in our notion of leadership and allowed us to reconsider our roles and worth at home and work.

Opportunities have emerged from an uncertain environment for leaders to reflect on how we capitalize on the leadership shifts that have transpired over the last year to pivot forward.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

8:30
AM

MORNING MINDFUL MOMENT

Ashley Williams, MS, C-IAYT Yoga Therapist & Founder, Mindful On Life and BareSOUL Yoga

9:00
AM

CONFERENCE OPENING AND WELCOME

Nakeina E. Douglas-Glenn, PhD, Director, The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University

9:30
AM

OPENING KEYNOTE - WE ALL WIN, WHEN WOMEN LEAD!

Kiko Davis Snoddy, Renowned Businesswoman, Philanthropist, Author, Trustee, Donald Davis Living Trust Founder and President of the Don Davis Legacy Foundation, Managing Director of Groovesville Productions & Publishing LLC

10:45
AM

PLENARY I - RISING ABOVE RESISTANCE: DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION FOR WOMEN IN TODAY'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Honorable Ida Chen, Judge, Court of Common Pleas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Marcelle Wilson Davis, DSL, Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, VCU Health System

Maria Morukian, MA, PCC, President and Founder, MSM Global Consulting, LLC

Janice Underwood, PhD, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

CONFERENCE AGENDA

12:30
PM

PLENARY II - WHO'S GOT NEXT? PREPARING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF IMPACTFUL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Adria Córdova, President, Association for Latino Professionals, Philadelphia Chapter

Abby Credicott, Chair, Chamber RVA, HYPE (Helping Young Professionals Engage)

Ka'Myia Gunn, Student, Emory University School of Law

Ryann Lofchie, Chief Executive Officer, Viveki Consulting, LLC

2:00
PM

PLENARY III - POWER UP! PREPARING FOR THE ESSENTIAL NEEDS OF WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Chrissy Keeton, Founder & CEO, Control Y Consulting

Jennifer Y. Scott, Director, The Americas, Global Workplace Solutions Team, The Coca-Cola Company

Elizabeth Veliz, Assistant Vice President, Talent Management & Organizational Development, VCU Health System

Omega Wilson, Founder, Innovative Strategies Consulting, LLC

3:30
PM

CLOSING KEYNOTE - HOPE, LOVE, AND GRACE... REACHING HIGHER GROUND

Susanna Wu-Pong Calvert, PhD, Founder, and Executive Director of the Foundation for Family and Community Healing

4:45
PM

FIRESIDE CHAT WITH CHARIS JONES & JESSICA NOLL

Charis Jones, Chief Executive and Chief Design Officer for fashion and lifestyle brand Sassy Jones

Jessica Noll, Director of Local Programming & Executive Producer & Co-Host, Virginia This Morning

WHAT TO EXPECT

Zoom Meeting Control Instructions

This conference is being recorded.

This session will be in webinar format.
Only panelists will be seen on the screen all other participants will be listed as attendees.

You will be on mute during the keynote and plenary sessions.

You may ask questions with the Q & A tool.

The chat will be used to share references, helpful links, and connect with other conference goers.

Feel free to use the chat to connect with other attendees!

Important Links

Below are important links to access the conference webinar and the Fireside Chat session.

Conference Webinar

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/81520796240?pwd=SFRoZWVYMUyNXZrbTNITmF4NCtLZz09>
Webinar ID: 815 2079 6240
Passcode: 15AHGWLC

Fireside Chat

Please use this link to access the Fireside Chat zoom meeting at 4:45 PM

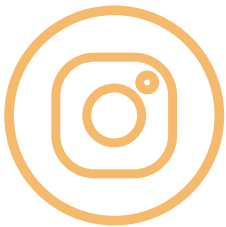
<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/86558664609?pwd=Y2w2WXhqcjdVRWhDNnI2YTFvTW9QZz09>
Meeting ID: 8534
Passcode: 15AHGWLC

If you experience any technical problems during the webinar, please contact The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at gehli@vcu.edu or call 804-827-1169.

