



NEWS & VIEWS

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Sharita L. Bryant, CPPB, VCM, VCO, VCA
2nd Past President



Joey Patterson, MPA, VCO
VAGP Protégé

A MENTOR AND PROTÉGÉ STORY

VAGP's Mentor-Protégé Program (VMPP) identifies members who are interested in serving in positions of responsibility and becoming a member of the Board of Directors. The program's mentors are past and present VAGP Board Officers. As a VAGP Mentor, you are committed to fostering a relationship with your protégé that empowers them with knowledge, tools, and resources to assist in their success on the job and in the program. VAGP Protégés should be able to work independently, function as a team leader, and commit to self-development. In order to be successful, the mentor and protégé collaboratively commit to cultivating their relationship, providing insight to VAGP board discussions, and promoting the program. With dedication, the program should be completed within two (2) years.

Joey Patterson

Joey Patterson is a Senior Contract Officer with Chesterfield County and a VAGP Protégé approaching VAGP Mentor-Protégé program completion in June. His professional development achievements include a master's degree in public administration, completion of ODU's Graduate Certificate in Public Procurement and Contract Management, and earning the designations of Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) and Virginia Contracting Officer (VCO). Joey's current work assignments include the following goods and services: construction and construction related trades, demolition, renovations, and waste disposal. Joey has also instructed many procurement related trainings both in his current and previous positions. Joey joined the VMPP to participate in leadership opportunities within our association including the Board of Directors. Before joining the program, Joey aspired to "work with a mentor willing to devote time to a young professional who was willing to ask many questions". Joey also requested a mentor who would go beyond the responsibilities of a VAGP Mentor and would encourage discussion on work-related projects. Therefore, both he and his mentor could learn from each other's work experiences and not solely focus on how to successfully manage a leadership position within VAGP. Joey accredits his VAGP membership to his enhanced professional relationships with colleagues, friends, and a community of mentors.



Joey at the 2019 Spring Conference

continued on page 9

IN THIS ISSUE...

A Mentor and Protégé Story.....	1
President's Message.....	2
VAGP Fall Symposium.....	3
What COVID-19 Has Taught Me So Far...4-5	

Hope in Procurement.....	6
Education Committee Update.....	7
Professional Development Update....	8
Stay In The Zone.....	10



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jay Smigielski, CPPO
VAGP President

In my humble opinion, the VAGP represents the finest group of procurement practitioners in public service. The members of the VAGP exemplify the highest degree of knowledge, ethics, and professionalism.

The Board of Directors annually selects two individuals who are the epitome of the VAGP for the past year. These individuals are recognized with the "Buyer of the Year" and "Manager of the Year" awards. The recipients of these awards are usually announced at the Spring Conference.

Selection of the recipients of these awards is a difficult decision. There are many worthwhile candidates who are deserving of the award. Unfortunately, we can only select one individual for each award.

The Buyer of the Year is presented to a procurement professional with little or no supervisory responsibilities and whose job involves determining customer requirements, developing and issuing bids and RFPs, selection of vendors, and other related tasks.



Kimberly Robinette of the Bristol Virginia Utilities Authority (BVU) is the recipient of the VAGP 2020 Buyer of the Year.

Kimberly started her career as File Clerk for the BVU and quickly rose through the ranks to become the Purchasing Agent. As Purchasing Agent she implemented a new document management system, helped write a new records retention policy, and led the effort in revising the BVU's purchasing policy. She provides continuous training to the BVU management team. Recently, Kimberly discovered a cooperative contract that will save the BVU an estimated \$20,000 a year. She has been praised

by her peers and supervisors for her dedication, work ethic, knowledge, attitude, and willingness to help.

Kimberly has earned her VCA, VCO, and bachelor's degree and is currently working for her CPPB. She also currently serves as Chairperson of the VAGP Public Relations Committee. She successfully coordinated the first VAGP low fee seminar to take place in the Zone 9 region.

The Manager of the Year is awarded to a procurement professional that has supervisory or management responsibilities in an organization. In addition to supervising purchasing personnel, the Manager of the Year may have legal, financial, technical, and general administrative duties.

