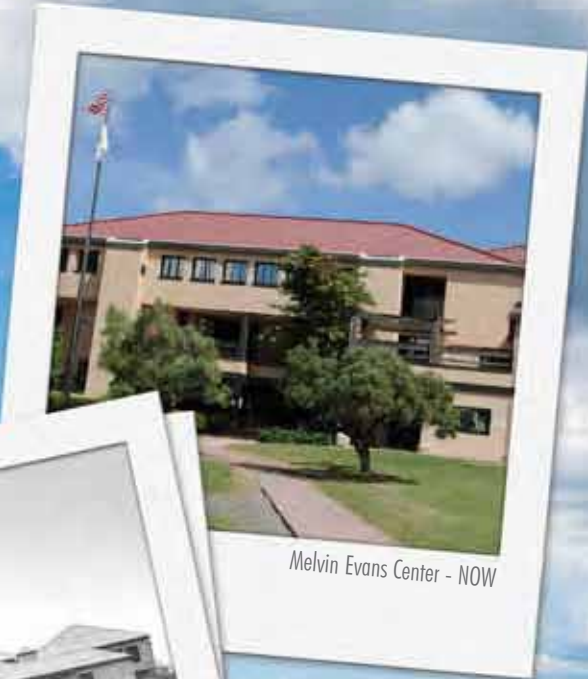


UNIVERSITY of the VIRGIN ISLANDS

# UVI

2010, Vol. 11

# magazine



Melvin Evans Center - NOW



UVI Residence Hall - THEN



Melvin Evans Center - THEN



UVI Residence Hall - NOW



Sports & Fitness Center - THEN



Sports & Fitness Center - NOW

## Transition Transformation

- Funding College Then and Now
- The Evolution of the Nursing Division



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UNIVERSITY of the VIRGIN ISLANDS MAGAZINE



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UVI then and now against the backdrop of Brewers Bay beach on the St. Thomas campus.

# UVMAGAZINE

UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS MAGAZINE 2008

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**PRINTING**

Model Offset Printing

**MISSION:**

To foster interest in and support for the University by sharing information with our internal and external constituents about the people and events shaping the University of the Virgin Islands.

**EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

UVI Magazine is published annually by the UVI Public Relations Office with the support of the Office of the President and the Institutional Advancement component.

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The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Commission on Recognition of Post-secondary Accreditation.



Photo by: Gary Metz

**“Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energizing spirit.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Think back to a time in your life that you consider meaningful. Whether it was the day the letter arrived telling you that you had been accepted to the college of your choice, your wedding day, or the day that you packed up everything and moved to a new town, chances are that you remember that moment because it signaled a shift – a change – a transition in your life.

And so it is at the University of the Virgin Islands. As UVI faces its 48th year, the campuses have been energized by the spirit of anticipation. A new University president, Dr. David Hall, is at the helm. Change is inevitable and UVI students, faculty and staff are motivated by the possibilities. UVI is on the brink.

Included in this issue of UVI Magazine are stories of transition – of people whose lives have been changed by their experiences at the University of the Virgin Islands, or whose contributions to the University have the potential to impact the territory, the region and the world in the very near future.

This 11th issue of UVI Magazine features a new athletics section, owing to the growing popularity and success of the University's athletics program. It also chronicles U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration, as witnessed by members of the Golden Key International Honour Society, who say their lives have been forever changed by the experience. Likewise, students who traveled to a Thurgood Marshall College Fund conference have returned home to UVI with new hope and inspiration. These stories are evidence of change that we really can believe in.

The University family is engaged in a common pursuit – joining hands, moving forward as we embrace momentous times that lie ahead. Imagine the possibilities. ✦

Patrice K. Johnson  
Editor-In-Chief



## Transitions and Transformations

It is a special pleasure to write my first message for the UVI Magazine. The theme for this issue is "Transition." There is a line in an old gospel hymn which states that "life is filled with swift transitions," and so is the life of a University. My appointment as the fifth President of the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) is a major transition for this special institution. In the short time I have been in office there are several initiatives which have been implemented. I have made the enhancement of our students' success a priority by focusing on how we can systematically increase our retention and graduation rates. I have also made it an institutional priority to develop and sustain a greater, closer and more systematic partnership with leaders providing K-12 education, in order to ensure that all students within the territory can reach their full educational potential. We have started new programs geared towards retaining and attracting more male students to the University. There is now a new budget process to create greater transparency and inclusiveness with respect to the University's budgeting process. These and other new initiatives all come together to create a major transition at UVI.

