

April 28, 2021 #EquityChat

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah (@makolaabdullah),
President of Virginia State University (@VSU_1882)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) It's Wednesday night and time for #EquityChat with your @equityavengers @iamkeithcurry & @SDMesaPrez tonight we are honored to host @makolaabdullah President of @VSU_1882 ! You may most recently seen him playing a little 🏀 with his students. Welcome Dr Abdullah! @CollegeFutures QT [@makolaabdullah](#) It is my pleasure to hang out with you and @iamkeithcurry thanks for having me. #EquityChat https://twitter.com/DrPamLuster/status/1387557753011408899?s=20&t=0OoG8358qPy_L60hq6Umg

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1. @makolaabdullah. Tell us about @VSU_1882? And your work with @VSU_1882? #EquityChat @iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures

[@makolaabdullah](#) A1. @VSU_1882 is the best university in the world! (I might be a little biased) We are an HBCU founded in 1882, with a little over 4000 students. accredited programs in engineering, business, education, social work and many other programs

[@SDMesaPrez](#) I think all of us feel that way about our institutions! I know I do about @sdmesacollege

[@makolaabdullah](#) A1b. I have been at @VSU_1882 for a little over 5 years as president and one thing I am very proud of is our commitment to using social media to communicate with our students and alums #EquityChat

[@iamkeithcurry](#) Q2. @makolaabdullah. Please tell us three things about you that are not on your resume.

@iamkeithcurry, @SDMesaPrez, @VSU_1882 @CollegeFutures

[@makolaabdullah](#) Hmmmm 3 things....

[@makolaabdullah](#) In college at @HowardU I was the foosball champion. I went on to compete at regionals was ended up the east coast collegiate foosball champion 🤔🤔 #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) That is delightful!

[@makolaabdullah](#) My sneaker game is pretty good for a college president. I'd put my #OrangeandBlue collection up against anyone. #EquityChat

[@makolaabdullah](#) I really enjoy musical groups. If I could sing, I'd love to sing background for anybody. #EquityChat

[@SDMesaPrez](#) I'll let @iamkeithcurry play foosball, I love to sing so let's find a way on social media to have fun with that!

[@makolaabdullah](#) I sang a little in my tedx talk, tried to keep it simple with the Temptations.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Classic

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Hmmmm orange and blue...

[@makolaabdullah](#) Our school colors are orange and blue. I have worn our school colors every day for the past 5 years.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) That's commitment! I'm fortunate that my favorite @nba team @warriors share my @sdmesacollege blue&gold. And my alma mater @SJSUalumni @SJSU

[@makolaabdullah](#) My motto is... if you are on the team, you have to wear the uniform. I'm lucky that our colors are awesome. Some institutions have very difficult colors to rock on a daily basis.

[@iamkeithcurry](#) foosball. Whenever you are ready to lose, meet me in Compton.

[@makolaabdullah](#) Brother, you are seriously not ready for this smoke. 🤔🤔

[@ahandsintheair](#) Please, oh please, make this happen.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) 🙌🙌🙌

[@LegaspiVp](#) I got next [GIF: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1387568725088358402>]

[@makolaabdulla](#) yeah... but Im faster than that. Or... I used to be lol

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q3. @makolaabdullah. Why should @CalCommColleges students attend @VSU_1882? #EquityChat
[@lamkeithcurry](#) @CollegeFutures

[@makolaabdullah](#) I do not know if any of my @VSU_1882 social media warriors are here like @MSFBishop or
[@fhjohnsonjr907](#) or @musikal_nupe or @DLP1996 that can help me answer. If not I'll try to paint a picture...

[@makolaabdullah](#) @VSU_1882 is a family environment with some of the best faculty and staff in the country.
Individuals that I believe really want young people to succeed. We have wonderful facilities.

[@fhjohnsonjr907](#) VSU is a family environment and you will have these family members for a lifetime! The
best faculty, staff, administration, students, and alumni! #TrojanFamily #HailState ❤️💙

[@ahandsintheair](#) Does VSU have exchange programs?

[@makolaabdullah](#) you think @SDMesaPrez would let you hang out with us? OOOOH you
meant STUDENT exchange lol. Sure!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) .@SDMesaPrez would indeed do that if she can visit regularly
[@ahandsintheair](#)

[@ahandsintheair](#) 😂 - both. @SDMesaPrez & I are already texting about an
HBCU trip. The 🌐 is opening back up & we need to "safely" make sure they are
aware of the opportunities that exist for them to grow into their purpose. Of
course we'd need to go with them 🙌.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) 🙌

[@makolaabdullah](#) All in, you have to come to @VSU_1882

[@makolaabdullah](#) Our students form incredible bonds, like the roommates (the kids who go viral,
[@ifyouwereafo](#)) and participate in shared governance through our @VSUSGA

[@makolaabdullah](#) and our students get a top notch education. Our alums include the 1st Black
Billionaire Reginald F. Lewis, to the last named 4 star General of the United States Dennis Via to
the Congresswoman @lucymbath

[@ahandsintheair](#) Those are incredible alums. I love that your students are able see
themselves and imagine life's possibilities in such a strong, empowering and supportive
academic and cultural community. Such a blessing.