The VAGP 2020 Manager of the Year is Lorie Newton. Lorie is currently the Acting Procurement Director of Chesterfield County and has a long and prestigious record of involvement with the VAGP.

continued on page 6

VAGP FALL SYMPOSIUM 2020



Donnie Legg, VCO
Conference Committee Chair

Hello fellow VAGP members. I hope this article finds everyone safe and well as these are truly some unprecedented times we are living in. I wanted to share with everyone that at the time of this printing the VAGP 2020 Fall Symposium is still scheduled for September 29-30, 2020 at the Hotel Madison in Harrisonburg, VA. Your VAGP Board is monitoring the current COVID-19 situation and will be making decisions regarding the conference as events unfold.

Currently we have Andy Masters <https://andy-masters.com/> on board to be our keynote speaker. He will be presenting Procurement Lessons Learned from H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D. In addition, the FBI is scheduled to give a general session presentation on Procurement Fraud.

As I said, we are closely monitoring the situation and will be making more definite decisions in the coming months. In the meantime, I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe.



Save the dates & Join us for the
VAGP Fall Symposium!

September 29 - 30
at Hotel Madison
in Harrisonburg, VA

"Beyond Purchasing"



WHAT COVID-19 HAS TAUGHT ME SO FAR



Cindy Davis Smith, CPPB
VAGP President-Elect

It's hard to believe that most of us have been working from our homes for two months. If someone would have told me this last year, I would have found it difficult to believe that the great United States of America would be crippled by a virus in spring 2020. To quote Charles Dickens from *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter (aka spring) of despair." Covid-19 has been a great equalizer and teacher over these past few months.



Lesson Number One: *Nothing is Constant but Change*

We experience change every day but are oblivious to small changes. On the other hand, we tend to freak out over the larger ones. As procurement professionals, policies and procedures are the bedrocks as to why things must be done a certain way. Covid-19 forced us to look at some of these procedures differently and adopt a new way of doing business. Often these changes were on our laundry list to review and revise, but we never had the creative space to think outside of the box. This virus taught us that our profession is constantly evolving, and we must include creative strategic thinking to advance the profession. This virus showed the world how critical our profession is to the daily operations of all companies. Procurement and specifically "Supply Chain Management" has been at the forefront of this pandemic. If you haven't taken a closer look at your operations and your professional DNA, now is the time to do so. There are many virtual training opportunities from various procurement associations. In addition, the ability to acquire a certification online has increased exponentially over the past few months. Have you reviewed all of the new certification programs

being offered by NIGP? Have you taken the opportunity to review any of the free classes that your agency is offering, such as a refresher course on Word, Excel or PowerPoint? This is the time to review your professional credentials and see where you would like to go next.

Lesson Number Two: *Relationships Matter*

During this time of uncertainty, trust and honesty are crucial. One must invest in creating trusting relationships so that when they are tested, they will withstand turbulent times. Relationships, both personal and professional,

continued on page 5

WHAT COVID-19 HAS TAUGHT ME SO FAR continued



have been tested during this quarantine time. Having a difficult conversation with someone you know and trust is less stressful than having a difficult conversation with a stranger. Parents were forced to see the challenges of teaching their perfect angels. Managers were challenged to manage employees while working remotely when it was difficult to manage employees in the office. When relationships are strong, all could work through tough situations with less stress and more honesty. Covid-19 didn't give a warning that relationships would be tested, it just showed up. As procurement professionals, we are tasked with procuring the right solution for the

right price at the right time. In the rush to secure the solutions, we must preserve and cultivate relationships with our project managers, program departments, vendors, senior management and associates.

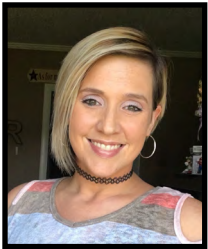
Lesson Number Three: *The Importance of Self-Care*

This is a simple concept. However, when was the last time that you took true care of yourself? There were too many places to go, things to do and people to see on our "To Do" list prior to the coronavirus. One didn't take the time and energy to conduct a self-inventory on body, mind and spirit. As a service line function, we work hard to serve others and often put ourselves at the bottom of the list. Well, coronavirus taught us that if we are not healthy then we are not of use to anyone. The motto for administering instruction for oxygen use on an airplane ring true, "Before you can administer help to anyone, you must first give yourself the oxygen the you need". In order to be a great procurement professional, you have to first make sure that you are serving from a place of wholeness and that you have filled your oxygen tank. Coronavirus put the spotlight on wellness and the importance of it all. It taught us to sit and be present with self, to rekindle old hobbies such as completing a puzzle or craft project. It forced us to walk in our neighborhoods and connect with nature.



