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## Best practices guide helps arts and craft centers adapt to changing industry



The Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement has created a best practices guide for arts and craft centers to help them adapt to changing market and industry conditions.

Arts and craft centers fall within the arts schools industry and can be either residential or non-residential. The centers offer a variety of classes, focusing on subjects including, but not limited to: painting, drawing, blacksmithing, jewelry-making, cooking, pottery, and textiles. Residential centers tend to offer longer courses that can last for multiple weeks while non-residential centers typically offer shorter-term courses or classes on a weekly basis.

Read more about the arts and craft centers best practice guide: <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/05/17/vt-cece-develops-document-to-guide-arts-and-craft-centers/>

## Holly Carroll joins CECE as business manager



Holly Carroll, formerly a business operations specialist with the vice president for Outreach and International Affairs, has joined the Center for Economic and Community Engagement as its new business manager.

Carroll spent 20 years working in senior management for OIA. "I'm really excited to be on this new venture," she said. "I'm looking forward to doing something different, expanding my knowledge, and using what I've learned from my degrees."

Read more about Holly Carroll: <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/05/25/holly-carroll-joins-cece-as-business-manager/>

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## CECE advisory board meeting focuses on project and personnel updates, future of Vibrant Virginia



The Center for Economic & Community Engagement Advisory Board and Virginia Tech Council on Vibrant Virginia held a joint meeting on May 23rd to discuss the future of the Vibrant Virginia program, provide personnel updates, and highlight current projects including the ACE Cluster Coalition, a 75-million dollar submission to the U.S. Economic Development Administration focused on the future of transportation.

Center staff also shared a video update on the Vibrant Virginia Impact Fund grantees, which can be seen on the Vibrant Virginia webpage: <https://cece.vt.edu/VibrantVirginia.html>

Read more about the board meeting: <https://blogs.tlos.vt.edu/cece/2022/06/01/cece-and-virginia-tech-council-on-vibrant-virginia-hold-joint-board-meeting/>

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## Meet our new graduate assistant Sadhana Manthapuri



Sadhana Manthapuri is pursuing her Ph.D. degree in Planning, Governance and Globalization in the Urban & Environmental Design & Planning track. Before joining Virginia Tech, she had two years of work experience in assisting the state government of Telangana, India to frame and implement various sustainable urban development policies.

She completed her master's degree with a specialization in regional planning in 2019 from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. During this period, her research focused on understanding the dynamics of cultural economics in India. She also worked on sustainable development of the Andaman Islands, which is home to indigenous tribes.

**Research interests:** local economic development, climate change, and transit justice.

### **Publications:**

- "Simulation of a Geo-Spatial Model through Networking Various Tourism Nodes of Andhra Pradesh – A case Study of Vijayawada" in GIS INDIA, in Jan 2016.
- "Role of Solid Waste Landfill Site in Solid Waste Management at Regional Scale" of India (NCHF) Bulletin, September-October 2018.
- "Rethinking the dimensions and approach of Circular Economy from the perspective of developing countries" ISO95, November, 2020.

**Email address:** sadhanam@vt.edu, sadhana.manthapuri@gmail.com

**LinkedIn:** sadhana manthapuri

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## Meet an Advisory Board Member: Kiyah Duffey, Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Fralin Life Sciences Institute at Virginia Tech



## **1. What is your career history?**

I have a Ph.D. in nutritional epidemiology and have worked at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Virginia Tech as research faculty. I left Virginia Tech and joined a small consulting firm based in the greater Boston area that worked with for-profit food companies and organizations doing nutrition consulting research. After that company closed down, I created my own consulting company where I spent more time working in the non-profit sector and serving as the science counsel to legal firms who needed help understanding nutrition science.

What led to my current role was a meeting I had with Matt Hulver, the former executive director of the Fralin Life Sciences Institute at Virginia Tech. I spent some time talking to him about the work I enjoyed doing, from conducting academic research to starting a business. He was looking to build a team for the institute and said it would be great if we could find a way for me to come on board. We talked about how I could use the skills that I've developed, and in April 2020 I started as the director of strategic initiatives for Fralin Life Sciences.

