



illuminate



VANDERBILT
People, Culture and Belonging

Vol 2.6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S REFLECTION	03
STAFF SPOTLIGHT	04
NON-DEGREE PROGRAM BENEFIT	05
UPCOMING EVENTS AND LAUNCHES	06
FUTURES LEARNING HUB UPDATES	10
HEALTH AND WELLBEING	14
SHAPING SUCCESS AT WORK: GOALS, GROWTH AND GUIDANCE	16

EDITOR'S REFLECTION

A Summer of Progress and Purpose

As summer's golden arc begins its descent, I find myself reflecting not only on the sunlit days behind us, but on the enduring light we've cast forward together. This season hasn't been just a time of initiatives. It has been a threshold. A moment when intention turned into action, and our shared commitment to you, the Vanderbilt staff, became something tangible, measurable, and lasting.

Through Project Polaris, we laid the foundation for a future-ready Vanderbilt. Our new skills-based job architecture doesn't simply clarify roles or chart career pathways. It strengthens the connection between your individual growth and the university's mission. It is a framework that supports not just jobs, but the dignity and possibility of the work you do.

On August 1, we will launch a reimagined performance management program, grounded in a new philosophy and policy and delivered through the Culture Amp platform. It is more than a process. It is a meaningful, ongoing dialogue that helps you reflect, grow, and stay

aligned with what matters most. At its heart are our core values: belonging, self-direction, collaboration, and growth.

This shift moves us beyond box-checking toward unlocking potential because when people Dare to Grow, when they are seen, supported, and stretched, the university flourishes.

And now, as the Talent Marketplace moves from beta to broader use, you will have even more tools to shape your own path. Powered by AI and rooted in the skills-based architecture, it allows you to explore opportunities, assess your strengths, and imagine what is next not just in your career, but in your calling.

None of these efforts stand alone. They are part of a larger transformation, a cultural shift. One that reflects our deep belief in your potential and our responsibility to help unlock it.

It's easy to miss change while it's happening. But when we pause and look back, the progress and purpose become clear and so does the future we're shaping together.

It's Our Moment.

Sydney

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Celebrating the excellence of Vanderbilt staff.



Marcy Pedzwater
Senior Instructional Designer
Office of Education Design and Development

Marcy has been a wonderful mentor. She has truly made an effort to support my professional development and fostered a safe and collaborative team culture. In addition to that, she's the type of person who would work long hours to produce high-quality courses. She cares about the well-being of her employees and peers. Her dedication, kindness, and pursuit of excellence have made such a positive impact at our office.

Submit a nomination for a staff member or team for our Staff Spotlight

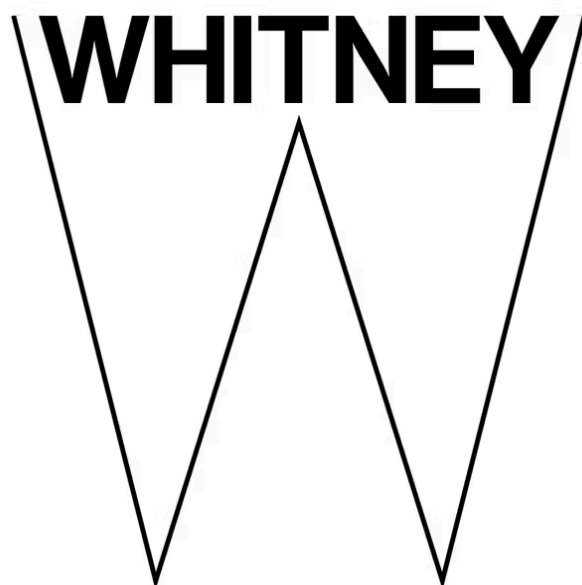


Did You Know?

The Whitney Museum

Exciting New Perk: With the opening of our campus in NYC, we're excited to announce the first (of hopefully many) partnerships. Vanderbilt employees can now receive free admission to the [Whitney Museum](#) in NYC. Definitely something to see if you ever travel to NYC.

Check out our [perks page](#) on how to get your tickets!



NEW EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT BENEFIT!

Vanderbilt Announces Two New Education Assistance Programs

Beginning today (July 23), eligible full-time staff and faculty who have completed three consecutive months of service are able to take advantage of two new education benefit programs designed to help you grow professionally and personally.

Programs Now Available through EdAssist

1. Certificate and Non-Degree Program

Receive up to \$5,250 per year for a wide range of professional development opportunities, including:

- Certifications & Licensures
- Bootcamps & Individual Courses
- CEUs & Prep Courses
- For-credit and Non-credit Training

Reimbursement Process: Submit your invoice or receipt once registered and receive reimbursement via payroll. No need to wait until you've completed your program!