As we edge back into the post coronavirus world, take the lessons of this season with you to make you a better procurement professional. Take the time to explore the changes that you may need to make you a stronger professional. There are countless certification avenues. NIGP has listed a few new ones. Develop honest relationships with your user groups as well as senior management. You will be tasked to work with different people during this new period as all agencies are exploring different ways of getting things done. Lastly, take the time to care for of yourself before you care for others. When your tank is full, you can give and receive more abundantly.

HOPE IN PROCUREMENT



Kimberly Robinette, VCO, VCA
PR Committee Chair, Zone 9 Ambassador & VAGP Protege

Today is tough for all of us. No matter how confident we are, this time can cause even the strongest to crumble. Myself, I feel like the mightiest of mighty one minute and feel the walls caving in around me the next minute. There have been days where I would receive frantic phone calls like, "We need disinfectant wipes, touchless soap dispensers, masks, and gloves and we need them yesterday!" Yikes! My hope plummets as I scour Amazon trying to find even one can of disinfectant spray.

One of the most challenging parts of this quarantine so far is trying not to lose hope. I am sure you can relate.

Hope is not just some Pollyanna vision of optimism, but hope is the driving force that keeps us moving towards a goal. Even when we are not so sure that a positive outcome is feasible, if you are like me your hope is that everything in the world around us will return to normal and we can think of this pandemic as a bad dream. But was normal really working for you before 2020?

"In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to." -Dave Hollis

I challenge you as procurement professionals to use this experience to better prepare for the future. Build hope from this experience. Before 2020, nobody knew how to deal with a quarantine. Now we have the makings of a road map.

Were there gaping holes in your procurement process that were perhaps not as evident pre-pandemic? If so, how can you patch those holes? Preparation is one of the best ways to nurture more hope. What went well during this time? List your successes, strengths and resources. There is no better booster of confidence and hope than seeing what you did well!

When the time is right, don't be afraid to meet with your end users to ask their honest opinion on what they think procurement could do better just in case there is a next time. Sometimes an emergency procured product or service that we think is enough is not what our end users need at all.

There will be many more challenges as we emerge from the perils of COVID-19, but as procurement professionals, this is when our true talents are showcased.

My hope for all of you is that you are safe, healthy and happy. God Bless.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*



At Chesterfield County she has helped the purchasing department evolve and improve how it conducts business. She has expanded opportunities for local businesses and has applied and expanded technology that makes it easier and more efficient for both vendors and county departments.

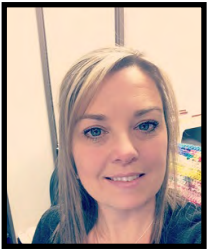
She encourages her staff to grow through education, obtaining professional certification opportunities, and involvement in the VAGP.

Lorie has been actively involved in the VAGP for many years having served in various roles and committees, such as being the Conference Advisory Committee chairperson, serving on the Board of Directors, and most recently as President of the VAGP. She still serves on the VAGP Board of Directors as First Past President. She is an active supporter of the VAGP and its members and helped develop an incredible first timer's event at the 2019 Spring Conference.

The VAGP is blessed to have such outstanding members as Lorie and Kimberly. They are a credit to the VAGP and their agencies. Please join me in wishing heartfelt congratulations to Lorie and Kimberly.

Jay

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE



Lisa Russell, VCO, VCA
Education Committee Chair

Our goal is to offer courses to expand your procurement knowledge and skills in preparation for the CPPB and CPPO certifications and to provide contact hours for recertifications. Our committee partners with NIGP to provide quality training and a variety of course topics. These classes offer a great opportunity for networking with other procurement professionals to exchange ideas and experiences to assist in your professional development.

NIGP made a few changes in class offerings that will be beneficial to all members trying to obtain certifications and recertify.

NIGP is sunsetting the following classes as of July 1, 2020:

Introduction to Public Procurement
Contract Administration in the Public Sector
Developing and Managing RFP's
Sourcing in the Public Sector
Strategic Procurement Planning

NIGP built content that offers parallel information in the new Pathways Courses, which are more focused on cooperative learning and have a workshop feel offering attendees the opportunity to practice real tasks. All courses will come with a student workbook and access to NIGP's Learning Management System (ASPIRE). Once the course evaluation and final assessment is completed in ASPIRE, attendees will receive instant recognition with a digital badge and certificate. It is possible to choose a number of topics to make education a 1 – 3 day course as desired.