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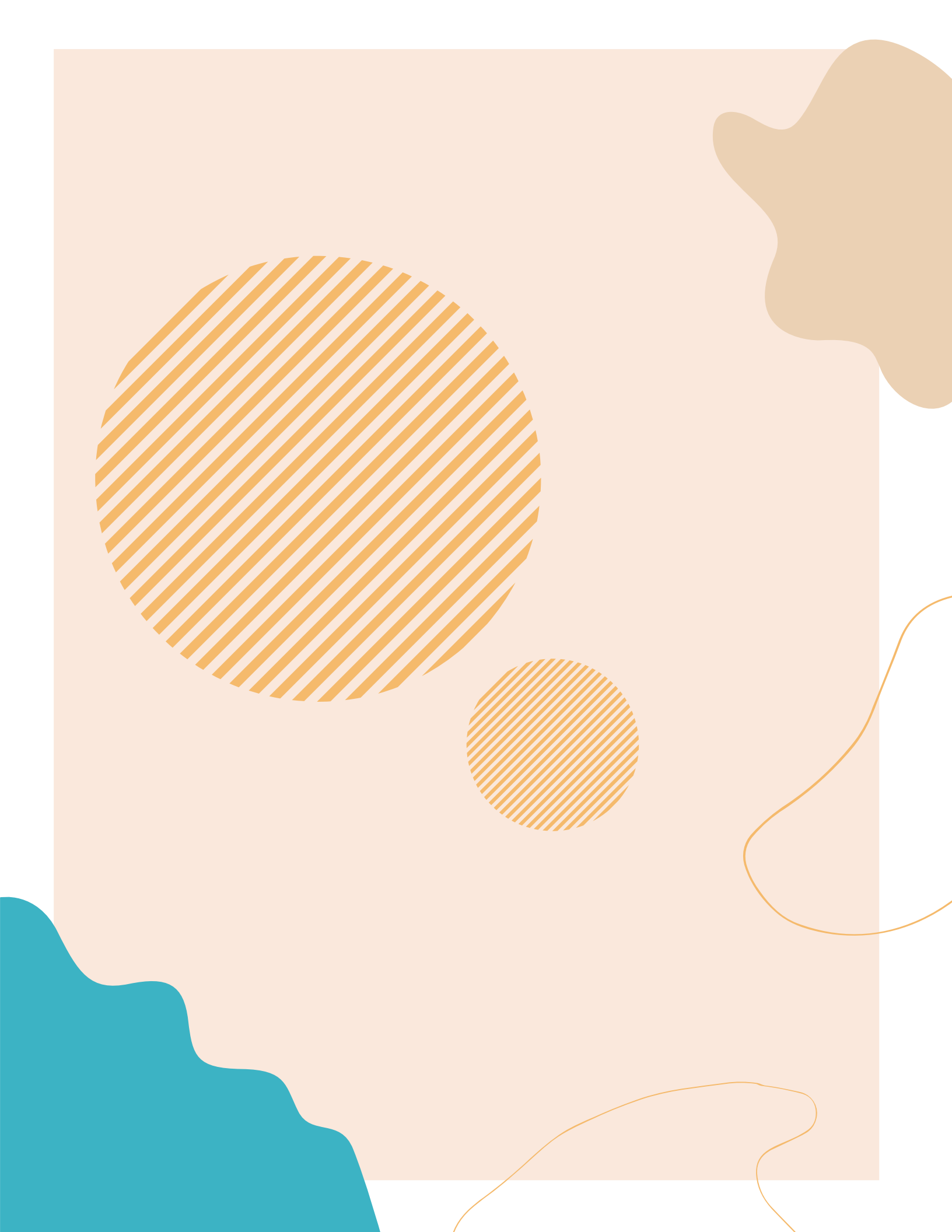
For more information on our programs, please contact us at

The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
gehli@vcu.edu



www.gehli.vcu.edu

#AHGWLC21





SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

MORNING MINDFUL MOMENT

Ashley Williams, MS, C-IAYT Yoga Therapist & Founder, Mindful On Life and BareSOUL Yoga

Take a moment to center yourself and direct your attention to your purpose. The morning will allow you to set your intentions for the day and posture yourself to usher in insight and inspiration, opening your being to catalyze inquiry, awareness, creativity, and peace.

OPENING KEYNOTE - WE ALL WIN, WHEN WOMEN LEAD!

Kiko Davis Snoddy, Renowned Businesswoman, Philanthropist, Author, Trustee, Donald Davis Living Trust Founder and President of the Don Davis Legacy Foundation, Managing Director of Groovesville Productions & Publishing LLC

Research and history have shown evidence that when women are in charge, everyone wins. There is a distinct female advantage that gives women the competitive edge. Women are likely to be more inclusive and transformational in their leadership style and ethos. They are more likely to mentor and role model. Countries do better when women lead. Communities do better when women lead. Companies do better when women lead. As a result, these women serve as aspirational markers to envision possibilities. Join us for this power session with leader Kiko Davis Snoddy, Trustee, Donald Davis Living Trust Founder and President of the Don Davis Legacy Foundation, Managing Director of Groovesville Productions & Publishing LLC, as she highlights her personal leadership journey and the leadership skills she believes are needed for success.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

PLENARY I - RISING ABOVE RESISTANCE: DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION FOR WOMEN IN TODAY'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Honorable Ida Chen, Judge, Court of Common Pleas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Marcelle Wilson Davis, DSL, Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, VCU Health System

Maria Morukian, MA, PCC, President and Founder, MSM Global Consulting, LLC

Janice Underwood, PhD, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

The national refocusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) was felt in workplaces and communities across the world. New efforts were launched, strategies were implemented, and commitments to lasting change were declared. In the months since, it appears the focus has drifted back to DEI status quo, as leaders committed to systemic change resist stagnation. DEI Executives featured in this discussion will provide their insights and share strategies for furthering mission-critical DEI initiatives in your own organizations.