However, transitions are very common, but transformations are unique and precious. Transformation suggests that the underlying quality of a person, entity or institution changes at its core. It suggests an enhancement in values as well as in the material state of things. What I hope my presence and leadership bring to UVI is true transformation. UVI is a unique University that has produced countless graduates who have made tremendous contributions to this territory, region, nation and world. As the University played a pivotal role in changing their lives, these alumni have been instrumental in changing the conditions of those around them. Yet our future requires that we create an educational process and culture that has a more profound and sustaining impact on the lives of those who attend UVI, and upon the world that we serve.

To be a transformative University we must have a greater substantive and more pervasive impact on the territory, the Caribbean and the world. To do this we must add more relevant programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. We must ensure that the major economic, social and health concerns of this region are also the major concerns of this University. We have to ensure that students throughout the Caribbean and the mainland see UVI as a destination of choice because of the quality of our programs and the power of our values. This University has had a special tradition of making students feel special and valued. We must do even more in this regard. Our future must be one where each person who passes through our doors gains a deeper understanding of their ability to make a profound difference in the world.

Transformation is also a spiritual principle. It suggests that a University is greater than the sum of its parts. There are intangible aspects to who we are as people and as institutions which cannot be easily measured but are essential to our growth and success. Though universities do not specialize in the concept of love, I deeply believe that our transformation will inspire us to create a "beloved community" where we care deeply for each other and those who we are called to serve.

Transitions will come each year of our existence. New students will arrive and others will graduate. New faculty members will come and some will leave us. But true transformation is not something that happens all of the time. It is something that we must intentionally create. It must emerge from the soul of our desires and from the heart of our passion for this University. To paraphrase Gandhi "we are the (transformation) we seek in the world." It is my fondest desire that all members of the UVI community will realize the wisdom in this statement and act upon it daily. ✦

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Hall  
President



UVI St. Thomas campus SGA President Jaedee Caines.



UVI's Upper Campus on St. Thomas is framed by Crown Mountain and the Herman E. Moore Golf Course.

## Making the Most of Her Higher Education

*"I started a bit later so I'm able to value what I'm getting here at UVI."* – Jaedee Caines

University of the Virgin Islands Senior Jaedee Caines has learned that with an education and a positive attitude her possibilities are endless. "UVI has exposed me to so much," the Communications major says. "Since I came to UVI I've realized the possibilities are endless. Everywhere I turn I see another opportunity for me to get better, an opportunity for me to grow." She credits much of this to her academic advisor and professor, Dr. Alexander Randall. Caines says Dr. Randall does not limit his students to the course offerings at UVI, but encourages them to look at different careers and opportunities, which has helped her to open her mind to think without boundaries.

Caines' exposure has not been limited to academic areas only. As someone with a penchant for getting involved, she's become a UVI student leader, a pageant contestant, sorority member, and more. Most recently Caines was elected president of the UVI St. Thomas campus Student Government Association.

"It's something that I was passionate about," Caines says. "I want to bring about change at UVI the best way I can." She was also the first runner up in the 2009 Miss UVI Ambassadorial

Competition. She has joined the sisterhood of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and is a resident assistant in the dormitories.

She also plays a role as vice president of the UVI St. Kitts/Nevis Association, a student peer educator, and a member of the UVI Advertising Club. While balancing all of her activities is a challenge, Caines says, "academics do come first." She has been on the Dean's list every semester at UVI.

"I think it's an advantage that I'm a bit older," says Caines, who went to work back home in St. Kitts/Nevis after earning a certificate from the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College. "I started (UVI) a bit later so I'm able to value what I'm getting here at UVI."

