



**Press Clippings
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People in the News

POSTED: November 10, 2015

Peirce College, Philadelphia, has promoted **Uva C. Coles** to vice president of institutional advancement and strategic partnerships, from vice president of student services, and **Brad K. Hodge** to vice president of student services and retention management, from vice president, finance. New hires include **Elizabeth M. Krapp**, vice president of finance and administration, formerly assistant treasurer at Franklin and Marshall College, and **Malik Brown**, assistant vice president of employer relations, formerly Dixon House director for the adult and family services division at Diversified Community Services.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

philly.com

Campus Inq

Peirce College offers career advice - and interview suits, too!



Robyn Dizes, director of career development at Peirce College, shows off the college's career closet.

At Peirce College in Philadelphia, career advisers offer job-seeking male students tips on resume-writing and interview techniques.

Oh, and a spiffy suit to wear on the job interview, too. The college for years has referred female students and alumni to the non-profit "Career Wardrobe" where they can borrow interview attire free of charge. But

they could find no similar organization for men, so over the last two years, the Philadelphia-based college that caters to adult learners has been building its own wardrobe for its male students and alumni.

"We wanted to be able to offer the same type of services for men," said Robyn Dizes, director of career development.

Now celebrating its 150th anniversary, Peirce is making a push to upgrade its collection. It wants 150 suits.

The college is looking for donations of all sizes, big and tall, small and medium, light-colored, dark-colored - whatever would be appropriate for a job interview.

"We've also put the push on for additional ties and belts," Dizes said.

Peirce career counseling officials are hoping to land the suave stash by the end of December.

"It's a really big need that we have," said Amanda Hill, supervisor of marketing and communications at Peirce, which enrolls about 2,200 students, average age about 35. "We've seen the success of students when they come in and find a suit that fits and they go out on an interview and can put all their skills to work. It's a really great thing."

Peirce has turned an office into a makeshift dressing room with blinds and racks of clothing. They call it the "Career Closet."

Clothing can be borrowed for up to two weeks, free of charge, by current students and alumni. (The clothing is available to those trying to land a job. Once the job is landed, individuals must begin building their own wardrobe).

Since July 72 Peirce students have borrowed from the closet.

It's not a unique program. Other colleges have started career closets, too. At the University of Arkansas, the Sam M. Walton College of Business Career Development Center Closet (Career Closet) opened in August 2010. Kansas State, Delta College in Michigan and Santa Monica College all have closets, too. More recently, two UCLA seniors opened one in April.

"It made me pause because we go to UCLA to get higher education to go to graduate school or get a good job, and attire shouldn't be the one thing holding us back from achieving our goals," Amir Hakimi said in an interview on UCLA's web site.

New to the interview world, students don't always know what they need, Dizes said. Her office hammers on the importance of appearance.

"The first impression is often the last impression," she said.

At Peirce, students will be charged \$50 if they don't return the clothing - but that's not happened in the last two years, Dizes said.

"They check it out like a library book," she said. "They are pretty good about returning it."

Philadelphia

Cheryl Ann Wadlington's Fight to Save Black Girls

In the wake of the Spring Valley High assault, the empowerment work of Philadelphia's Evoluer House is more vital than ever.

BY **BOBBI BOOKER** | NOVEMBER 3, 2015 AT 3:55 PM



Students from Evoluer House summer 2015 Youth Workforce Development and Personal Development programs leaving class at Peirce College. Inset: Cheryl Ann Wadlington.

When video surfaced of a South Carolina school security officer **yanking a high-school student from her desk** because she had allegedly disobeyed orders to put her cellphone away, observers howled. Although the white officer, **Ben Fields**, was fired, many blamed the girl — an African American teenager — for not complying with her teacher. The incident was one of thousands that have played out across the country in which reported misconduct by Black girls at school prompted a seemingly disproportionate — and often violent — response by school and local authorities.

“Girls of color face much harsher school discipline than their white peers but are excluded from current efforts to address the school-to-prison pipeline,” according

to “**Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected**,” a report by Columbia Law School’s Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies and the African American Policy Forum. The report, based on a new review of national data and personal interviews with young women in Boston and New York, cites several examples of excessive disciplinary actions against young Black girls, including the controversial 2014 case of a 12-year-old in Georgia who faced expulsion and criminal charges for writing the word “hi” on a locker room wall. A white female classmate who was also involved faced a much less severe punishment.

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Education cited in the report, nationally Black girls were suspended six times more than white girls, while Black boys were suspended three times as often as white boys. Equally shocking is The National Crittenton Foundation (TNCF) recent report, “**Gender Injustice**,” which noted that “Girls are rarely detained for offenses that cause a risk to public safety — they are significantly more likely to face arrest for ‘status offenses,’ which are actions that would not be considered a crime if they were adults, such as running away.” The 2014 “**Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls: A Call to Action for Educational Equity**,” a report co-written by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the National Women’s Law Center, points out that African-American girls “are the group of students who are often not the focal point in conversations about educational equity.”