PLENARY II - WHO'S GOT NEXT? PREPARING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF IMPACTFUL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Adria Córdova, President, Association for Latino Professionals, Philadelphia Chapter

Abby Credicott, Chair, Chamber RVA, HYPE (Helping Young Professionals Engage)

Ka'Myia Gunn, Student, Emory University School of Law

Ryann Lofchie, Chief Executive Officer, Viveki Consulting, LLC

With nearly five generations of employees in the workplace, it's time to make room for emerging talent to lead the vision forward. Today's next generation of women leaders are the largest in the workforce and have already amassed an outstanding record of accomplishment. Yet, the current agenda for women's leadership centers heavily on a historical model. With plenty of experience under their belts, the next generation of women leaders is looking for a modern take on the appraisal of their performance. This session will examine the changing values of young working women, how well we are preparing for the next generation of leaders from their perspectives, what advice they need, and what advice they can give.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

PLENARY III - POWER UP! PREPARING FOR THE ESSENTIAL NEEDS OF WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Chrissy Keeton, Founder & CEO, Control Y Consulting

Jennifer Y. Scott, Director, The Americas, Global Workplace Solutions Team, The Coca-Cola Company

Elizabeth Veliz, Assistant Vice President, Talent Management & Organizational Development, VCU Health System

Omega Wilson, Founder, Innovative Strategies Consulting, LLC

The work-life challenges women face were exacerbated by the pandemic, forcing new ways of working and living. As we move beyond these experiences, women's choices, expectations, and narratives about work are evolving—so too must their workplaces. This plenary session will highlight the organizational norms and expectations needed to construct workplaces that support the changing needs of women. Join us to explore tactics, strategies, and visions needed to create the conditions necessary for women to strive and thrive in the changing workforce.

CLOSING KEYNOTE - HOPE, LOVE, AND GRACE... REACHING HIGHER GROUND

Susanna Wu-Pong Calvert, PhD, Founder, and Executive Director of the Foundation for Family and Community Healing

The conference will come to a close creating a reflective space to turn your attention to higher ground. Prioritizing hope, love, and grace can serve as guiding principles to cultivate a growth mindset and transform leadership for yourself and others. Draw on the inspiration of our closing keynote speaker, Founder, and Executive Director of the Foundation for Family and Community Healing, Dr. Susanna Wu-Pong Calvert, to spark your own.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

FIRESIDE CHAT WITH CHARIS JONES

Charis Jones, Chief Executive and Chief Design Officer for fashion and lifestyle brand Sassy Jones

Jessica Noll, Director of Local Programming & Executive Producer & Co-Host, Virginia This Morning

Don't miss this interactive conversation with nationally and internationally acclaimed entrepreneur and industry leader Charis Jones, Chief Executive and Chief Design Officer for fashion and lifestyle brand Sassy Jones. Get up close and personal with our speaker as she shares the secrets of her success and strategies to expand your influence and impact. Her story reveals an aspirational model for going the distance to achieve your dreams. She is a true example of how commitment to your vision and willingness to risk it all pay off in the end. Hear the secrets behind her bright, bold, and unapologetic confidence and how you can elevate your leadership brand!



The background features a white central area surrounded by abstract geometric shapes. In the top right, there is a large orange circle partially overlapping a white circle. Below it is a teal circle. On the left, a thin orange line curves upwards. At the bottom left, there is a semi-circle filled with orange diagonal stripes. At the bottom right, there is a teal shape and a thin teal line curving upwards.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Kiko Davis Snoddy, Renowned Businesswoman, Philanthropist, Author

Kiko Davis Snoddy is a global entrepreneur, orator, advocate, and author. Kiko is the trustee of the Donald Davis Living Trust. The Davis Trust is the majority shareholder of First Independence Bank, the 7th largest African-American owned bank in the United States, controlled by the Davis Family. She is also the founder and president of the Don Davis Legacy Foundation, established in 2016 to perpetuate legacy-building efforts and initiatives that support the community at large. In addition, Davis Snoddy is the managing director of Groovesville Productions & Publishing LLC which controls the Grammy Award-winning music catalog of multiple gold and platinum-selling hit records. Prior to her role as foundation founder and president, Davis Snoddy worked as a real estate professional facilitating multiple development projects which includes building and rehabbing multiple affordable single-family residential properties and several commercial real estate projects throughout the country.

Kiko Davis Snoddy is diligent at maintaining a historically significant empire while forging yet another path all her own. Always creating opportunities, she is currently developing products for the beauty industry, along with collaborating with a production company to produce a documentary to be released early next year. Davis Snoddy recently co-authored her first book *A Widow's Resilience – Wisdom Keys for Moving Forward in Life and Love After Death Do Us Part*.