Caines is well on her way to accomplishing her dream career in journalism. She was named the top Communications student for the 2008-2009 academic year. Along with her experience at VON Radio, she has worked at the St. Kitts/Nevis Observer, SKN Vibes and the Government Information System. She is also a writer for the award-winning UVI Voice student newspaper.

The UVI senior says she hopes to pursue a masters and a doctoral degree after earning a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and an Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice in 2010. ➔



Miss UVI Carice Glasgow

## ...And She Does it While Wearing High Heels

Why settle for one degree when you can have several? Why choose only one career when you can have many? Miss UVI Carice Glasgow feels the possibilities are endless, so she says she likes to keep her options open.

"I love a lot of things and I feel that I can be good at a lot of things," Glasgow says. "I'm all over the place.

I don't have one set goal. I just love learning."

Glasgow is a sophomore computer science major who also likes the idea of studying law, medicine, marketing or tourism in graduate school. Although she may not pursue all, Glasgow says she plans to tackle at least two of the subjects. "If you have many passions, many things that you're interested in, then you'll be willing to do the work," she says.

Glasgow knows about hard work. When she entered the Miss UVI competition she was a resident assistant in the dorms, carrying a course load of 18 credit hours and was a member of various

clubs and organizations – including the Psychology Club, Math Boosters, the Travel Club, the International Students Association and the UVI Bucs Dance Squad.

The hard work paid off when Glasgow was crowned Miss UVI on March 28. She made history, becoming the first student enrolled on the St. Croix campus to win the Miss UVI title. She also walked away with the titles of Miss Photogenic, Miss Intellect, Best Performing Talent, Best Ambassadorial Presentation and Best Evening wear.

As Miss UVI, Glasgow serves as an ambassador for the University – participating in the University's recruitment efforts and being visible in the UVI and general communities. So far she has participated in orientation activities and the St. Thomas Carnival Parade.

"I hope to do my best and live up to everybody's expectations," Glasgow says of being Miss UVI. In addition to that role, she has also added more responsibilities to her plate, recently becoming a Student Government Sophomore Senator and president of the St. Croix Chapter of the Golden Key International Honour Society.

Glasgow, who is from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, plans to return to work at the Ministry of Telecommunications after her completing her degree at UVI. After a few years of working, she hopes to further her education by pursuing a master's degree. Glasgow says her future is promising and her possibilities are without limits. ➔



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UVI students and their advisors assemble at the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's 9th Annual Leadership Institute.

## Learning Firsthand What It Takes to Reach the Top

“Specializing in Futures” is the slogan UVI chose for itself as it told the world what students receiving their education here could expect to gain. In 2009 some of those students, facing graduation day, found another institution making their future a focus, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. They took part in a conference sponsored by the college fund and came home with an idea of what it takes to be a leader and how they could expect to progress if they accept that challenge.

In October TMCF hosted its 9th Annual Leadership Institute, Recruitment Conference and Career Fair in New York. This year's theme was “Equipping Leaders to Assess, Analyze and Solve Complex Problems.” TMCF promotes its annual institute as the premier career conference and recruitment fair for students attending Historically Black College and Universities.

The University of the Virgin Islands was one of the 49 schools taking part in the 2009 event. “UVI was very excited to have received an invitation for 17 of our students to participate,” says Miriam Osborne-Elliott, Associate Campus Administrator for Student Affairs.

The campus administrator said ten of the students were selected from two days of interviews conducted on the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses in September. The students were juniors and seniors with demonstrated academic acumen in business, science, technology and math. Anitra Terrell from TMCF, conducted the interview.

The other seven attendees were students who had participated in the TMCF's Teacher Quality and Retention Program (TQRP) that was held this summer. TQRP helps new teachers by giving them guidance and support during their first three years of teaching in the public school system.

Some of the students who took part in the conference said they were left with a new perspective on the corporate world and the role they may someday play in it. Some said they received insights on what it takes to be successful leaders. Others, who did not have corporate aspirations, called it the kind of experience that any student could benefit from.

