



Take Three with Venus Coates

Venus Coates, MBA is the Department Administrator for the Kern Institute

We recently asked Venus to share a little about herself and her role in the Kern Institute...

Tell us about your background and current role in the Kern Institute:

I am a Milwaukeean, born and raised in the 53206 ZIP code. My high school math teacher, Jim Piatt, somehow convinced my mom that I should take algebra and geometry during my first year of high school. From there, it became a love-hate relationship with numbers. But the push from Mr. Piatt led me to major in accounting at Howard University.

I am by *trade* an accountant, but like many accountants, wanted to get on the other side of the numbers. My career spans auditing, financial planning, and analysis across multiple industries: manufacturing, financial services, hospitality, and healthcare. My husband Avery and I are raising three girls: Ajah, Amayah, and Aleyah. The oldest son, Anthony, I think is raising *us*, while his brother watches from heaven and gives him some insight. I have served in my role as a Department Administrator since August 2019. I often share that my role is to *keep the lights on*, although I am responsible for financial and operational oversight.

I also take pride in asking enough questions to *keep "the lights on"* through our work.

What accomplishment have you been most proud of in your work?

I am proud of the team of colleagues I work with daily to impact change. Dr. Kalet and I both started in late 2019, and there have been multiple transitions. Being new to the organization -- figuring out my position while recruiting talent -- was challenging. Over the last several years, recruitment of a diverse, innovative, and courageous team has elevated the offerings of the Kern Institute.

I am also proud of the innovative programming that has become part of the MCWfusion curriculum. The 4C and REACH programs have laid a foundation for Learning Communities. It would not be right if I did not mention as an accomplishment moving from a basic to an intermediate user of Oracle. All my fellow Department Administrators can attest to this accomplishment.



What Kern activities do you look forward to in the coming year?

More days with temperatures above 70 degrees... it has been a long winter. 😊

I look forward to completing our strategic plan. The strategy allows us to define our mission, vision, and core values. There is a quote by Lisa Graff that states, “You can't get where you're *going* without being where you've *been*.”

The “*been*” state of the Kern Institute and evolving platform of the college gives us a solid foundation for propelling forward and establishing MCW as an exemplar of medical education.

I continue to look forward to candid conversations when I am asked, “What do you do, or what does the Kern Institute do?” These conversations allow me to engage, learn from our stakeholders, and respond, “What you think should be the focus of the Kern Institute?”



Favorite Spring Recipe

My favorite recipe comes from my best friend from college (Howard University) Vanessa is my go-to person for recipes. Below is one that she curated.

Strawberry Crunch French Toast

Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients:

1 day-old loaf Challah Bread or Brioche

10 lemon flavored Oreo cookies

8 vanilla wafer cookies
1 cup (.8 oz bag) freeze-dried strawberries
3 Eggs
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup milk
1/4 cup flour
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla extract
8 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature
1/4 cup strawberry preserves , at room temperature
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
1 Tbs. powdered sugar (optional)
Maple syrup (optional)

Instructions:

1. Slice your loaf into 2-inch slices. You'll get about 4 slices per loaf, not using the ends of the bread. Then, cut a 1-inch slit about half-way deep into the slices.
2. Place cookies and freeze-dried strawberries into a large (gallon-size) plastic food storage bag. Seal the bag. Crush mixture with a rolling pin into fine crumbs. Pour strawberry cookie crumbs onto a plate and set aside.
3. In a shallow bowl or dish, whisk together eggs, flour, granulated sugar, salt, and vanilla extract. Make sure to smooth out the lumps from the flour. Then, slowly whisk in your heavy cream and milk.
4. In a small bowl, add the cream cheese and strawberry preserves. Whip together with a hand mixer. Place into a small (quart-size) plastic food storage bag. Seal it and place in the refrigerator.
5. Dip each piece of bread into the egg mixture and then press it gently into the strawberry cookie crumbs, flipping to coat on both sides.
6. Melt butter on a griddle over medium heat; add the bread and cook for 2 minutes on each side, until golden brown.
7. Place bread, slit-side up onto a plate. Take the cream cheese mixture out of the refrigerator and squeeze into one corner of the food storage bag, forming a cone shape like a piping bag. Cut the tip off of the bag and squeeze filling into the slits of the bread.
8. Serve with sprinkled powdered sugar and maple syrup.



Vanessa Vilson is a personal chef and caterer in the DC area. She's earned an Advanced Culinary Arts degree from Stratford University. She developed her passion for cooking from her paternal grandmother, who owned a culinary school and taught cooking and pastry-making on the island of Haiti. Vanessa's food captures the essence of her New York City upbringing and her Caribbean roots. She aims to serve the most delicious, palette-pleasing and eye-catching food, which she refers to as "love on a plate!"