Her philanthropy extends to the support of other great causes and organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, Covenant House, United Negro College Fund, NAACP and many other organizations that serve the community.

A respected investor, highly sought national speaker, and passionate mentor, Davis Snoddy has received numerous accolades for her work including the Michigan Chronicle's Women of Excellence Award, the prestigious Ebony Magazine Power 100 honor, and Café Mocha's Salute THEM: Business Legacy Award. In late 2020, she completed the Women's Executive Leadership program at Yale School of Management. Recently, Davis Snoddy became a multi-year fellow selected by the Salzburg Global Seminar, a non-profit organization that challenges global leaders to shape a better world by fostering partnerships for creative, just and sustainable change. She continues to speak across the nation with a special focus on empowering women in business. Guided by faith and divine order, Davis Snoddy wed international manufacturer Anthony L. Snoddy in late 2019. The couple lends their combined philanthropic efforts by serving as Music Hall Board of Trustees and the Chairman's Circle. The Snoddy's are devoted parents to five children around whom their world revolves.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Susanna Wu-Pong Calvert, PhD, Founder and Convener for Mission & Vision, Foundation for Family and Community Healing

Over the past 25 years in higher education as a teacher, coach, and a faculty and student development professional, Calvert has taught and counseled hundreds of students and faculty members on interpersonal relationships and personal development. Calvert spent most of her life playing the game of creating a successful life... a PhD in pharmaceutical chemistry, tenure at a major university, a McMansion and 2 kids, only to realize that these things did not bring happiness. She learned over time that relationships are the most important thing in our lives, but few, including Calvert, are taught how to create rewarding relationships in our personal and professional lives; this was particularly evident to Calvert while observing many young people ill-equipped to manage emotional and relationship challenges. After decades fostering professional and personal development in students, staff, and faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Georgia, a degree in applied positive psychology (MAPP), and several coaching credentials, Calvert became inspired to bring mental, emotional, and relationship education to students and communities beyond higher education through this unique Foundation.

FEATURED SPEAKER

FIRESIDE CHAT WITH CHARIS JONES AN AFTER CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP CONVERSATION



Charis Jones, CEO & Chief Designer, Sassy Jones

Jones is the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Designer of Sassy Jones, a fashion and lifestyle brand. Her goal is to make style and fashion feel effortless for the woman who wants and does it all. Under Jones' leadership and vision, the brand has stunned the business and fashion worlds, having reached the 24th spot on the Inc. 5000 list and been named by Forbes as one of the top 25 small businesses that thrived during the pandemic. Jones has been recognized as the 2021 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, a Tory Burch Foundation Fellow, and as a winner of HSN's "The Big Find," and now is regularly featured on their retail platform. With impeccable style, flair, and innovation, Sassy Jones is on its way to becoming a household name and iconic fashion design house.



Jessica Noll, Director of Local Programming & Executive Producer & Co-Host, Virginia This Morning, WTVR CBS 6

Calling Richmond home for the last 20 years, Noll was raised on the beaches of the Carolina coast in Wilmington, NC. Today, she's the Director of Local Programming for WTVR – Richmond's CBS affiliate overseeing all station-generated, non-news-related content. This graduate of Penn State University is also the Director of Local Programming for CBS 6 and the Executive Producer and host of the daily talk and entertainment show, Virginia This Morning. Outside of the station, Noll relishes being a community contributor and loves enjoying the delicious local food and craft beverage scene!

PLENARY SPEAKERS



The Honorable Ida K. Chen, Judge, Court of Common Pleas, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chen was the first Asian female to serve as a judge in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She served as a Trial Attorney with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, to chair the Interpreter Services Committee of the Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial & Ethnic Fairness. Chen has served as an Adjunct Professor with Temple University School of Law and serves on many boards including Drexel University, Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues, Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition, and was the co-founder of the Asian American Women's Coalition.



Adria Córdova, President, Association for Latino Professionals for America, Philadelphia Chapter

Córdova serves as Chapter President of Association of Latino Professionals of America- Philadelphia Chapter, the oldest Latino professional organization in the United States, with the mission of empowering, connecting, and inspiring the next generation of Latino leaders. Córdova is a first-generation college graduate of the University of New Mexico and Anderson School of Management-UNM. Córdova is an Account Manager at General Mills; and is an advocate for diversity and outspoken ally for all marginalized communities, by serving as a member of the Familia Network Employee Resource Group, and as a leader on the Women in Sales Steering Team and Diversity Recruiter to ensure talent acquisition is inclusive and diverse.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Abby Credicott, ChamberRVA, Chair, HYPE (Helping Young Professionals Engage)

