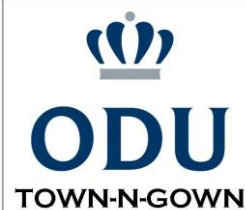


# ODU Town-N-Gown

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia 23529 757-683-5759



January 2026



*From the  
Officers and Directors  
of  
Town-N-Gown*

## **Town-N-Gown Leadership**

### **President**

Jo Tabb Hayden

### **Co - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Presidents (Programs)**

David Heath | Jennifer Douglas Pegues

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, (Membership)**

Mary Lou Speckheuer

### **Corresponding Secretary**

Patricia Steele

### **Recording Secretary**

Pamela McNaught

### **Treasurer**

Lawrence Owes

### **Directors-at-Large**

Gloria Brown

Randy Lougee Justin Mason

Evelyn Robinson Wilma Robinson

Helmut Speckheuer

### **University Liaison**

Veleka Gatling, Ph.D.

AVP, Community Engagement



Website: [www.ODUTNG.com](http://www.ODUTNG.com)

Email: [towingownodu@yahoo.com](mailto:towingownodu@yahoo.com)

## **Upcoming Events / Dates to Remember**

- Jan 6 *Opera for Everyone* - Class Begins (pg 5)
- Jan 6 National Technology Day
- Jan 9 National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
- Jan 9 Bad Movie Night @ The Lê (pg 6)
- Jan 16 National Religious Freedom Day
- Jan 20 Spring Semester Classes Begin
- Jan 25 Town-N-Gown *New Year Reception* @ The Lê (pg 9)
- Jan 29 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance (pg 3)
- Jan 29 Opening Reception for Kahn Exhibit @ The Gordon (pg 6)
- Jan 30 Kahn + Friends Exhibition @ The Gordon (pg 6)
- Jan 31 Annual "Play for Kay" Women's Basketball Game (pg 8)
- Feb 3 Town-N-Gown Board Meeting @ Waitzer Hall (pg 7)
- Feb 7 *Happy Birthday Big Blue!!*

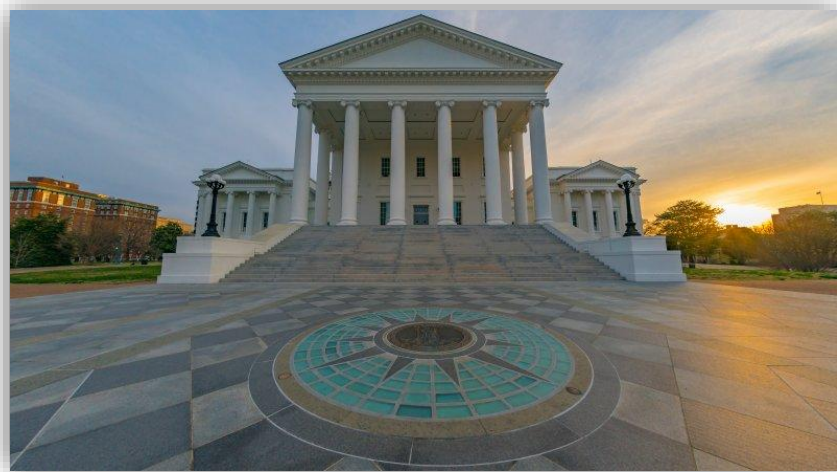
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*Don't miss your RSVP dates! See pages 8 & 9!!*

## *Around Campus*

### ODU's *State of the Commonwealth* Report

Old Dominion University released its 11th annual State of the Commonwealth Report December 16 highlighting where Virginia stands regarding regional progress and the financial circumstances that affect the pocketbooks of all residents.



Produced by the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy in the Strome College of Business, the 2025 State of the Commonwealth Report shows Virginia, which last year was listed as the best state to conduct business by CNBC, has fallen to 4th place. The report examines why that may be and takes a hard look at the numbers to ascertain what's on the horizon in terms of housing, inflation and employment.

The 2025 report has four chapters: **"Virginia's Economy Slows**

**as Challenges to Growth Rise,"** [which examines] Virginia's economy over the past decade and looks at obstacles to its continued growth; **"The State of Virginia's GO Virginia Regions,"** [examines] Virginia's nine distinct regions, based on economic development and workforce needs based on population, gross domestic product, military, civilian and individual employment and income levels; **"Virginia's Workforce: Understanding Apprenticeships,"** looks at apprenticeship programs across the country [and discusses] how such programs could play a part in Virginia's economy; and **"Is It Better to Give Than Receive? Exploring the Distributional Dimension of Virginia's Budget,"** analyzes how revenue is collected and allocated back to localities.

Over the past 20 years, the Strome College of Business's Dragas Center for Economic Analysis has produced economic research reports for the state's business and community leaders as they seek data to pinpoint areas in need of attention and to affect positive change. The 2025 State of the Commonwealth Report is available [online](#).