Based on the amount of troubling news this trio of stark reports contains, the cry for societal change has even reached the highest level of government. Last week, The White House Council on Women and Girls and the Domestic Policy Council’s Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity team held an all-day forum called “**Girls of Color and Intervening Public Systems: How Can Communities Interrupt the Sexual Abuse-to-Prison Pipeline?**”

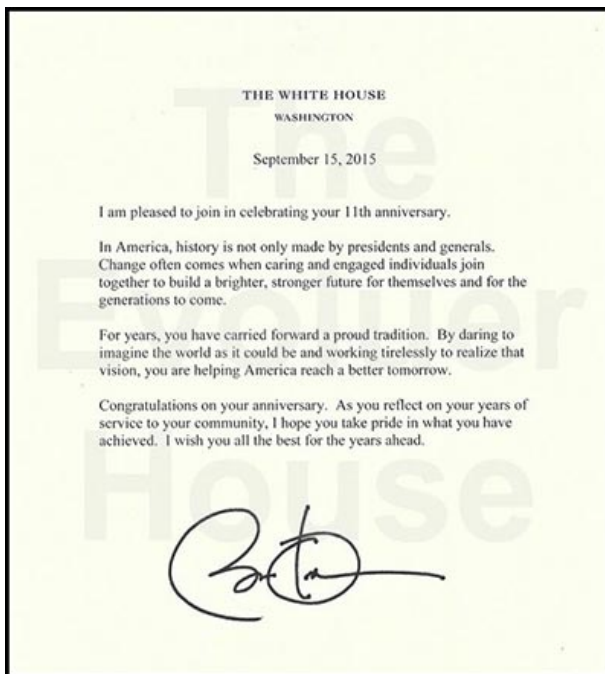
“We don’t often talk about how society treats Black women and girls before they end up in prison,” said **President Obama** in a September speech to the Congressional Black Caucus. “They’re suspended at higher rates than white boys and all other girls. And while boys face the school-to-prison pipeline, a lot of girls are facing a more sinister sexual abuse-to-prison pipeline. Victims of early sexual abuse are more likely to fail in school, which can lead to sexual exploitation, which can lead to prison. So we’re focusing on boys, but we’re also investing in ways to change the odds for at-risk girls — to make sure that they are loved and valued, to give them a chance.

The conditions that confront many Black girls and other girls of color has been at the forefront of nearly 20 years of advocacy of **Cheryl Ann Wadlington**. While Wadlington is known to magazine readers and TV viewers as a fashion and beauty correspondent and image expert, she is dedicated to empowering young, at-risk girls and women in the Philadelphia region with her non-profit program,

The Evoluer House. As the executive director, Wadlington oversees a two-tiered girl empowerment curriculum: the Evoluer Personal Development Workshop and Youth Workforce Development Programs. (Full disclosure: I did some volunteer work for Evoluer House in December 2013; programs like it helped me in my own youth.)

“Black girls feel devalued and feel their voices are not heard,” said Wadlington in a phone interview. “Decades ago, I saw something was going on with Black girls. Just by being a woman, you can do observational research and see that there is something going on in terms of the behavior of young girls. Also in my travels around the country, I just saw behavior that was very strange and outside of the box in a bad way. I noticed that something was going on that is not good for the progression and development of a young girl. I said something needs to be done.”

Initially, Wadlington created the “Foundation of Educational Excellence,” a minority college scholarship project with the help of the late Pa. State Representative **David P. Richardson, Jr.**, a relentless community advocate. Wadlington explained that non-profit The Evoluer House was started in 2004 “to specifically deal with girls, because innately, I knew something was wrong. ... I had concerns, and I knew girls needed something they could relate to ... [so] we decided to go after those girls that some people considered lost, forgotten or hard to reach. We sat down with educators and asked: ‘What are the issues and how do we reach these girls?’”



With a team of education, human resources and image professionals, Wadlington developed two eight-week programs aimed at girls 13 to 18 years old. The workshop acknowledges the pressures these teens face, then grooms them by providing social, communication and leadership skill sets. “Both programs have a civic engagement class to show girls how they can make a difference in their community,” explained Wadlington, who says each Workshop has a waiting list of over 100. To date, the workshops have ushered over 1,000 at-risk girls into becoming productive members of society — a fete that

was recognized by Obama in a letter of congratulations (left) to the 11-year-old organization.

In a sense, Wadlington is “paying it forward” by encouraging vulnerable girls because, like them, her life was in peril as a youth. As a result of acting out after her father’s death, Wadlington was sent to reform school, an event she details in her 2013 memoir/self-help book, *The DivaGirl’s Guide to Style and Self-Respect*.

“I think why I have compassion and have a deep passion to do this is because I know who that maybe-lost girl is,” said Wadlington. “I can relate to what young girls may be going through because I was a girl who did go through the system, but was able to rise to the top because of intervention from women and mentors in the community. That is the reason I am who I am today, and it is that kind of impact that I knew was necessary to save our girls — and it had to be uncompromising.”

Wadlington cites a [Philadelphia Public School Notebook story](#) that published the 2011-12 Civil Rights Data Collection, a biennial survey of key education and civil rights issues in the nation’s public schools. It showed that in Philadelphia 25 percent of Black girls received out-of-school suspensions, compared to 2 percent of white girls. The data also show that in Philadelphia, 33 percent of Black girls were referred to law enforcement as opposed to 2 percent of white girls. Nancy Potter, staff attorney at Pennsylvania’s Education Law Center, said that the rate of exclusionary discipline practices — suspensions and expulsions — in Philadelphia schools, especially among Black girls, is also alarming.

According to Wadlington, the video of a 16-year-old nonviolent algebra student assaulted by a school cop should not only escalate the “school-to-prison pipeline” debate, but also stir a collective effort to address violence and abuse against the young women in all of our communities.

“Everyone should care because when girls do better we all do better,” said Wadlington. “When girls are empowered and educated they are able to take care of their family, and our taxpayers don’t have to worry about taking care of future mothers who may go into the system. For example, for a girl to attend our program it’s \$1,000 a child, but to keep her in a juvenile justice system you’re looking at \$30,000 a year of taxpayer’s money. So it does have a significant impact on the economy as well.”