



Thomas Jefferson described his vision for the University of Virginia as “a system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest.” **Yvonne B. Hubbard**, who became UVA’s director of Student Financial Services in 2002, took that vision to heart

when she and her staff designed AccessUVA in 2004. With the program, the University committed to meeting 100 percent of students’ demonstrated need.

Those who nominated her for the Zintl award wrote: “From her view, financial aid has less to do with balancing an equation in a financing formula than it does about leveling the playing field.”

AccessUVA has been tweaked over the years, but if success can be measured in the diversity of UVA’s student body, it has worked: In Fall 2021, the University welcomed its most diverse class ever, with about 40 percent identifying as minority. About 13 percent were the first in their families to attend college.

In 2008, Hubbard accepted the Benjamin Franklin Award on behalf of the University from the National Student Loan Program, recognizing its financial literacy education of students. “We have made it clear from the start that AccessUVA is not just about money, but about preparing students for the lives that they will lead,” she said.

Hubbard came to the University in 1985 as a computer programmer in financial aid and worked her way up to systems analyst. She became Director of Financial Aid in 1997, after serving as interim director for a year. Between 2000 and 2002, she served as acting Bursar. In 2002, Financial Aid and Student Accounts were combined into Student Financial Services. She retired from UVA in 2015.

WHY DID YOU COME TO UVA?

I have a teaching degree, and I was a social worker for about five years. I found from experience that neither suited me. I had been in the Air Force, and with my veterans benefits, I went back to school at PVCC in computer programming. The biggest employer for computer programmers in the area was the University. I wanted to work for an educational institution, and I was very blessed to get a job here at the University of Virginia.

WHAT WAS UVA LIKE WHEN YOU ARRIVED? HOW HAS IT CHANGED AND/OR STAYED THE SAME?

My job originally was as a computer programmer for the Financial Aid Office. I was in administrative computing, and for a non-academic, you see a very different side of the University.

UVA acted like a small school back in 1985, and everything was very manual and very slow. So, we were on the leading edge of trying to upgrade the administrative systems into something that was more efficient, less manual.

HOW DO YOU THINK DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF YOUR IDENTITY, INCLUDING BEING A WOMAN, IMPACTED HOW PEOPLE RESPONDED TO YOU IN YOUR POSITION?

I never felt that being a woman had anything to do with anything. At the University, I was always in the moment with anybody who was in the room. I never felt not spoken to, not considered. I never had those issues, but I know that other people did. It wasn't about me, it was really about who I worked with. I was hired by Leonard Sandridge and John Casteen. I worked with Pat Lampkin. It was a phenomenal experience.

Parents responded to me as being female sometimes. There were times when I would have to have my boss, Steve Kimata, come and talk to a parent because being female was an issue with them, but that was few and far between. I can really say that being a woman in my job never made any difference. I probably was pretty blessed because of that.

WHAT SUPPORT(S) DID YOU HAVE? WHAT KEPT YOU GOING IN MOMENTS OF ADVERSITY?

I went from being a supervisor in the computer world, a Program Manager and Systems Analyst, to being Director of Financial Aid. You can imagine what kind of support I needed. All of a sudden, I needed to navigate the institution itself, and deal with students and parents and academics. I was with a totally new group of people.

Pat Lampkin, who at that time was an Associate Vice President in Student Affairs under Bill Harmon, was phenomenal. Pat just understood the institution, and she understood how to mentor people. I'd be in her office crying, it was just overwhelming at times. Without Pat and her patience, I would have failed miserably.

continued

In Her Words | Yvonne B. Hubbard

There were other women who were always there for me, like Kathy Reid, who was a Vice Provost, and Ann Antrobus, the Registrar. All these women understood how to mentor somebody and they never let me doubt that I could do what I had been asked to do.

I should just have started by saying that I worked with phenomenal people. I had great supervisors – Mr. Sandridge and Steve Kimata and Bill Harmon were all very supportive.

When I was offered the position, Leonard Sandridge, with Bill Harmon and Pat Lampkin sitting next to him, said to me, “We expect you to fail sometimes because if you don’t fail, you’re not moving. And we will be there. You are not in this alone – we will be there with you.”

I would say to all the women and people at the institution in non-academic jobs: You’re so a part of the institution. You may not see a student every day but you are so important to the success and welfare of our students. You should never doubt that you’re part of that core mission of the institution.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A WOMAN IN A SIMILAR POSITION TODAY?

The impostor syndrome is real and it’s debilitating. I think the best advice I can ever give anyone is to never be afraid to ask for help. I suppose there are times you have to know who to ask for help. There are some people who aren’t interested in your success, but that was so rare. When I asked for advice, I always got help. And whether that’s female or male, it’s somebody you trust. We all have rough times, and we can’t get through them by ourselves.

Whether as a woman in the workplace or as just a person in the workplace, when someone asks for help, everything else disappears and that person in front of you becomes your focus, because that person is saying to you, “I trust you, help me get through this.” I think that if we do that, then the University will always be successful.

IS THERE SOMEONE YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF HAVING SUPPORTED OR HAVE ENJOYED A MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH?

Administrative women were my focus, women who don’t see a student every day. They all affect what happens to our students at the institution – their grades or access to classes. I think that I’ve helped people see the connection between the bland administrative side of things and how it really does support our students and our mission at the University.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED? WHAT LEGACY DID YOU LEAVE THAT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

If you'd asked me this five years ago – which course, when you retire, people ask you that all the time – I would have talked about how we changed financial aid at the University. UVA considered itself a small school and, therefore, didn't have a lot of money and couldn't do a lot to support our students.

We changed that. I would say, I loved our financial aid programs and I love the fact that we put our two offices (Financial Aid and Student Accounts) together, and I love the fact that we supported our students.

But now, five years later, I hope, I think, I was trusted. You can tell that I'm a little brash, probably a little loud. But I know people trusted me. I know that no one ever doubted my commitment to our students. I was trustworthy and, in this day and age, being trusted takes a lot of work. I'm proud of it.

I would say to all the women and people at the institution in non-academic jobs: You're so a part of the institution. You may not see a student every day. You are still so important to the success and welfare of our students, that you should never doubt that you're part of that core mission of the institution.

Every once in a while, we on the administrative side of things forget that, and that's why it's always great to go visit on Grounds. There were people that I worked with who had never been on Grounds, so we would take a little trip to the Lawn and just sit and enjoy what the students enjoy every day. I think that it is important to really be in the moment with the mission.



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