Success Criteria: Completion with a C- or better, pass, or equivalent credential (e.g., badge, CEU)

Note: Textbooks are not covered

2. English Language Learning Program and Financial Literacy Courses

In addition to the Non-Degree program, we're launching offerings for English Language Learning and Financial Literacy programming through EnGen. These exciting opportunities are designed to support you in developing your communication and money skills while growing your career.

- Same eligibility as the Non-Degree program
- Shared annual cap of \$5,250 across both programs

Why this matters

Investing in your development matters because it helps you advance your career by building skills that support growth in your current role or prepare you for future opportunities. It also enhances your resume with valuable credentials that set you apart. Best of all, you can learn on your own terms by choosing the learning path that aligns with your goals and fits your schedule.

More information

To learn more about these new education benefit programs, including eligibility details and how to get started, visit [vu.edu/benefits](https://vanderbilt.edu/benefits). There, you'll find comprehensive information, FAQs, and resources to help you take full advantage of this opportunity.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND LAUNCHES

Coming Soon: Total Rewards Statements

Coming in August, we are excited to offer total reward statements to give our staff a clear, personalized view of the full value of their employment. These statements go beyond base pay to show the complete picture of each individual's total compensation, highlighting benefits, retirement contributions, time off, and more.

By offering this comprehensive snapshot, we aim to increase transparency, support financial awareness, and help employees better understand and appreciate the many ways Vanderbilt invests in their wellbeing and success.

New University-Wide Policy Process and Portal

We are excited to announce the rollout of a new university-wide policy process and portal. This initiative aims to improve the management and accessibility of policies across the institution, located by selecting "Policy Portal" on the University Policy Office website.

Key features of the new policy process and portal include:

- **Centralized policy portal:** All university policies will be housed in a single, searchable online repository for easy access.
- **Streamlined policy development:** A standardized policy development and approval workflow will ensure policies are created and updated consistently.
- **Improved transparency:** The new process will increase visibility into policy changes and provide clear communication channels.
- **Enhanced compliance:** The repository and process will help ensure policies are up-to-date and aligned with relevant laws and regulations.

This initiative is supported by a new University Policy Office within Compliance Services for the Office of General Counsel, available to answer questions or provide guidance.

Please reach out to Sophia Saison, Assistant Director to the University Policy Office if you have any questions or feedback at Sophia.saison@vanderbilt.edu.

VUIT Learning Collective - August & September Sessions

Sizzlin' Systems: Performance with a Breeze: Optimizing Under the Sun with Alex Cadreche, Chris Lacher, and Kevin Sanderson

Friday, August 1 / 10:00 - 11:00am

Get ready to fire up your systems and chill out with our summer-themed session focused on advanced performance optimization for Windows desktops! Whether your PC is dragging like flip-flops in the sand or heating up faster than your car seat in August, we've got the tools and tips to help you clean up, tune up, and power up.

[Register Here](#)

PowerPoint 101 with Dylan Platz

Friday, September 5 / 10:00 - 11:00am

This beginner-friendly course introduces the essentials of Microsoft PowerPoint. Participants will learn how to create visually engaging slides, apply consistent formatting, insert multimedia, and deliver presentations with confidence. Whether you're new to PowerPoint or looking to sharpen your skills, this session will help you build a strong foundation for effective communication.

[Register Here](#)

Project Polaris Launched: Attend a Training Session!

To prepare for the launch of the skills-based job architecture, all staff members are encouraged to attend one of the following virtual training sessions, which will help you understand the job architecture and how it supports your development. The sessions will be recorded if you are unable to attend live. Please click on your preferred option below to register for the training.

Introduction to the Skills-Based Job Architecture

- [Monday, Aug. 4 | 4 - 5 p.m.](#)
- [Thursday, Aug. 7 | 9 - 10 a.m.](#)
- [Thursday, Aug. 7 | 12 - 1 p.m.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND LAUNCHES

Employee Appreciation: Kona Ice Truck! Thursday, Aug 14 | 2 - 4:30 PM



PCB invites staff to recharge and stay cool during the Tennessee summer heat, with this grab-and-go event featuring the Kona Ice - Shaved Ice Truck. This event will offer employees a fun, casual break as they prepare for the start of the academic year.

The Kona Ice truck will be stationed on **Alumni Lawn from 2:00–3:00 PM** and then move to **Peabody Campus from 3:30–4:30 PM**. Employees are invited to stop by either location for a complimentary shaved ice and a quick cool-down moment.