Credicott is a supervisor of Environmental Regulations leading the Environmental Justice team for Dominion Energy. Prior to joining the Environmental Justice team, Credicott spent 3 years as supervisor leading the Climate, Greenhouse Gases, and Corporate Metrics team for Dominion Energy, in which she was closely involved in the development of Dominion Energy's climate commitments of reaching Net Zero and associated emissions reductions. She currently serves as chair for ChamberRVA's HYPE young professional organization (Helping Young Professionals Engage), which is a hub for RVA young professionals to connect with each other, plug into [RVA's] community, and grow personally and professionally. Credicott holds a bachelor's degree in environmental science from the University of Virginia



Marcelle Wilson Davis, DSL Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, VCU Health System

Davis is an experienced DEI strategist assisting organizational leaders in the collection and analysis of workforce and recruiting metrics. Skilled in evaluating business landscapes and implementing projects and policies that enable organizations to integrate inclusion in business practices. Marcelle's background extends to academia, which includes both the design and facilitation of both MBA and PhD courses. Davis is a published author and is in several academic journals. She has been a keynote speaker and presenter at a variety of conferences, both nationally and internationally. Davis has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Georgia State University, an MBA from American Intercontinental University, and a Doctor of Strategic Leadership from Regent University.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Ka'Myia Gunn, Student, Emory University School of Law

Gunn graduated in 2019 from The College of William & Mary where she majored in Government. During her tenure, she actively served her campus and the greater Williamsburg community and gained a passion for making a difference through policy, law, music, and dance. Gunn served in a state-wide position for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, as a Praise and Worship leader at Divine World Changers Int'l Ministries, and as the Policy Manager and legislative assistant to former Virginia Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy. Gunn is currently attending the Emory University School of Law.



Chrissy Keeton, Founder & CEO, Control Y Consulting

As a leader in technology, Keeton has experienced the unique challenges that come with being a woman in an industry that lacks diversity. She believes in the business case for diversity and brings a practical approach to help companies accelerate their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals. Keeton is now the founder of Control Y, a consulting and coaching firm that helps companies create an environment where women leaders thrive. Keeton was the former Chief Customer Officer at SingleStone, a tech consulting company, where she advised Fortune 500 executives on digital and agile transformation, customer experience, and operations improvement.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Ryann Lofchie, Chief Executive Officer, Viveki Consulting, LLC

Ryann Lofchie has built a career around an unwavering belief in human potential. She recently launched her newest venture, Viveki Consulting, LCC serving as a strategic advisor to business owners looking to build heart-centered businesses. At the height of the pandemic, Lofchie worked to relaunch the Richmond region's Small Business Development Center assisting entrepreneurs to navigate the uncertain economic environment. Prior to this role, she served as the CEO of the Frontier Project, a boutique consultancy that focused on culture transformation and leadership development. Lofchie has a BA in Psychology from the University of Illinois, a Master's Degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Illinois, and an MBA from the University of Richmond.



Maria Morukian, MA, PCC, Founder & President, MSM Global Consulting, LLC

Morukian brings years of experience in consulting, training, and coaching leaders in their growth and development. She specializes in equity, diversity and inclusion, intercultural competence, resilience and well-being, organizational culture transformation, and leading innovative change. She hosts a podcast and blog, Culture Stew, which focuses on the multidimensionality of identity and best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the coming months she will be publishing her first book, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Trainers: Fostering DEI in the Workplace." Morukian earned a dual Bachelor's Degree from the University of Michigan in Organizational Studies and Spanish, and a Master's Degree from American University in International Communications.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Jennifer Y. Scott, Director, The Americas Global Workplace Solutions Team, The Coca-Cola Company

As director for the Americas for The Coca-Cola Company, Scott leads efforts to support more than 30 office locations, in more than 15 countries making sure employees can focus on products while her team provides safe and productive places to work. Previously, Scott developed workplace change programs for Fortune 500 companies across North America, served as executive director for the Hanover County Chamber of Commerce and taught as an adjunct at Virginia Commonwealth University. Scott has received the coveted Gold Award from the Virginia Public Relations Awards Program, and a slot on Richmond's Top 40 Under 40 Inside Business Leadership Awards, and is a graduate of Marshall University.



Janice Underwood, PhD, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth Of Virginia

Underwood was appointed by Governor Ralph Northam as the Commonwealth of Virginia's first cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). This position is also the first of its kind in the nation. As the Commonwealth's CDO, she is committed to addressing racial, ethnic, disability, gender-based, and other cultural inequities in formal and informal policies in Virginia state government. In her historical role, she provides leadership for building diversity-led innovation across local, state, and federal government. Her goal is to make Virginia an exemplar for the nation, regarding diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. Underwood has more than 25 years of public service, where she championed to make systemic inequity visible in the education sector as a university administrator, teacher educator, researcher, "national board certified teacher," and diversity trainer. As a national expert in the cultural contexts of public education, change management, and leadership, Underwood works to make public and private sectors more culturally relevant.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Elizabeth Veliz, Assistant Vice President, Talent Management & Organizational Development, VCU Health System

Veliz is a performance-driven, executive-level bilingual business professional with 25+ years of experience in utilizing a process-focused approach to organizational design, change and HR leadership for multi-billion dollar organizations while providing strategic business management insights to support executive decision making. Veliz has a proven track record of revitalizing organization culture and HR operations while successfully building a culture of employee engagement, overcoming resistance through employee involvement and implementing rapid change derived from data-driven metrics. Veliz is a strong, compassionate leader who values teamwork, kindness, professionalism and working in impactful organizations that have a strong purpose.