Credit: Joy Vann, ODU News

Full story [HERE](#)



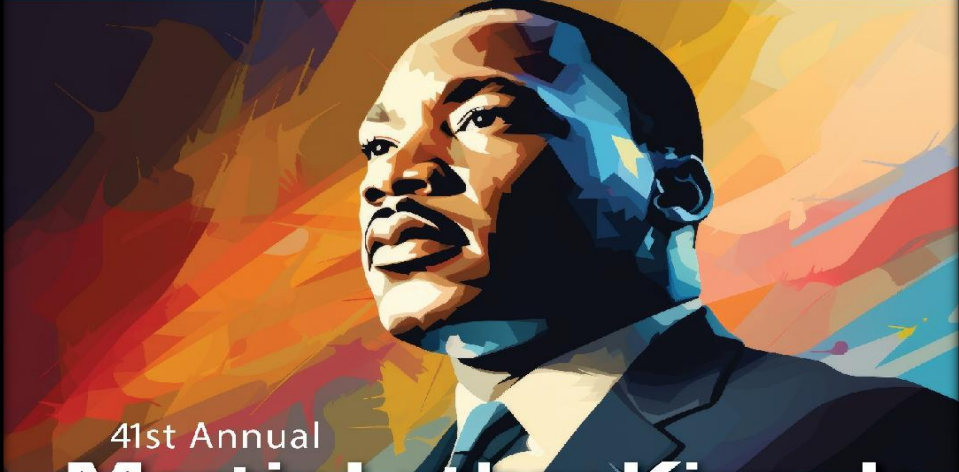
Our sincerest thanks to **Colley Avenue Copies & Graphics** for their ongoing support of Town-N-Gown. As a gift to our organization, Colley Avenue Copies & Graphics has generously printed and processed our flyers, programs, posters, banners, stationery, and business cards for many, many years. We are most grateful for the generous donation of their time, talent, and treasure!

## 41st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance



**OLD DOMINION**  
UNIVERSITY

President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.  
cordially invites you to Old Dominion University's



41st Annual  
**Martin Luther King, Jr.**  
**OBSERVANCE**

*featuring*

**Dr. Dwight S. Riddick II**  
President of CMI Max Potential Coaching Academy  
and  
**Dr. Jennell Whitfield Riddick**  
Founder and Executive Director of Walk In It, Inc.

**Thursday, January 29, 2026**  
**Chartway Arena, Big Blue Room**  
6:30 p.m.

**Special Presentation**  
Hugo A. Owens Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Award

**Free and open to the public. RSVPs not required, but encouraged.**  
**Parking is provided in the Constant Center 43rd Street Garage.**

[RSVP](#)





## A Year in Review: ODU's 2025 Most Memorable Moments



At ODU, 2025 was a forward-focused year marked by momentum and meaningful impact. From pioneering the use of artificial intelligence to research breakthroughs in cancer to groundbreakings that will enhance the campus experience, explore some of the most compelling moments of 2025.

Credit: Kenya Godette

Full story & videos [HERE](#)



## ODU Becomes First University to Earn NSA Cybersecurity Validation

ODU's School of Cybersecurity is setting a new national benchmark in cybersecurity education by becoming the first institution to receive dual validation for its pioneering cyber and artificial intelligence programs from the National Security Agency (NSA). This groundbreaking achievement advances the University's leadership in preparing students for the rapidly evolving technological landscape where artificial intelligence intersects with cyber defense. ODU is the first institution in the nation to receive both the AICyber and SecureAI recognitions.



The University is one of 10 higher education institutions in the nation and the only one in the Commonwealth of Virginia to have earned all three of NSA's Centers of Academic Excellence (CAE) designations, which include CAE Cyber Defense, CAE Cyber Operations and Cyber Research. This NSA recognition comes as the University celebrates 10 years of cybersecurity education, having launched its first program in 2015 with 11 students. The ODU School of Cybersecurity was officially established in 2020 and has since grown to enroll approximately 1,700 students.

The University has developed partnerships and connections with national agencies and companies, including local military bases, NSA, and Amazon, to create internship, research and certification opportunities for students. This commitment to innovation ensures that students graduating from the ODU School of Cybersecurity are equipped to lead this innovative industry.

Credit: Kelsey Kendall, ODU News

Full story [HERE](#)

Opera for Everyone Begins New Session

OPERA FOR EVERYONE - SPRING 2026

Old Dominion University Community Music Division Life Long Learning Class  
Invites you to enroll in its Continuing Education class: OPERA FOR EVERYONE.

Join us in preparing for Virginia Opera's Spring 2026 season.

*Intelligence* (Jan 30 & Feb 01) and *Aida* (Mar 13 & 15).

