

# illuminate

A glowing lightbulb is the central focus, containing a small tree with yellow and green leaves. The lightbulb is illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The background is a soft, teal gradient. The lightbulb sits on a dark, textured surface that looks like moss or soil.

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**editor's  
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**VANDERBILT**  
People, Culture and Belonging

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# editor's reflections

This time of year, holds a special place in my heart, and I hope it does for you as well. At Vanderbilt, the energy is undeniable—from our collegiate sports triumphs to faculty reaching remarkable milestones, and staff being celebrated for their innovation and humanity. It's a season to reflect on the meaningful moments that connect us and make this community extraordinary.

As I approach nearly a year at Vanderbilt, I find myself reflecting deeply on the moments that have shaped this journey. Growing up on a rural farm, I learned the value of pausing to appreciate life's defining markers—moments of hard work rewarded, connections forged and the beauty of shared purpose. Walking onto Vanderbilt's stunning campus for the first time stirred that same sense of awe and possibility, reminding me of the natural beauty of the farm where I grew up.

## ***What moments have defined your time at Vanderbilt?***

Perhaps it was the quiet satisfaction of solving a challenging problem, the joy of seeing a colleague thrive or the pride of helping a student succeed. These moments are not just memories; they're stepping stones—powerful markers of our shared mission and the bright future we're building together.

Gratitude for these moments is transformative. It's not just a fleeting sentiment—it's a force for innovation and progress. True innovation isn't just about groundbreaking ideas or technology; it's about people. People who feel valued, connected and inspired create change that resonates far beyond the present. When we take the time to recognize the contributions of those around us, we foster an environment where creativity thrives and collaboration flourishes.

Gratitude also strengthens resilience. Vanderbilt celebrates gratitude with Winter Break. Winter break is more than a pause—it's an opportunity to reset, reflect and celebrate. It's a chance to honor the collective effort that makes Vanderbilt a place of excellence and possibility while preparing ourselves for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

To celebrate these meaningful experiences, Vanderbilt has launched the *Moments That Matter* campaign. This initiative invites each of us to share the personal or professional moments that have made a lasting impact. Whether it's a heartfelt thank-you to a colleague, a story of triumph, or a moment of unexpected joy, your contributions help weave the rich tapestry of our community. I encourage you to visit the [Moments That Matter](#) website and share your story.

As we step into the new year, let's carry forward a spirit of gratitude—celebrating the connections that unite us, the creativity that energizes us, and the dedication that elevates our work to new heights.

Each of you brings Vanderbilt's mission to life, whether by directly supporting students or empowering those who do. Your contributions matter deeply, and they are what make our shared journey so remarkable. Together, we are shaping Vanderbilt into a place where every person feels seen, valued, and inspired to bring their best.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community. Wishing you a restful and joyful winter break filled with moments that truly matter.

**It's Our Moment.**

*Sydney*



# staff spotlight

## Kelly Morgan, Executive Coordinator College of Arts & Sciences

Kelly works as Executive Coordinator for the Dean in the College of Arts & Science. In addition to serving as primary support for the Ginny & Conner Searcy Dean of the College of Arts & Science and supporting all faculty governance, she has now taken on all major event planning on behalf of the Dean's Office. She works with great enthusiasm and care for the essential details to make all their events even better. Kelly recently oversaw hiring multiple student workers to support and enhance our operational efficiency.



[Submit a nomination for a staff member or team for our Staff Spotlight](#)

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## New Name, Same Benefits

Virgin Pulse—who powers your wellbeing program—is becoming Personify Health on **January 1, 2025**.

### What does this mean for you?

**Seamless transition:** Your programs, account history and all the features you love will continue to be available. Your points, as well as your PulseCash, will be automatically transferred to your new Personify Health account.

**Vibrant new look and feel:** The Virgin Pulse logo, colors and fonts will be replaced with the fun new Personify Health brand.

**Same username and password:** Starting December 9, your Virgin Pulse sign-in link will redirect to a new Personify Health web address. You'll be asked to sign back in on the web and on your app using the same username and password you have now.

**New mobile app logo:** Starting December 16, the app name will change to Personify Health and the icon change to our new brand mark, Percy.

TIP: Enable biometric sign-in on the mobile app for increased security and quick access to your account and bookmark the new website once you're redirected! To enable biometric sign-in:

- Open your Virgin Pulse mobile app, and tap on More
- Go into Settings
- Locate Biometric-Sign in and toggle it On



# Vanderbilt Voyage Team wins Innovation Excellence Award

Chancellor Daniel Diermeier and Vice Chancellor of People, Culture and Belonging Sydney Savion presented awards at the 2024 Fall Staff Assembly to a mix of inspiring individuals and teams who have made significant contributions through their community engagement, innovation and leadership.