Ashley Williams, MS, C-IAYT Yoga Therapist & Founder, Mindful On Life and BareSOUL Yoga

The Founder of BareSOUL Yoga & Wellness, a community-based organization initially created to offer accessible yoga offerings, and Mindful on Life, which is a curriculum-based program dedicated to transforming the community through the practice of mindfulness education. Williams has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology degree from the University of Virginia and a Master's of Science degree in Yoga Therapy from Maryland University of Integrative Health. Williams is a Yoga Therapist and Mindfulness Educator with 12 years of experience in the fields of education, behavioral and mental health, and community programming in Richmond, VA, and surrounding areas.

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Omega W. Wilson, EdD, Founder, Innovative Strategies Consulting, LLC

Wilson is a leadership expert, speaker, trainer, coach, and author whose philosophy is simple: “Lead By Example”. Wilson is the Founder & CEO of Innovative Strategies Consulting, LLC where she serves as the Senior Leadership Development Coach. A John Maxwell certified coach, trainer, and speaker who provides coaching to school divisions, teachers, administrators, 1:1 life coaching, and courses for aspiring administrators and existing administrators. Wilson helps people, worldwide, create a leadership legacy within their own spheres of influence. She has appeared on CNN, NBC, ABC and CBS and has been featured in articles in The Richmond Times Dispatch, The Free Press, and The Progress Index



The background features a white central area surrounded by abstract shapes. In the top right, there is a large circle with diagonal orange hatching. In the bottom right, there is a teal shape with a wavy outline. In the bottom left, there is a teal circle with a smaller teal circle inside it. On the left side, there is a vertical orange bar and a thin orange line that curves upwards.

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The image features a white central area surrounded by abstract shapes in orange and teal. A large orange circle is at the top, and a teal circle with diagonal stripes is at the bottom left. A teal wavy line is on the right side. The text 'ABOUT THE INSTITUTE' is centered in the white area.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

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 Grace E. Harris, Ph.D., upon her retirement from the position of provost and vice president for academic affairs. Harris served the university for more than 40 years in the roles of faculty member, dean, vice provost, provost and vice president for academic affairs, and acting president, becoming the highest-ranking woman and highest-ranking African American in VCU's history. Following her retirement as provost, Harris served as a distinguished professor in the Center for Public Policy and led the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute.

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.



GRACE E. HARRIS

Grace E. Harris, Ph.D., graduated high school from Halifax Training School in 1950, where she was class valedictorian. Harris attended Hampton Institute, now Hampton University, and spent a semester at Grinnell College in 1952 as an exchange student. She was involved in a program designed to promote interracial understanding at both schools. At that time, she was one of five African Americans at Grinnell. Harris received her Bachelor of Science in sociology from Hampton Institute, graduating with highest honors. Originally denied admission to Richmond Professional Institute of the College of William & Mary (now VCU) in 1954 during Virginia's massive resistance, Harris attended Boston University in 1954-55. She would later return to Richmond and receive her Master of Social Work from RPI in 1960. She received Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in sociology from the University of Virginia in 1974 and 1975, respectively.

Beginning her career in 1955, Harris was a caseworker in Hampton, Va., in the Department of Public Welfare until 1957, and eventually a caseworker and supervisor in the Department of Welfare and Institutions in Richmond, Va. In 1963, she went on to become executive director of the Friends' Association for Children. She was also director of the Richmond Community Action Program. From 1967 to 1976, Harris served as an assistant professor in the VCU School of Social Work. During her last year as assistant professor in the school, she was director of student affairs. In 1976, she became an associate professor. Two years later, Harris was named associate dean of the School of Social Work, a role she maintained until 1980. In the year following, she was named Fellow in Academic Administration for the American Council on Education, which was an internship with president and vice president for academic affairs at VCU. In 1990, she was named vice provost for continuing studies and public service. In 1993, she moved on to become the first African American and first woman provost and vice president for academic affairs in VCU's history. In 1995 and 1998, she was named acting president of VCU.

Following her retirement from her position as provost and vice president for academic affairs in 1999, the VCU Board of Visitors established the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute to honor Harris's exemplary service to the university. Harris stepped down from her post as distinguished professor at the institute in December 2015. Active in community organizations in the Richmond area, Harris served on numerous boards, task forces and commissions. She was a founding board member of the Richmond Women's Bank and served on the advisory board of the Virginia Health Care Foundation and the Virginia Commission on Higher Education Appointments.

