



On February 1, 2016, Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D. became the 14th President of Virginia State University (VSU). In his remarks during his introduction to the Trojan family, President Abdullah outlined his four core beliefs: *I believe in God. I believe in family. I believe in the transformative nature of education. I believe in Virginia State University.*

President Abdullah also emphasized several focus areas to sustain VSU as an 1890 Land-Grant University. The areas of focus include providing a transformative experience for students, strategically investing in academic programs, partnering with others as a university to tell the VSU story, embracing the University's Land Grant Mission and embracing VSU's role as *Virginia's Opportunity University.*

Under President Abdullah's leadership, the University has experienced some significant achievements.

- Recognized as one of the nation's top 20 "Best Colleges for African Americans" by ESSENCE magazine.
- Established partnerships with local public school systems wherein VSU students tutor students in mathematics and reading,
- Opened the Academic Center of Excellence as a one-stop hub for first-year students to receive career and academic advising and tutorial services.
- In July 2017, the Commonwealth of Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe presented the inaugural Outstanding State Stewardship Award to VSU for the preservation of Summerseat, an historic house built around 1860 near VSU.
- Established the University's Advisory Board for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning Intersex Ally+ (LGBTQIA+) Inclusion to investigate ways for the institution to be a more affirming learning environment for all students, faculty and staff within the LGBTQIA+ community.

- In June of 2018, the University was named the HBCU of the Year and awarded Best Board of Trustees of the Year and Female Student of the Year by HBCU Digest, an online blog. Additionally, in 2017, President Abdullah was named the HBCU Male President of the Year.
- Ranked as the No. 19 historically black college or university (HBCUs) on the 2019 U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges rankings. This is up 12 spots from the 2018 rankings where the University was ranked No. 31. Also, the University was ranked as the No. 8 public HBCU.

President Abdullah is an academic administrator committed to excellence. He is also an internationally-renowned educator recognized for outstanding research. Prior to his appointment as president of Virginia State University, Dr. Abdullah served as provost and senior vice president at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Fla. (2013-2016), provost and vice president for academic affairs at Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens, Fla. (2011-2013), and dean and director of 1890 land grant programs at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Fla (2008-2011).

Dr. Abdullah is a Chicago native. He earned his undergraduate degree from Howard University in civil engineering and his doctorate and master's degrees in civil engineering from Northwestern University. He is the youngest African American to receive a Ph.D. in engineering.

Dr. Abdullah is a very active member with various organizations. In August of 2018, Dr. Abdullah was elected a member of the Board of Trustees for the Virginia Historical Society, which owns and operates the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. He also serves as a member of the executive committee for the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, as a Board of Trustee member for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and the 5000 Role Models of Excellence. He is the chair for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association Board of Directors. In 2017, he was inducted into the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Alumni Hall of Fame. He is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated.

He and his wife, Ahkinyala Cobb-Abdullah, Ph.D., are the proud parents of a son, Mikaili, and a daughter, Sefiyetu, who both are college graduates.