

BEYOND THE BEAT

A LIVE-RECORDED SERIES AT VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Every life has a rhythm. Every story has a reason.

THE VISION

Everything has a beat - a vibration. Beyond the Beat is a television and digital interview series hosted by VSU psychology alumna Chey Butta (Cheyja Andrews). Artists, athletes and public figures move beyond applause and achievement to share the real stories of identity, struggle, healing, resilience and purpose. Each live campus recording connects a recognized guest with student voices, an uplifting "Speak Life" moment, and an optional live performance.

THE URGENCY: BEHIND THE HEADLINES ARE REAL STUDENTS

37%

reported moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms¹

11%

reported suicidal thoughts¹

13%

experienced nonconsensual sexual contact since enrollment²

14.1%

of undergraduate women with partners reported intimate partner violence²

¹ Healthy Minds Study 2024–2025, surveyed college students. ² 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey, 33 participating universities. Neither survey measures VSU-specific rates.

WHY VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY? WHY NOW?

STUDENT WELL-BEING

Open, stigma-reducing conversations on anxiety, suicide prevention, trauma, consent, relationships and help-seeking, with campus support resources present.

REAL-WORLD TRAINING

Students help research, film, direct, produce, edit, promote and cover each episode alongside professional mentors; potential internships and portfolio work.

A GREATER PLATFORM

Position VSU as the launch home for a distinct HBCU-rooted series linking cultural influence, student success and nationally shareable storytelling.

THE ON-CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

Proposed format: a live audience recording featuring a candid guest interview, student-led questions, a "Speak Life" message, and select live music where appropriate. Mass Communications students collaborate on planning and production; Student Affairs, Counseling and Title IX partners help design safe discussion and clear support pathways.

PILOT + CADENCE Launch with one co-produced pilot; aim for three campus tapings annually (every four months), with room to expand to quarterly.

THE INVITATION

Partner with Beyond the Beat to explore a VSU-based pilot. I am seeking your support for a planning conversation with Mass Communications, Student Affairs and campus leadership to align student roles, facilities, funding or sponsorship opportunities, guest outreach, safeguards and distribution.

"I want to bring what I have learned back to the university that helped shape who I am - and create a stage where students discover the power of their own stories."

CHEY BUTTA | Cheyja Andrews | VSU Alumna, Psychology | Host, Beyond the Beat | Founder, Speak Life

SOURCES Healthy Minds Study (2024–25): healthpolicy.ucla.edu/our-work/publications/healthy-minds-study-2024-2025-data-report | AAU Campus Climate Survey (2019): aau.edu/resource-library/aau-campus-climate-survey-2019