Harris also was vice chair of Gov. Mark Warner's transition team — Put Virginia First. She was also involved with the establishment of John B. Cary Elementary School.

Harris received many awards and honors for her professional and community contributions, including VCU's Presidential Medallion. She was cited for her leadership in establishing the first-ever, long-range strategic plan for VCU. The university also awarded her with the Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enrichment and the Riese-Mellon Award. Harris received honorary degrees from the College of William & Mary, the University of Richmond and Virginia Union University, and was recognized as Educator of the Year by the Richmond Chapter of the National Coalition of Black Women. In honor of Harris's longstanding leadership, service and contributions to VCU, a campus building, Grace E. Harris Hall, was dedicated in her honor in 2007. The Virginia General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution No. 513 in 2012, commending Grace Edmondson Harris. She received the John Jasper Trailblazer Award in 2014. Harris was also inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa, a national leadership honor society in 2014, joining other leadership luminaries, including Margaret Thatcher, Jimmy Carter, Shirley Chisholm, George H.W. Bush, Hillary Rodham Clinton and Tim Kaine. In 2015, Harris received an honorary doctorate from the College of William & Mary. In addition, Harris was inducted into Richmond Times-Dispatch Person of the Year Hall of Fame for lifetime achievements in the region. Harris is survived by her husband, James "Dick" Harris and their two children who continue her legacy — one as a social worker and the other through employment at VCU. Harris has one grandson, of whom she was most proud. He is an alum of William & Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University.





VCU

The Grace E. Harris
Leadership Institute

A institute in the
L. Douglas Wilder School of
Government & Public Affairs

2022 HIGHER GROUND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The HIGHER Ground Women's Leadership Development Program is a five month leadership development experience for current and emerging women leaders who are committed to investing in themselves and their organizations. The program is designed to benefit women at all career levels in public, private, nonprofit, and entrepreneurial positions. Training opportunities promote personal and professional growth through leadership development, education, coaching, and networking. By engaging in intellectual and experiential workshops, participants learn key principles aimed at enhancing their leadership styles to help them successfully leverage opportunities for advancement.

2022 PROGRAM DATES

FEBRUARY 3-4 | MARCH 3-4 | APRIL 7-8

MAY 5-6 | JUNE 2-3 | JUNE 17

NOVEMBER 2022 | 15TH ANNUAL HIGHER GROUND
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

APPLY TODAY!

APPLICATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 15, 2021 FOR

MORE INFORMATION:

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AS A PARTICIPANT, YOU WILL:

- Investigate your leadership style through assessment instruments and explore aspects of personality and behavior in areas such as problem solving, decision-making and communication styles to increase self-awareness
- Enhance your self-awareness of personal leadership styles and strengths
- Expand your experiential and intellectual analysis of the process of leading through a series of intensive and interactive sessions
- Develop skills and methods to engage and understand leadership
- Increase your skills and abilities to gather and utilize feedback
- Gain greater effectiveness in communication and collaboration
- Obtain broader insights into processes of leading in diverse arenas
- Create a clear vision for self and organization
- Strengthen your performance capabilities as agents of change
- Grow in confidence and comfort in leadership roles



HIGHER Ground applies the leadership principles of the Institute and is based on contemporary research and practice in leadership. HIGHER Ground has been extremely successful in addressing the following priorities since its inception in 2001:

Reflective Practice. Participants receive tools to uncover their own leadership styles and improve leadership skills, behaviors, competencies, and practices through personal development and feedback. Focusing on self-discovery, participants complete a series of intensive leadership assessments, including personality style inventories and a comprehensive 360-degree feedback survey.

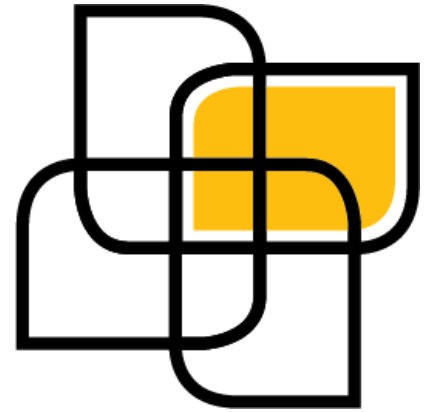
Collaborative Leadership. Participants are guided through a broad understanding of the nature and scope of shared leadership processes and will learn effective strategies for creating and managing high-performance work teams in their organizations.

Self-Identification as a Leader & Change Agent. Participants will receive tools to help them become more effective and impactful in their overall leadership abilities. They will learn to identify their unique strengths and confidently utilize them in leading. They are equipped with tools to more effectively communicate, collaborate and manage conflicts among diverse groups.