[@ahandsintheair](#) That video was epic! Loved it.

[@makolaabdullah](#) why thank you! its all @ifyouwereafo fault 😂

[@ifyouwereafo](#) You're the man with the moves 😂

[@MrGranderson](#) They should attend @VSU_1882 because it's a place to gain a wealth of knowledge in your field of
choice and gaining a family that will help you be successful even after graduation I got you @makolaabdullah

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q4. @makolaabdullah. @VSU_1882 has implemented many student success strategies. Which one are
you most proud of? @iamkeithcurry, @SDMesaPrez, @VSU_1882

[@makolaabdullah](#) I am most proud of our Academic Center for Excellence @VAStateACE. Placing many of our offices
(advising, orientation, tutoring, etc) on the 2nd floor of the library to provide a one stop shop for academic issues.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Love that approach-no need to hunt around...makes the support ubiquitous and embedded
[@makolaabdullah](#)

[@makolaabdullah](#) i feel that the more we can do that, we can improve the experience for the students and the staff

[@ReginaBTyler](#) Super excited that the TRIO: Student Support Services is the newest edition to ACE designated to serve low income, first generation students!! #TRIOWorks



[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5. [@makolaabdullah](#). How has [@VSU_1882](#) addressed Affordability, Food & Housing Access for your students? #EquityChat [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#)

[@makolaabdullah](#) We are the best value in 4 year Higher Education in Virginia and we are committed to keeping tuition and fees low. We have not raised our t&f in 2 years, and when we have in the past it has always been less than 3%

[@makolaabdullah](#) and we have a food pantry on campus for students that have food insecurities

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q6. [@makolaabdullah](#). What three recommendations would you provide to the Biden Administration about the challenges higher education institutions are faced with at this time? [@iamkeithcurry](#),[@SDMesaPrez](#),
[@VSU_1882](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) These are very impactful recommendations, many of which align with recent statements from the Biden Administration. That give me hope but ... we have lots of work to do to move the the will to a way.

[@makolaabdullah](#) agreed

[@makolaabdullah](#) 1. He should support opportunities for young people to get a 2 year or 4 year degree by increasing the Pell. The Pell grant has not kept up with inflation and has left many families to pick up the slack.

[@makolaabdullah](#) 2. He should provide additional funding to support the INSTITUTIONS that support access for students (those institutions that support high percentages of pell eligible students). So those institutions can continue to support students as they chase their dreams.

[@makolaabdullah](#) 3. He should expand access to research programs so institutions that support access can 1. Do quality research on their impact practices and 2. provide stem related research opportunities for faculty and students

[@SDMesaPrez](#) And fund undergraduate research-we have a research conference on campus annually and it's growing-its such an important early step for [@CalCommColleges](#) students #EquityChat
[@lamkeithcurry](#)

[@makolaabdullah](#) exactly

[@ahandsintheair](#) These are very impactful recommendations, many of which align with recent statements from the Biden Administration. That give me hope but ... we have lots of work to do to move the the will to a way.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q7. As colleges and universities begin spending the new Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) II and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Funds. How is [@VSU_1882](#) utilizing these funds? #EquityChat
[@lamkeithcurry](#)

[@makolaabdullah](#) We have made some of these funds available to students. Additionally we have used funds to improve technology, to provide covid testing and to help ease the financial burden of not having students on campus. Our CFO [@vsuDavenport](#) has done an incredible job.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q8. [@makolaabdullah](#). What gives you hope? [@iamkeithcurry](#),[@SDMesaPrez](#), [@VSU_1882](#)
[@CollegeFutures](#) #EquityChat

[@ahandsintheair](#) What a great question!