Please visit the link below to view the crosswalk of the sunsetting courses above to the new Pathways Courses:

<https://nsite.nigp.org/nigppathways/pathways-uppcc-bok>

To view a video to learn more about the Pathways Digital Badges click on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWTGbXRLzu4&feature=youtu.be> .

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, **NIGP is offering all face-to-face course online via Zoom.** Visit <https://www.nigp.org/home/your-learning-journey/education/take-a-course> for more information.

The rates for courses are as follows:

	VAGP Members Rates	Non-Members Rates
1 Day Course	310.00	\$410.00
2 Day Course	\$425.00	\$525.00
3 Day Course	\$595.00	\$695.00

continued on page 8

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE continued

There are many other courses available. If you have any questions regarding course offerings or are interested in hosting a class at your location or online, please reach out to **Lisa Russell, VAGP Education Chair** at RussellL@chesterfield.gov or (804) 751-2239 or any other Committee Member in your area below.

Education Committee Members and Locations

Amy Bevins – Loudoun Water abevins@loudounwater.org	Kevin McDowell – Radford University dkmcdowel@radford.edu
Charity Hooper – Stafford County chooper@staffordcountyva.gov	Jeff Taback – VCCS Shared Services jtaback@ssc.vccs.edu
Kristen Hylton, UOSA Kristen.Hylton@uosa.org	Vin Kamatchi – Chesterfield County Kamatchiv@chesterfield.gov
Cindy Smith - Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority cdsmith1@wmata.com	Oscar Knott, Henrico County Kno008@henrico.us
David A. Sandloop – VA Beach City Public Schools David.Sandloop@vbschools.com	

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE



Sheila Farmer, CPPB
Professional Development Committee Chair

This is a scary and uncertain time in our industry — but with change comes innovation.

We are experiencing unprecedented change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All Low Fee Professional Development in-person training seminars are currently cancelled to allow all members to continue with the Governor's recommendation for social distancing. The VAGP Board evaluates the training opportunities monthly. We will send member notices when the Professional Development seminars become available.

The VAGP Board is committed to providing training solutions and opportunities for our members and are researching to establish future virtual seminars. As training programs and events shift online, the VAGP Board is researching strategies and solutions to accelerate the development of instructor-led training to a virtual format.

This is a scary and uncertain time in our industry — but with change comes innovation. VAGP is a highly adaptive organization and will leverage our creativity, talent and evolve to meet the needs of a “new normal”.

Thank you, stay safe and healthy!

A MENTOR AND PROTÉGÉ STORY continued

Joey recalls his most memorable VAGP experiences and attributes them to his “number of leadership opportunities”. In his membership tenure of approximately five (5) years, Joey has assisted with and led various facets of VAGP’s conference & host committees. Most recently, he served as the 2019 Chairperson of the VAGP Membership committee. In this role, Joey gained insight into our diverse membership. The professional needs of a member in one office area can differ from the needs of a member in another office regarding training budgets and professional development opportunities, organization & departmental support, or career advancement opportunities. “VAGP responds the needs of its members, as well as the profession”, Joey expressed.

Sharita Bryant

Sharita Bryant is a Procurement Management Account Executive with Department of General Services, Division of Purchases and Supply (DPS), a 2009 graduate of the VMPP, currently serving on the VAGP Board of Directors in the role of 2nd Past President, and a 1st year VAGP Mentor. Her professional achievements include 2019 VAGP Manager of the Year, designations of Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB), Virginia Contracting Master (VCM), Virginia Contracting Officer (VCO), and Virginia Contracting Associate (VCA). In her current role, she provides technical and procurement consulting services to client entities, conducts procurement management reviews, develops and facilitates procurement related trainings, and delivers recommendations for operational enhancement & operational efficiencies to client entities. When asked why she joined the VMPP she expressed, “You have to pay it forward!” Sharita accredits her work and VAGP membership experiences to her love for the profession. “As a public procurement professional, we are offered the opportunity to actively participate in the investment of your tax dollars.”