## **2. What are some of the projects you are currently working on as the director of strategic initiatives for the Fralin Life Sciences Institute?**

I have a wonderful team of people at Fralin Life Sciences that I get to work with. Some of the biggest projects we're working on are: instituting a process for establishing memorandums of understanding for the various investments we make around campus; identifying ways in which the institute can use our lab spaces more effectively and share those resources with the university; and evaluating how our end of year reporting is collected and shared. Also, we work as a team to understand how requests for funding fit into our investment strategy and how we can use those funds to support the research enterprise on campus.

## **3. What is your favorite part of working at Virginia Tech?**

Hands down, what I have loved most about my position at the Fralin Life Sciences Institute is the people that I get to work with. The leadership team, the staff in the building where I sit, and those I have met that are part of the institute are wonderful individuals. I've really enjoyed getting to know them.

## **4. What is one of your proudest accomplishments?**

My graduate work was used as the basis for a New York City executive order that required calorie posting on menu labels at fast food restaurants and I was asked to prepare expert testimony to support the passing of this order. It was fantastic as a grad student to see my research have such clear and direct impacts on people's behaviors and on policy decisions. I'm also extremely proud of the company I created. Developing a product and learning the manufacturing process required a lot of perseverance and I'm proud of what I was able to create. At Fralin, I am very proud of the work I did supporting the TECH Together Campaign, which was launched in the spring/summer of 2020 as we all tried to figure out how to come back to campus safely amidst the COVID pandemic.

## **5. What inspired you to start your own company, Kizingo?**

My graduate work focused on understanding how people made decisions about what they ate and how those decisions impacted their health. When my oldest started eating solid foods, I realized that many of the habits adults wanted to change could actually be influenced early in life. I realized we could potentially set kids on a path to healthier habits early on. I began reading the literature around kids' dietary habits and health, and I learned that parents and caregivers often overfeed their kids when they are beginning to eat solid foods. There was a lot of evidence showing that kids who can maintain control over the self-feeding process are less likely to overeat and are less likely to become picky eaters. The tools I was giving my kids to eat with, utensils in particular, were not well designed to encourage the kinds of behaviors we want them to have. So, I decided to design something different.

## **6. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to start their own business?**

Do not be afraid to ask questions. In anything you do – academia, business, parenting, even being a good friend! – but especially when you are starting a business, you have to be willing to admit when you don't know something and be willing to learn. One of the best questions I've found is "what questions haven't I asked? What don't I know?" I knew nothing about plastic injection manufacturing and admitting this was critically important. Also, you have to focus on what you love and not try to be someone else's business. The more you can focus on your company, your path, and your strengths – rather than trying to do it the way someone else did – the easier it will be to keep going.

**7. What advice would you give to someone who is uncertain what path to take in their career?**

My advice is to say yes more often. Find what you enjoy doing, and discover the ways you can do that while contributing to a team or an organization. I never could have dreamed as a grad student that I would be at this point in my career. I have said yes to opportunities, and I have been willing to make mistakes. I've been interested in trying new things and I think that's gotten me to where I am, where I can work with an organization and be in a position where I get to look at the big picture as well as the steps we need to take to reach our goals.

**8. What are you looking forward to doing most as a member of the CECE advisory board?**

Whenever I am able to be in a setting like this, I always look forward to learning. There are so many opportunities for organizations, institutes, and groups to learn from one another and help support each other's missions by working together. There's a great potential for that kind of collaboration with CECE. And to then have some direct and positive impact on the commonwealth is also really exciting.

**9. What books have you read recently that you would recommend?**

I just read *You Are Your Best Thing*, a compilation of stories about the Black experience, edited by Tarana Burke and Brené Brown, and it was beautiful and moving.

I also finished reading *Find Your Why* and *Start With Why*, two books by Simon Sinek. From a business and team perspective, starting with why is a powerful message that is applicable to anybody, including parents!

Right now, I am reading a book called *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern, which my 12-year old was reading for one of her electives at school. She was really enjoying it so I picked it up, and it is a fun and fantastical book.

**10. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?**

I have had the pleasure of doing a lot of travel in my life and right now, top on my list for another visit is the Galápagos.