## Innovation Excellence Award

The Innovation Excellence Award is given to a staff member, or staff group or team, for excellence in innovation demonstrated by implementing or attempting a new system or approach that has had a meaningful and significant impact on a process, program or initiative at Vanderbilt. This year's award was presented to members of the team from People, Culture and Belonging who created and launched the new onboarding experience, Vanderbilt Voyage.



Chancellor Daniel Diermeier (far left) and Vice Chancellor of People, Culture and Belonging Sydney Savion (far right) pose with award winners (left to right) Jonathan Pate, Whitney Coppinger, Joanna Echols, Hannah Johnson and Chance Ryon. (Harrison McClary / Vanderbilt University)

Congratulations Vanderbilt Voyage Team! From the nomination: “Vanderbilt Voyage is transforming the experience of joining Vanderbilt for your work life. This team designed, created and delivered this new orientation experience. Vanderbilt Voyage is not just an hour or a day of orientation. It’s a yearlong blueprint for an employee’s first year that fosters connections with Vanderbilt’s people and culture. It offers new employees an immersive journey into the university’s mission, vision, core values, history and traditions. The program stands out for its focus on ‘moments that matter’—meaningful experiences that foster a sense of purpose, belonging and growth.”

## Nominations for Spring 2025 Staff Assembly

Look for nominations for Spring 2025 Staff Assembly to open in March.

Here is how you nominate:

1. Find the award and click the nomination link
2. Enter your contact information
3. Provide a detailed explanation of why the person you are nominating deserves this award.

# Become a certified Dore-to-Dore Navigator.

Vanderbilt launched an exciting new Facilitator Training Program in partnership with the [Association for Talent Development \(ATD\)](#) in September with an inaugural cohort and invites you to apply for the second cohort. This comprehensive program will equip you with the skills and knowledge to lead engaging, effective training sessions that support the professional development of your colleagues.

As a Dore-to-Dore Navigator, you will:

- **Become a Champion of Our Values:** master our core values and spread them with passion and precision.
- **Foster Flexibility and Support:** deliver tailored learning solutions, providing immediate, expert support where it's needed.
- **Support Cost-Effectiveness:** train our own staff, avoid costly external training and create a ripple effect of knowledge and growth.
- **Develop Leadership in Action:** build essential leadership skills, grow while nurturing others' potential.
- **Be part of a community of facilitators:** connect with other trainers to share best practices, resources and more.
- **Earn a Prestigious Certification:** this certification is a valuable asset that enhances career prospects and boosts engagement.

This is a unique chance to enhance your professional capabilities, make a meaningful difference, and become a key part of Vanderbilt's premier training initiatives. Space is limited, so [apply today](#).

## What's in it for You? Navigator Incentives, Benefits and Support:

- Experience comprehensive training on advanced facilitation techniques, adult learning principles, curriculum development, and presentation skills.
- Earn the globally respected Training & Facilitation Certificate.
- Receive a digital badge—a symbol of achievement and motivation.
- Accumulate continuing education credits.
- Hone communication and presentation skills, essential for leadership.
- Enjoy flexible scheduling to balance current responsibilities.
- Connect with a dynamic network of passionate trainers.

Don't miss this chance to elevate your skills, make a lasting impact, and position yourself for success. Apply to become a Dore-to-Dore Navigator today! We only have five more spots available so apply today!

## To be eligible for the Dore-to-Dore Navigator program you must:

1. Submit a [Dore-to-Dore Navigator application](#)
2. Maintain satisfactory employment status.
3. Worked at Vanderbilt for a minimum of one year.
4. Discuss this opportunity with your supervisor and maintain their support.
5. Have the availability and willingness to attend three days of in person training on Feb. 11th, 12th and 13th from 8am – 5pm on campus. Lunch will be provided.
6. Complete the Vanderbilt Voyage Train-the-Trainer course (date to be determined).
7. Participate in the facilitation of Vanderbilt Voyage up to two times per quarter to maintain Navigator compliance.

# We want to hear from you!

## PCB launches employee appreciation and professional development survey, chance to win Vanderbilt swag

Over the past nine months, People, Culture and Belonging (PCB) has been on an extensive listening journey, gathering insights from over 150 engagements and using data to shape a transformative path forward for the division at Vanderbilt University

### Shifting to a Human-Centered Approach

As we continue our transformation, PCB is adopting a human-centric model that puts your experiences and preferences at the heart of staff appreciation and professional development. We're moving away from traditional HR practices to embrace what matters most to you.