As a token of appreciation, the first 500 employees will also receive a branded swag item.
More details to come!

Nominations for Fall Staff Awards Opens Aug 1, 2025

The awards recognize the many contributions of university staff to Vanderbilt's core goals and mission. The winners of each award will be announced at the annual Fall Staff Assembly on October 29.

The Fall Staff Awards include longtime university awards, including the Community Impact Award, Professional Excellence, Innovation Excellence, Research Excellence, Student Impact, and Leadership Excellence awards.

Nominations can be submitted by staff, students, faculty or postdoctoral scholars via the [online nomination form](#) through Friday, Aug. 29. Please see the [staff awards website](#) for nomination guidelines and award amounts.

ICYMI

Thank you to all who came to the Polaris Event



FUTURES LEARNING HUB UPDATES

We've put together a new set of Anchor's Edge sessions for August, and we'd love for you to join us. If you've attended a Tech Tuesday or Thrive Thursday before, you'll find the same practical, just with fresh topics and new voices.

The sessions are focused and designed to provide you with something worthwhile to take back to your day.

Can't make it live? No problem—register anyway, and we'll send you the recording within 48 hours. Browse the lineup below and save your seat.

MOTIVATION ★ MONDAY

Register

Motivation Monday – August Session

When: 8/4/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

About: Monthly live roundtable that spotlights a Vanderbilt team or individual who's driving impact through outstanding performance and meaningful collaboration.

Social Security 101: Everything You Want to Know

When: 8/14/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

About: In this Thrive Thursday session, join Robin Foutain of the Social Security Administration to break down the basics of Social Security benefits, including retirement, disability, spousal, and survivor benefits. She'll also walk through what you need to know about enrolling in Medicare so that you can feel more confident planning ahead.

THRIVE THURSDAY

Register

Personify Health Webinar Series

When: 8/20/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

About: Join Amy Silvers, Wellbeing Champion Program Manager, for an engaging Personify Health webinar series designed to help faculty, staff, and postdocs get the most out of this powerful wellbeing platform!



Register



Register

Digital Fluency for All: A New Literacy

When: 8/26/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

About: Digital fluency isn't about knowing every tool—it's about knowing how to **adapt, problem-solve, and collaborate effectively** in a tech-enabled workplace. From navigating platforms like Oracle or Teams to engaging in ethical digital communication and AI-assisted work, digital fluency is now a core competency, not just for IT staff, but for everyone.

Why Join

- **Skill Building:** Gain valuable skills to help you excel in your current role or unlock new opportunities.
- **Community:** Connect with colleagues across the university who share a passion for growth and learning.
- **Accessibility:** Each session is designed for a wide range of experience levels and interests.

FUTURES LEARNING HUB UPDATES

Complete a learning course through Futures Learning Hub

At Vanderbilt University, we value professional growth and continuous learning. We want to reward you for your hard work of expanding your skills through Digital Learning Marketplace.

You don't need to **take a specific course** to be eligible for the swag box drawing. Feel free to choose any Digital Learning Marketplace course that aligns with your professional goals! Winners will be announced at Curious Bar the last Wednesday of March, April and May.

Here's How You Can Enter:

1. **Login:** Access the Learning Hub.
2. **Learn:** Complete at least one course of your choice.
3. **Win:** You are automatically entered to our drawing to receive a Vanderbilt Swag Box valued up to \$75!

Course of the Month - July 2025

Creating a Culture of Collaboration

What you'll learn

Discover why a collaborative work environment can promote success, and learn how to create a cooperative culture in the workplace. Author, CEO and instructor Lisa Bodell outlines the benefits of collaboration, and shares techniques for leaders or individual contributors to start building a team-centric culture. She also defines common barriers to collaboration, and describes methods to overcome those obstacles. Finally, hear about her practical approaches for breaking the ice in any room, and where to find fantastic and unexpected collaborators.



Register for the Course of the Month

Performance Management Virtual Training Sessions

Employee Sessions

Navigating Culture Amp for Performance Development

This session is designed to introduce all employees to using the Culture Amp platform. We'll walk through how to set goals, prepare for one-on-ones, and navigate the performance review process. With live demos, tips, and time for Q&A, you'll leave with the tools and confidence to make you comfortable with using Culture Amp.

Session 1 – August 12 at 10 AM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Session 2 – August 19 at 2 PM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Performance Management Best Practices for Staff

Learn how to get the most out of Culture Amp with this practical session focused on staff best practices. We'll cover how to set meaningful goals, prepare for one-on-ones, receive feedback, and navigate your performance review. Walk away with tips and tools to help you stay aligned, grow professionally, and engage in ongoing development.