Sharita opens the vendor expo at the 2018 Spring Conference

When asked about her most memorable VAGP experiences Sharita says, “Oh the places you will go”. As a VAGP member for over a decade, Sharita has received VAGP scholarships and awards, served on numerous VAGP conference committees including the 50th and 60th anniversaries years, served as chairperson of the VAGP Diversity and Membership committees, and is a 2008 VAGP J. Brad Oakley Scholarship recipient. If you have ever come to a VAGP conference and attended the business meeting or the 1st timer reception, I am sure you have heard Sharita share the benefits of VAGP membership, networking, and professional opportunities—the possibilities are endless. As a member of the VAGP Board of Directors, Sharita recollects the unparalleled collaboration between leaders of the association, all who contribute diverse insight from their backgrounds and experiences with the common goal of serving the membership.

Similar to developing a contract, a VMPP commitment is an agreement between two (2) parties. Before considering acceptance, both parties should review and discuss the requirements of the program, share backgrounds, discuss expectations, assess risks, and develop and implement a plan of success. Joey and Sharita did not begin their VMPP path at the same time. At the onset of their VMPP relationship, Joey was beginning Year 2 of the program. They immediately assessed the requirements needed to keep Joey on track for program completion. When asked to serve as Joey’s mentor, Sharita says, “I was excited about the opportunity having worked with Joey on previous VAGP projects and during my Presidency—he’s always sharp!”

When asked about future endeavors, Joey and Sharita discussed a project recently assigned by the VAGP Board. Together with a small group of members, they are beginning to build the framework for a VAGP Leadership Program. The VAGP Leadership Program will offer members structured tools and resources to develop or enhance leadership skills. In addition, Joey is looking forward to his next endeavor in serving as an instructor for VAGP’s Time and Material Contracts seminar. Joey stated he would not have had the opportunity to become a VAGP instructor if it were not for the opportunities and guidance Sharita provided for him as his Mentor. Although Sharita and Joey are ending their VMPP partnership next month, both will continue to work together and support each other’s contributions to VAGP and their leadership roles within the association.

STAY IN THE ZONE...



Melissa Tillman
Zone 7 Ambassador

This has been a tough season for VAGP members as our plans and work schedules have been in upheaval due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was sad to cancel the 2020 VAGP Spring Conference and not be able to present the Ambassadors "Hot Topics Breakfast" that we had worked so hard to design. All of the Pro-D Low Fee Seminars have been canceled through June 10th due to the governor's mandate and even the testing centers for the May CPPB and CPPO candidates have been shut down and we are working to use alternative methods to test.

You would think that the social distancing would stop us all in our tracks but never has there been such a call for those in our profession to use our skills to help our localities survive. I am proud to be an Ambassador for the VAGP and it's been amazing to work with others in my field to help navigate this isolation culture. Whether it's figuring out how to use Zoom or Microsoft Teams to host virtual meetings, working to get contracts signed electronically, or sourcing PPE gear for our first responders...we are essential!!!

Below is a list of the Ambassadors that are ready to help you stay connected:

Zone 1: Ambassador is Gina Mobley | Email: glmobley@fcps.edu
Zone 2: Ambassador is Nicole Robertson | Email: nicole.robertson@harrisonburgva.gov
Zone 5: Ambassador is Tonya Joyner | Email: TAJoyner@vbgov.com
Zone 7: Ambassador is Melissa Tillman | Email: melissa.tillman@lynchburgva.gov
Zone 8: Ambassador is Dawn Rago | Email: drago@roanokecountyva.gov
Zone 9: Ambassador is Kimberly Robinette | Email: krobinette@bvua.com
Ambassador Chair: Carla Smith, CPPB | Email: Carla.Smith@Vbschools.com

We are still seeking an ambassador for Zone 3- (Rappahannock, Culpeper, Madison, Greene, Orange, Charlottesville, Albemarle, Louisa, Fluvanna). If you would like more information on how you can participate or how to get in touch with your Zone Ambassador contact Carla.Smith@vbschools.com.

NEWS & VIEWS

We want your news and views in 2020!

This is your Association and your publication—make your voice heard! All VAGP members are encouraged to send articles, press releases, and photos. Published articles on purchasing related topics may help members earn recertification points. For eligibility requirements, please verify directly with the certifying agency. Suppliers and contractors are also encouraged to submit purchasing-related articles for publication. Limited opportunities are available and offered at no cost!

Submit your contributions to LeeAnne Beatty Smith at smith2LB@jmu.edu

Production Schedule	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Deadline for Submission	Aug 12	Nov 4
Publish Date	Sept 16	Dec 2



- Industry News
- Best Practices
- Photo
- Book Reviews
- Education Opportunities
- Event Recaps
- New Certifications
- Tips and Tricks