### Help Shape the Future of Employee Appreciation and Development

We know that post-pandemic appreciation and learning are different. We want to hear from you—what makes you feel valued? Are there events you miss, or would you prefer Vanderbilt swag as a service award? Now's your chance to share your thoughts.



Take 5 minutes to complete our brief, anonymous survey and let your voice shape future appreciation initiatives and learning opportunities at Vanderbilt. You can also share your insights via email at [PCB@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:PCB@vanderbilt.edu).

To thank you for your time, you can enter a drawing for a \$75 Vanderbilt swag bag after completing the survey.

Your feedback matters—help us shape the future at Vanderbilt!



[Take the Survey](#)

# the health & wellbeing corner

## *Join Staff-Letics 3vs3 Basketball*

Attention all basketball fans! Vanderbilt University's Staff-Letics program is back with a new addition: the 3 vs 3 Basketball League! Games will run from Jan. 15 to Feb. 26. This is your chance to shoot hoops, bond with colleagues and stay active in the new year.

### League Specs

[Sign-up online](#), **registration closes Jan. 10**. Form a team with your colleagues or sign-up solo, and we'll match you with teammates. Teams can be made up of any staff members from across the university, regardless of their division or department. Everyone is welcome, regardless of skill level! Check out the 3v3 rules.

The league runs every Wednesday from **Jan. 15 to Feb. 26**, with games scheduled between **11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m.**, and tip-off at **noon**. All games will be played in the VU Recreation & Wellness Center. Staff will have access to locker rooms to change.

Staff with Vanderbilt parking permits can park along Children's Way behind the Recreation and Wellness Center, West Garage on 25th Avenue, and 25th Avenue Garage. Paid parking is available long Children's Way behind the Recreation and Wellness Center, West Garage on 25th Avenue, and 25th Avenue Garage.

### Volunteers Needed

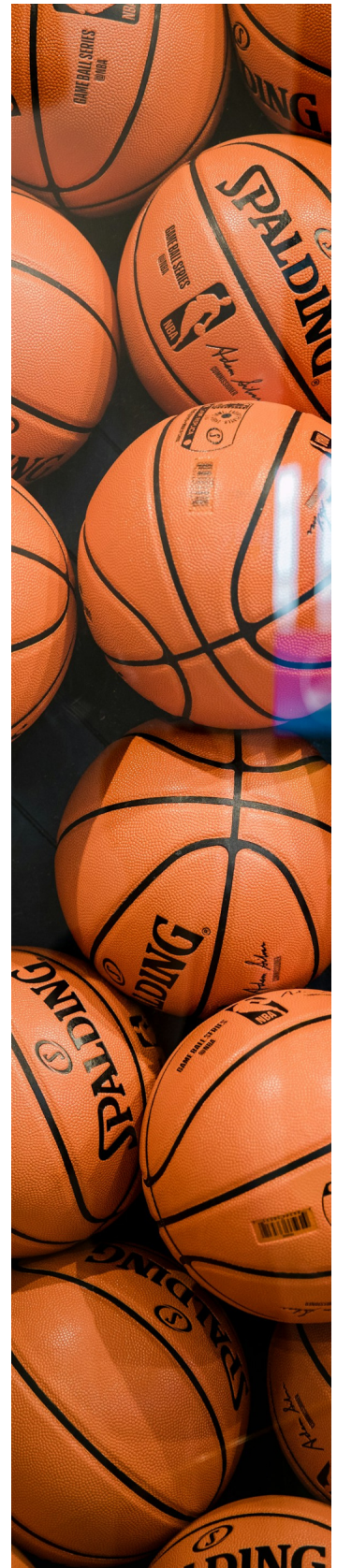
Want to be part of the action without stepping onto the court? We need volunteers to help make the league a success. Opportunities include assisting keeping score and ensuring everything runs smoothly. Volunteering is a great way to support your colleagues, meet new people and enjoy the energy of Staff-Letics.

### Upcoming Staff-letics Events

Coming in 2025, we'll have kickball and cornhole. Have a sport or activity in mind that you'd love to see? Share your ideas with us through [our submission form](#).

### Intramurals

Looking for something a little more competitive? Staff who are members of the rec center can also participate in intramurals. Check out the schedule for the fall and spring semesters





# the health & wellbeing corner

## *6 Strategies to Help Heal from Burnout*

There are many ways to prevent burnout, and many of them focus on various types of self-care. However, while self-care is crucial in a mentally healthy lifestyle, it's important to note that not all burnout is within your control. It's important to focus on things you can change but remember that your burnout may be caused by external factors, and that the best you can do is make sure that you're treating yourself well. The more responsibilities you have, the more crucial it is to re-energize and recharge so you can operate at optimal levels.