Session 1 – August 14 at 2 PM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Session 2 – August 21 at 10 AM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Manager Sessions

Managing Performance with Culture Amp

This session takes a closer look at how managers can effectively use Culture Amp to support their teams. From setting and approving goals to facilitating one-on-ones, managing feedback, and completing performance reviews, we'll explore key responsibilities and best practices. You'll receive hands-on guidance, practical tips, and ample time to ask questions, enabling you to lead with clarity and confidence.

Session 1 – August 13 at 10 AM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Session 2 – August 20 at 2 PM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Performance Management Scenario-Based Discussions

This interactive session provides managers with an opportunity to explore real-world scenarios using Culture Amp. Through guided discussions and practical examples, you'll learn how to handle common challenges, such as goal alignment, feedback conversations, and performance reviews, while effectively applying platform features. Build confidence, share insights, and strengthen your approach to performance development.

Session 1 – August 26 at 10 AM CST

[Click here to register](#)

Session 2 – August 28 at 2 PM CST

[Click here to register](#)

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Ways to Overcome Loneliness at Work via *LyraHealth.com*

Feeling connected is important for our overall well-being, and having a sense of belonging in the workplace is no exception. Recent research highlights that 30% of adults experience feelings of loneliness and disconnection at least once a week.

Let's explore how we can recognize signs of loneliness at work and explore practical steps to create a healthier, less isolated, and more supportive workplace.

Signs of loneliness at work

The most common signs of loneliness at work usually look and feel like:

- Struggling to feel engaged
- Feeling disconnected from work
- Decreased productivity
- Lack of eye contact in meetings
- Frequently eating lunch at your desk
- Feeling worn out, physically or emotionally
- Avoiding meetings or employee interactions
- Declining quality of work

How to deal with loneliness at work

Many factors can affect how connected a person feels to their workplace community. Although loneliness is different for everyone, a sense of belonging can reduce feelings of isolation at work. Below are a few tips to consider:

Validate yourself

The first step to managing loneliness at work is acknowledging what's happening. Whether working remotely or onsite, it's OK to sometimes feel alone—but there's always an opportunity to do something about it.

Check in with teammates

Schedule a virtual coffee chat or have lunch with a co-worker in person. Starting small is perfectly fine—you don't have to change who you are and become a social butterfly to increase your sense of connection with others.

Switch up routines

If you work remotely and have the option to go into the office, try commuting in on days you know others will be there. If you live in the same city as other remote co-workers, consider meeting at a coffee shop to work. For onsite workers, think about places you can walk to during your break for fresh air or lunch.

Look for social opportunities

Some workplaces have fitness clubs, volunteer days, happy hours after work, book clubs, or groups for shared interests like chess and sports. Ask your HR department for information on upcoming social opportunities or try starting an initiative yourself.

Explore employee resource groups

If you aren't ready to join social clubs at work, consider joining an affinity group that supports your lived experience and identity. These groups can provide a sense of belonging and camaraderie, and offer a supportive network where you can share experiences, find mentorship, and access resources that promote personal and professional growth.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Financial Education Webinar

Managing My Money: Budget, Emergency Savings, and Debt Basics (foundational/basic)

Date/Time: August 6 at 11:00 AM CT

Overview: This workshop will help you take control of your finances by learning how to build a budget, save for an emergency, and manage your debt.

[Click to Register](#)

Fundamentals of Retirement Income Planning (moderate/intermediate)

Date/Time: August 21 at 1:00 PM CT

Overview: This workshop is for individuals who are starting to plan for retirement and want to learn about the key considerations for building an income plan.

[Click to Register](#)

How to Register:

To sign up for a financial education webinar, log into your [Fidelity NetBenefits®](#) account. If you experience any issues, please call Fidelity's service center at 800-343-0860. If you're a first-time user, select "Register as a new user."



Personify Health Safe Senders List

Stay up to date with all the exciting tools, tips, and resources Personify Health has to offer by adding their email addresses to your safe sender list in Outlook. This helps keep messages out of your junk folder and right where you can see them. Below, you'll find step-by-step instructions and a list of key email addresses to keep everything Personify at your fingertips!