[@makolaabdullah](#) Young people give me hope. [@VSU_1882](#) students give me hope. When they study, when they express themselves through arts or sports, when they take to the streets. Young people give me hope. #EquityChat

[@poppyfitch](#) My favorite #EquityChat Q, and the best answer by far!! "Young people give me hope." Indeed!!!
❤️👏👏

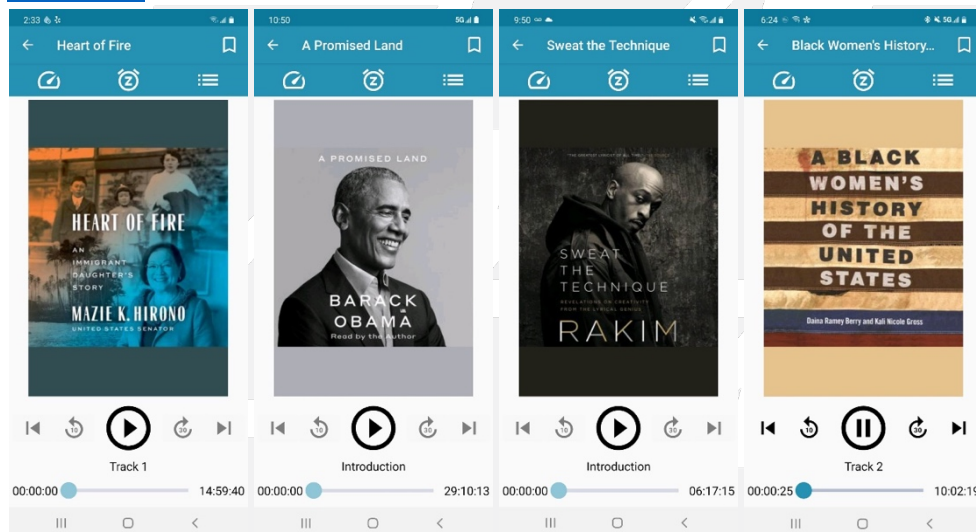
[@ahandsintheair](#) I love this question and your response. Students are indeed the fuel...the why...the reason for our work.

[@makolaabdullah](#) 100%

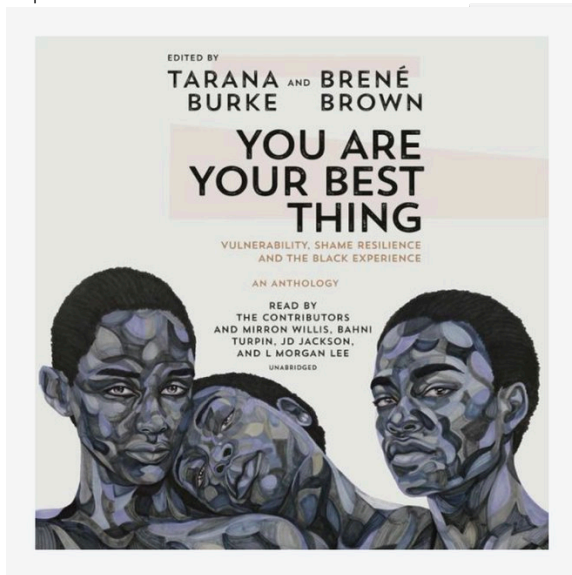
[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q9. [@makolaabdullah](#). What are you reading? And what book(s) would you recommend we consider reading? #EquityChat [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#)

[@ahandsintheair](#) Another favorite question. I just finished an Audible book and am looking for recommendations.

[@PMotaleb](#)



[@ahandsintheair](#) Thanks, @PMotaleb! I've listened to 2 out of 4 and think Black Woman's History might be my 3rd. I'm also excited about "You Are Your Best Thing: Vulnerability, Shame, Resilience and the Black Experience."



[@ahandsintheair](#) @Pmotaleb – just added both 📖 to my library! Thanks for the recommendations!

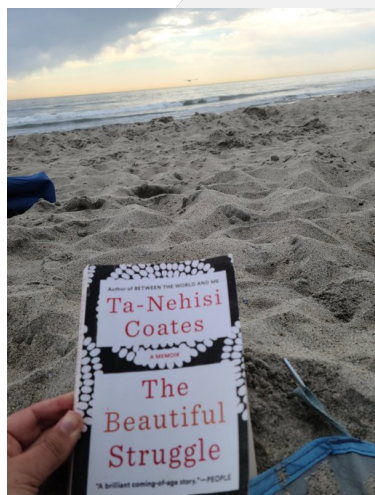
[@PMotaleb](#) Ohh this looks so interesting too. I'll add it to my list too. Happy reading.

[@MichaelGryboski](#) Pardon the shameless interruption, but I dare recommend my novel "A Spiral Into Marvelous Light." The story follows non-religious reporter writing obituary about controversial fundamentalist preacher.

<https://t.co/EL7dY9RuWM>

[@makolaabdullah](#) I would recommend Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me. I really enjoyed it.

[@PMotaleb](#) I loved his memoir too



[@SDMesaPrez](#) One of my favorites as well.



EQUITY
AVENGERS

[@ahandsintheair](#) Me, too!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) TY so very much @makolaabdullah we've enjoyed getting to know you - booked a foosball comp w/ @lamkeithcurry & trip to @VSU_1882 for me & @ahandsintheair ..TY for your leadership & commitment to students. Next week we welcome @FoundationCCC ED #KeethaMills @equityavengers Out!