Here are some self-care strategies to help you cope with and recover from burnout:

1. Align your thoughts with who you desire to be and how you desire to behave. Living in tandem with your values can help you override some of the disempowering feelings that can come from burnout.
2. Operate from a place of mindfulness. This practice can help you stop and notice what you may not have noticed before and experience your life to the fullest.
3. Pay attention to your physical wellness. Practices like stretching your body throughout the day, taking a walk (research shows that even a 10-minute walk can boost your mood for up to two hours), and resting when you're feeling rundown can help rejuvenate you.
4. Create something. Assemble crossword puzzles or conduct word searches, or adult coloring books, or arts and crafts. Creating space for non-work related activities can increase internal satisfaction.
5. Talk with a close friend. This can help you forget about your worries and receive support from someone who really gets you.
6. Speak with a mental health professional about your unique emotional challenges and needs. It can be tough to process the difficult emotions you're experiencing on your own. A trained professional can create a safe space to identify your blind spots and develop an action plan toward a more balanced life. Get started with Lyra, your mental health benefit, [here](#).

# the health & wellbeing corner

*Prioritize & Identify Savings Goals - Financial Wellness*



Click to learn about Financial Wellness from Fidelity



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
People, Culture and Belonging

Lyra

JOIN US FOR

## Managing Mental Health During the Holidays

Wellbeing Workshop

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

1P to 2P CST

The holiday season doesn't always feel joyful. Sometimes, it's hard – especially when everyone else seems to be celebrating. The truth is there's no right or wrong way to feel during the holidays. Many people have mixed emotions during this time of year.

In this workshop, you'll learn how to make the most of this holiday season, whatever that means for you. We'll discuss research-backed strategies for setting expectations and protecting your mental health during common holiday stress – including how to find joy, navigate conflict, and make the most of the moments that matter.



# the health & wellbeing corner

## *The Golden Dores Explore Vanderbilt's Vibrant Arboretum Campus*

As the crisp autumn air signals the change of seasons, the Golden Dores, one of Vanderbilt's 15 thriving Employee Affinity Groups, recently embarked on an enchanting tree walk around the university's picturesque arboretum grounds.

Led by Brandon Hulette, Grants Manager at the Heard Libraries, the event offered the Golden Dores a unique opportunity to learn about the history and significance of Vanderbilt's renowned arboretum status. Participants gained a deeper appreciation for the campus's diverse array of award-winning trees, including the revered Centennial trees that have stood as anchors since the time of the university's founding.

The tree walk commenced at the Heard Library lawn, where the group immersed themselves in the spectacle of Vanderbilt's autumn landscape. As they strolled towards 21st Avenue, Edgehill, and the Peabody Campus, Hulette delighted them with captivating stories about the university's history and the remarkable trees that adorn the grounds, some for over a hundred years.

The vibrant hues of the changing leaves painted a breathtaking backdrop, as Hulette shared insights into the different species and their unique characteristics. Vanderbilt's arboretum status is a testament to the university's commitment to preserving and celebrating its rich natural heritage, with over 190 species of trees across the 330-acre campus.

The Golden Dores' tree walk exemplifies the vital role that Employee Affinity Groups play in fostering a culture of belonging at Vanderbilt. As one of 15 such groups, the Golden Dores provide a platform for faculty and staff to connect, build community, and actively contribute to the university's values and mission.

These types of events not only deepen the Vanderbilt experience, but also serve as a testament to the institution's dedication to creating an inclusive environment where all community members can thrive. By supporting and engaging with Employee Affinity Groups, Vanderbilt continues to cultivate a vibrant and connected campus landscape, where the true spirit of the arboretum is celebrated year-round.

For more information on how you can become a part of one of our EAGs, contact [eag@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:eag@vanderbilt.edu) or contact Lydell Francis ([lydell.francis@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lydell.francis@vanderbilt.edu)).



# upcoming events & launches

## ■ **Vanderbilt unlocks the Future of Workplace AI**

Are you ready to dive into the world of generative AI with Vanderbilt University? In today's rapidly evolving tech landscape, staying on top of AI trends and advancements is imperative. That's why Vanderbilt has launched the Futures Learning Hub and partnered with LinkedIn Learning, OpenSesame and Coursera to offer groundbreaking generative AI courses and specializations designed by world-renowned Vanderbilt faculty.