- no-reply@personifyhealth.com
- invites@personifyhealth.com
- support@personifyhealth.com
- no-reply.forms@personifyhealth.com
- no-reply@my.personifyhealth.com
- invites@my.personifyhealth.com
- support@my.personifyhealth.com
- no-reply.forms@my.personifyhealth.com
- no-reply@info.personifyhealth.com
- invites@info.personifyhealth.com
- support@info.personifyhealth.com
- no-reply.forms@info.personifyhealth.com
- no-reply@alerts.personifyhealth.com
- invites@alerts.personifyhealth.com
- support@alerts.personifyhealth.com
- noreply.forms@alerts.personifyhealth.com



SHAPING SUCCESS AT WORK: GOALS, GROWTH AND GUIDANCE

Success in the workplace is not just about showing up and completing daily tasks—it's about setting a clear vision, constantly developing your skills and building meaningful relationships that propel you forward. Whether you're looking to advance in your career, take on new challenges or simply improve your performance, three essential strategies can help: setting SMART goals, committing to lifelong learning and leveraging networking and mentorship opportunities.

Setting SMART Goals

One of the most effective ways to achieve success is by setting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound—better known as SMART goals. These goals provide a structured approach to personal and professional development by eliminating vagueness and creating a clear roadmap for success.

- **Specific:** Clearly define what you want to achieve. Instead of saying, "I want to improve my social media content performance," specify, *"I want to improve content performance by improving average post reach by 30% in the next four months by optimizing posting times, improving visual content and leveraging analytics to refine strategy."*
- **Measurable:** Establish criteria for tracking progress. Ask yourself how you will know when you've reached your goal. *"I want to increase my social media followers by 10%, this means adding 100 more followers this quarter by implementing a targeted content strategy, influencer collaborations, and paid ad campaigns."*
- **Achievable:** Ensure your goal is realistic given your resources and current capabilities.
- **Relevant:** Align your goal with your career aspirations and organizational objectives. *"I'd like to become better in social media and plan to complete at least two industry-recognized certifications this year to stay updated on the latest trends, algorithm, and best practice."*
- **Time-bound:** Set a deadline to keep yourself accountable. *"Increase website visits from social media by 25% in the next three months by using more call-to-action posts, link placements and content repurposing strategies."*

By consistently applying the SMART framework, you can break larger aspirations into manageable steps, stay motivated and celebrate progress along the way.

Continuous Learning and Growth

The professional world is constantly evolving, and the most successful individuals embrace a mindset of lifelong learning. Staying competitive and adaptable requires investing in skill development and seeking opportunities for growth.

- **Seek Professional Development Opportunities:** Take advantage of training programs, certifications, attend conferences, webinars and courses relevant to your field. Check out Futures Learning Hub.
- **Embrace Feedback:** Constructive criticism provides valuable insights into areas for improvement. Actively seek feedback from colleagues, supervisors and mentors.
- **Develop Soft Skills:** Communication, leadership and emotional intelligence are just as critical as technical skills in advancing your career.

By continuously learning, you enhance your value in the workplace and position yourself as a proactive, resourceful professional ready for new opportunities.

Building Connections

Career growth is not a solo journey—it thrives on connections. Building a strong professional network and seeking mentorship can open doors to new opportunities, insights and guidance.

- **Cultivate meaningful relationships:** Engage with colleagues, join professional associations and attend industry events to expand your network.
- **Seek out mentors:** A mentor can provide valuable advice, share experiences and help navigate career challenges. Connect with individuals both within your organization and beyond to gain diverse perspectives and insights.
- **Be a mentor:** Mentorship is a two-way street. Sharing your knowledge with others not only reinforces your own learning but also fosters a culture of collaboration and support.

By actively networking and engaging in mentorship, you create a support system that fosters personal and professional growth.

SHAPING SUCCESS AT WORK: GOALS, GROWTH AND GUIDANCE

By setting SMART goals, embracing growth opportunities and actively networking, you position yourself for long-term success and fulfillment in your career. Take charge of your professional journey today and shape a future that aligns with your ambitions!

To help you put these strategies into action, don't forget to use our performance management tool, **CultureAmp**. Whether you're setting SMART goals, tracking your progress, or reflecting on feedback, CultureAmp provides a centralized space to manage your development journey. You can easily update your goals, request feedback, and stay aligned with your manager on expectations and growth areas. To get started, log into [CultureAmp](#) using your Vanderbilt email address and click the Single Sign-On (SSO) button. Then, navigate to the Goals tab, where you can set individual, group, and developmental goals. Make the most of CultureAmp to stay focused, build accountability, and keep your career momentum going.

Check out the courses on page 11

connect with us



vanderbilt.edu/pcb



110 21st Ave S Suite 1000
Baker Building



pcb@vanderbilt.edu



Curious Bar
Check website for location

Follow us on...