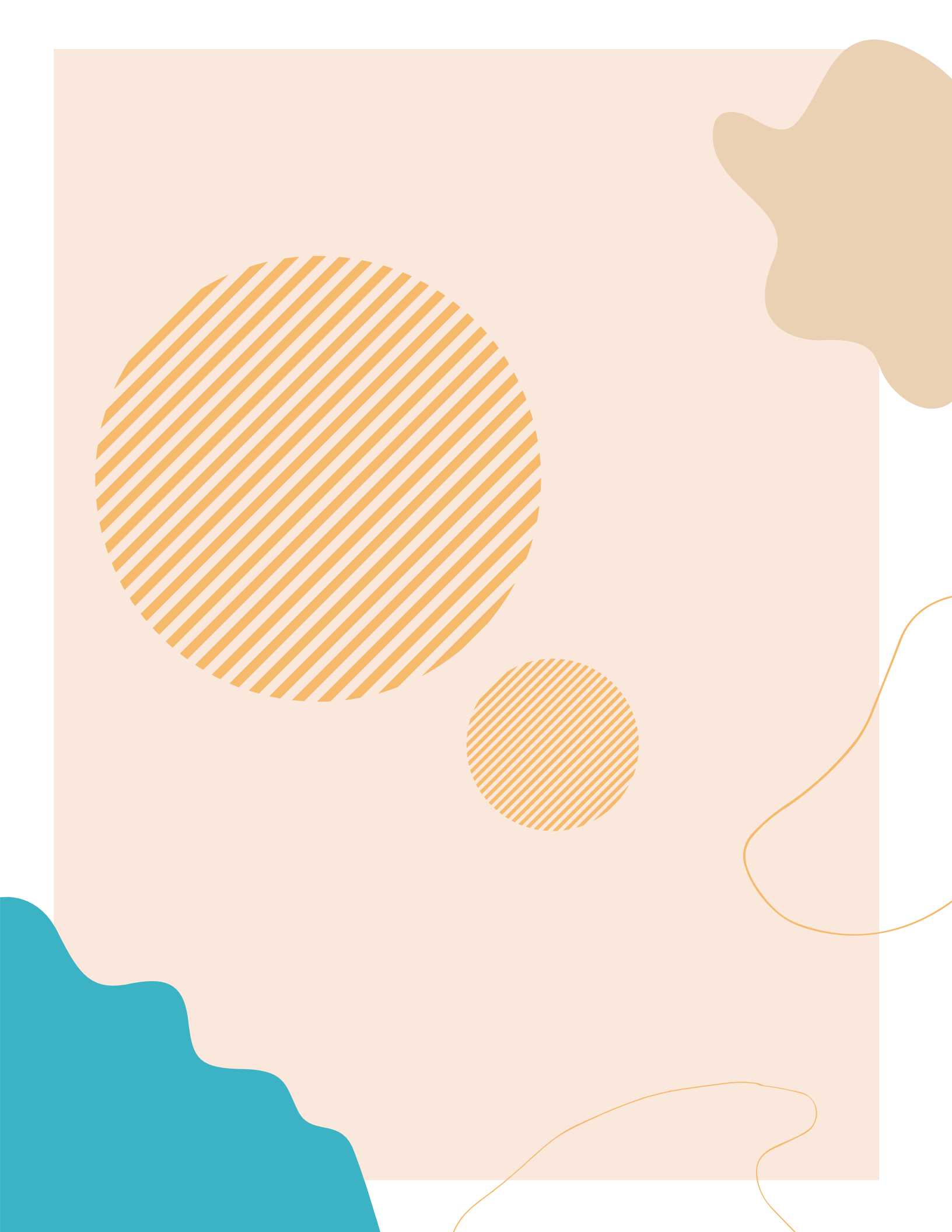
Authenticity & Well Being. Participants explore their ability to connect authentically with the thoughts and feelings of themselves and of others, in order to motivate and inspire movement toward desired outcomes and influence positive well-being.

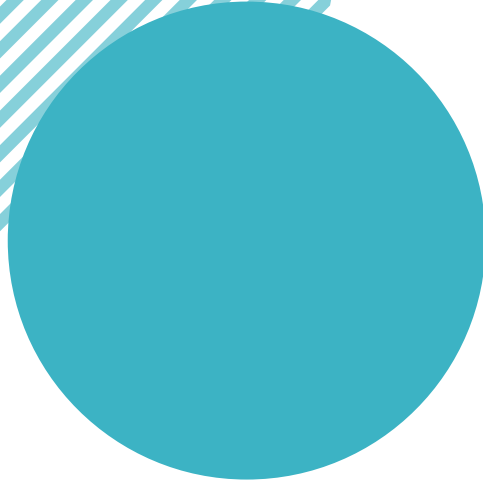
Tuition. The \$1800.00 participant fee covers all program costs including all leadership assessments, an overnight retreat, registration for the 2022 Annual Higher Ground Women's Leadership Conference, and meals on program days. Participants qualify for 8 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for full program participation. Tuition may be paid by either a sponsoring organization or the individual. Participants are responsible for securing their own transportation to program sessions.

NOTES



VCU The Grace E. Harris
Leadership Institute





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