Through in-depth employer needs assessments and market research, Vanderbilt identified key industry, organizational, and workforce skill gaps, prompting us to expand and diversify our offerings to meet these essential high-demand industry needs. By enrolling in our courses, you too can stay ahead of the curve and take your generative AI skills to the next level! Visit our website to discover how our courses will help you maximize productivity, allowing personal growth and professional advancement.

New Courses:

Integrating Generative AI into Project Management | Bennett Landman

Qualitative Methods for Quantitative People (with Gen AI) | Bennett Landman

Generative AI & Model Selection | Jesse Spencer-Smith

History & Relevance of the Rise of Gen AI | Jesse Spencer-Smith

From Data to Decisions: Getting Started with Gen AI | Will Doyle

From Data to Decisions: Finding Patterns with AI | Will Doyle

From Data to Decisions: Making Predictions with AI | Will Doyle

Accelerate Your Learning with ChatGPT | Dr. Jules White

Generative AI for Leaders | Dr. Jules White

Vanderbilt University and Coursera

# PIONEERING AI EDUCATION

Explore how 500,000+ learners worldwide are transforming their careers with our courses.

Explore Our Courses

Explore Our Courses

# upcoming events & launches

## ■ Introducing Futures Learning Hub Upgrades

We heard you loud and clear: searching for learning resources in Oracle needed a makeover. Sometimes it felt like finding a needle in a haystack, right? Well, we've been hard at work to change that!

### Introducing the brand-new Learning Catalog!

As the **first phase** of our mission to enhance your learning journey, we've combined the **Search** and **Browse** features into one seamless hub—the Learning Catalog. This isn't just a merger; it's a complete revamp to make your experience smoother and more enjoyable.

But guess what? We're just getting started! We know there's still room to grow, and we're committed to continuously improving searchability in Oracle to make your learning adventures even better.

### What's in it for you?

**Effortless Searching:** Our improved search functionality helps you find exactly what you need, faster than ever before.

**Personalized Recommendations:** Access curated and recommended experiences tailored just for you. It's like having a personal learning concierge!

**User-Friendly Interface:** Navigate with ease through an intuitive design that makes exploring new content a breeze.

**One-Stop Learning Hub:** No more jumping between tabs or getting lost in menus. Everything you need is now in one magical place!

We believe learning should be an exciting adventure, not a complicated quest. With the new Learning Catalog, you're set to unlock knowledge without the hassle. Stay tuned for more enhancements as we continue to make Oracle even better for you!

## *Futures Learning Hub Contest Winner*

Congratulations to November's winner, Lori Dillingham for the completion of Unlocking Authentic Communication in a Culturally-Diverse Workplace.

[Explore Futures Learning Hub](#)

# vandy takes a break

## the power of pause: how taking a break sparks innovation

Whitney Coppinger

Assistant Director, Communication Innovation Strategist

At Vanderbilt, we are deeply grateful for winter break, a time to pause, recharge and reconnect with what matters most. This intentional downtime allows staff to step away from the demands of daily work, fostering rest and renewal that are essential for creativity, well-being and overall productivity. It's an opportunity to spend quality time with loved ones, reflect on accomplishments from the year and set intentions for the year ahead. By prioritizing this period of rest, Vanderbilt underscores its commitment to the holistic well-being of its staff, recognizing that a rejuvenated team is key to driving innovation and impact in the new year.

Pausing allows our brains to shift gears and engage in a process known as "incubation." During breaks, especially extended ones, our minds continue to work on problems in the background, making connections we might not have consciously considered. This is why some of our best ideas often come while we're on a walk, taking a shower or simply daydreaming. Albert Einstein famously described how moments of quiet reflection inspired his theories about the universe. These unstructured periods allow our brains to wander freely, often leading to creative breakthroughs that would have been elusive during focused effort.

Breaks also provide opportunities to explore new perspectives. When we step away from our regular routines, we're more likely to engage in activities or environments that stimulate fresh ideas. Traveling to a new place, spending time in nature or even pursuing a hobby can lead to unexpected insights. For instance, Steve Jobs' study of calligraphy during a break from college influenced the elegant typography of Apple's early computers—a defining feature of the brand's identity. These experiences help us see problems through a different lens and uncover solutions that wouldn't be apparent within the confines of our daily work.

Taking a pause is not just about rest—it's about creating space for growth. By prioritizing well-being and embracing moments of reflection, individuals and organizations can foster a culture where innovation thrives. In recognizing the power of pause, we unlock the potential to achieve not only greater productivity but also deeper creativity and impact.



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