Two 5-Week Terms, Tuesdays 10:00 - 12:00			
Term #1 - <i>Intelligence</i>		Term #2 - <i>Aida</i>	
Week	Date	Week	Date
1	January 06	1	February 17
2	January 13	2	February 24
3	January 20	3	March 03
4	January 27	4	March 10
5	February 03	5	March 17
Break	February 10		

Class Information:

- Tuition for both terms - \$250
- Tuition for one term - \$130
- Registration - First day of class (check or credit card)
- Location - ODU Diehn School of Music building, 1339 W 49th St, Norfolk, VA 23529
- Parking - VIP Lot next to the building
- Instructor - Kelli Bly, ODU Associate Professor of Music
- Assistants - Karen Hoy, Juilliard Graduate Singer, Voice Teacher; John Collins, opera enthusiast
- Information - karen.hoy7320@gmail.com

The class features a variety of guest speakers and performers including many from Virginia Opera.

We look forward to a wonderful semester of opera!

Old Dominion University Community Music Division Life Long Learning Class



@ The Lê Planetarium

*Bad Movie Night - The Black Scorpion*



January 9, 2026 | 6:30pm  
Trivia | 7pm Movie | \$5

Cash/Credit/Debit at the door

“Volcanic activity frees giant scorpions from underground caves who then wreak havoc in the rural countryside and eventually threaten Mexico City.”



@ The Gordon

The Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries present Samuel Kahn, Ph.D. + Friends, an in-depth exploration of the art, methods, and inspiration behind the work of Connecticut based self-taught artist Samuel Kahn (1927-2007). Kahn’s colorful and playful drawings, sculptures, and plaques tell the story of his connection to the New England landscape, his close study of environments and wildlife, and his use of art as a conduit for feeling and emotion.

Kahn’s works are accompanied by works from the Kahn family, including those of wife Renée Kahn and son Ned Kahn - both accomplished contemporary artists. Works also loaned from the Barry Art Museum at ODU complement Kahn’s style rounding out a

cast of “friends.” reminiscent of the ecological connections Kahn focused on representing in his work. Like the ecology Kahn attempted to represent, this exhibition demonstrates how self-taught art and contemporary art traditions overlap, intermesh, and influence each stylistically, materially, and relationally.



A free, public opening of the exhibition will be held on January 29, 2026 from 6 – 8 pm.





## Around Town

### *Portsmouth -*



[2025 Cinema Series](#) | Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

[Glove & Glory Boxing](#) | Jan 9

[Serenity at the Sea](#) | Jan 17

[JanuFest](#) | Jan 17

[First Run Films](#) in a historic Theatre | Daily

January Events Info [HERE](#)



## *Town-N-Gown Notes*

*Town-N-Gown members are always welcome at the board meetings as well as attending any associated scheduled tours. The next board meeting will be held Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at Waitzer Hall on the EVMS campus; tour follows. For more information or to RSVP, contact Jo Hayden by January 28<sup>th</sup> at [jthaydn@gmail.com](mailto:jthaydn@gmail.com).*



***Town-N-Gown website*** is live! If you have not yet seen our website, take a minute to visit! The site has all the essential information about Town-N-Gown as well as history, photos of past events, upcoming events, and the previous issues of the TNG newsletter. Have a look at [www.ODUTNG.com](http://www.ODUTNG.com).

Submit your TNG photos (or feedback!) to our Webmaster David Heath at [heathdsh@hotmail.com](mailto:heathdsh@hotmail.com).

## Members' "New Year" Reception

Sunday, January 25, 2026, 2pm - 4pm

Enjoy a fabulous time with your fellow Town-N-Gowners at the beautiful Lê Planetarium.



Light refreshments, door prizes, and "what's up in the night sky?!"

Members: FREE    Guests: \$10

**RSVP** by January 20, 2026 to Jennifer Douglas Pegues at  
[jldouglas23462@aol.com](mailto:jldouglas23462@aol.com) or 757-701-0640

Parking: 43rd & Elkhorn Garage (corner of Elkhorn & West 43<sup>rd</sup>);  
*enter garage from Elkhorn Avenue*



## **Town-N-Gown at Women's Basketball!!**

Always a Fan (& TNG!) Favorite - the annual "National Girls & Women in Sports Day/Play4Kay" event



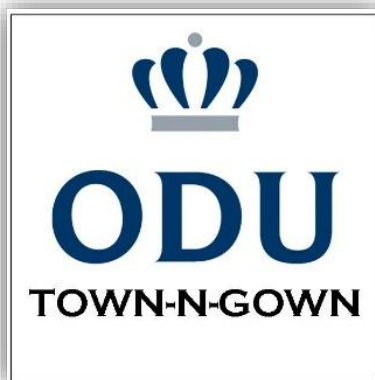
Saturday, January 31, 2026, game @ 1pm

The Lady Monarchs host the Southern Mississippi Lady Eagles

**RSVP** by January 23, 2026 to [jldouglas23462@aol.com](mailto:jldouglas23462@aol.com) or  
Jo Hayden at [jthaydn@gmail.com](mailto:jthaydn@gmail.com)



Wanted: Newsletter Editor. Town-N-Gown is looking for a detail-oriented ODU Monarch fan who enjoys sharing all the latest news from campus and the larger community. Contact Jo Hayden ([jthaydn@gmail.com](mailto:jthaydn@gmail.com)) for details!



*Thank you for your continuing support of Town-N-Gown and ODU! GO MONARCHS!!*