Bernhardt Simmonds said he brought a new set of skills back

from the conference. “The Leadership Institute enhanced my communication skills, amplified my confidence, and it rewarded me with the knowledge needed to be successful in the corporate world. It allowed me the opportunity to be interviewed by a few of the Fortune 500 companies and network with students from different universities all over the United States. This experience is one that has changed my life forever,” he says.

More than 25 corporate recruiters took part in this year's leadership conference. Among the participating corporate leaders were Hewlett Packard, Nike, American Airlines, Shell Oil, the National Basketball Association, and federal agencies including the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Departments of Energy and Defense.

“From the opening plenary session, in which Ms. Gloria Mayfield Banks shared her ‘ABC's of Success’ to the closing event – the 22nd Anniversary Award Black Tie Dinner, the institute was entertaining, rewarding, and very informative. The UVI participants will soon share their experiences back home on their respective campuses,” Osborne-Elliott says.

There was also a workshop designed to help participants identify their greatest strengths and provide insights on how to make the most of them. It was called the Gallup Strengths Quest, based on a popular book, *Now Discover Your Strengths*.

Judging by the feedback offered by UVI participants the TMCF conference left them favorably impressed. “This leadership conference fosters all characteristics and behaviors needed in a leader; everything from networking, interviewing tips, emotional intelligence and this list goes on and on. I am honored to have been chosen for such a noteworthy opportunity,” says Sylvester L. Allen Jr.

Renako Wells says the experience has helped him connect his present to his future. “I will ever be thankful to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Leadership Institute because it has helped me to make wiser choices for both my professional and personal life,” he says.

The students were escorted by the Counseling and Placement Supervisors, Doris Farrington Hepburn, Verna Rivers, and the UVI TMCF Liaison and Scholarship Coordinator Ardrina Scott Elliott. ➔



# UVI Golden Key Students Gather Inspiration, Life Lessons from Obama Inaugural

The election of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States was a historic event that brought truth to the belief that with hard work and determination, anyone can achieve their dreams.

That truth could not have resonated more with students from the University of the Virgin Islands- St. Croix campus, where seven members of the Golden Key International Honour Society embarked on a week-long trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the Congressional Youth Leadership Conference. Selected because of their academic achievements and contributions to the community, the students interacted with young scholars from around the world and had experiences they may never repeat.

Arriving on January 16, the UVI students attended several workshops and panels headlined by some of the most prominent figures in American politics, such as former Secretary of State and retired general Colin Powell and former Vice President Al Gore. Among the others they met with VI Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen. Visits to the U.S. Capitol and the University of Maryland were also part of the agenda. But the highlight was the presidential Inauguration, where Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president amid millions of supporters in the blistering winter cold.

"This trip was truly a life-changing experience," said Melina Moore, a recent UVI graduate who plans to pursue her master's degree in special education in the fall semester. "To be part of history, to be hugged by strangers while our new president took the oath, to be at the Lincoln Memorial in the presence of millions where the color of my skin did not matter was truly an honor that I'll be able to treasure. My children, their children and their children's children will all be able to hear about my experience. This is truly priceless." Renako Wells left with strong feelings of his own.

"The trip was very motivating and inspirational," said the senior accounting major. "I think it encouraged us to be the best at whatever we do; to have perseverance and to not get discouraged. The sky is the limit," he said.

The students in the Golden Key International Honour Society are already on their way to promising futures. Comprised of sophomores, juniors and seniors, society members are all

in the top 15 percent of their class. On top of excelling academically, they work hard to raise

nearly \$20,000 to fund their trip. UVI provided additional support.

While the University's mission includes shaping its students into future leaders through top-notch education and a challenging curriculum, there are few experiences that can amount to witnessing the first black person to assume the most powerful position in the world. Miriam Osborne-Elliott, Associate Campus Administrator at UVI, knows that such events are extremely important for young people because they offer valuable insight on aspects of the world. For some, she says, it was even a geography lesson.

"For the students who left the territory, they experienced cold, one of the coldest Januarys in American history," says Osborne-Elliott. "But it was a phenomenal, incredible, once-in-a-lifetime experience, where they interacted with people that they read about in books, people who impact American policy. It was a great educational experience."

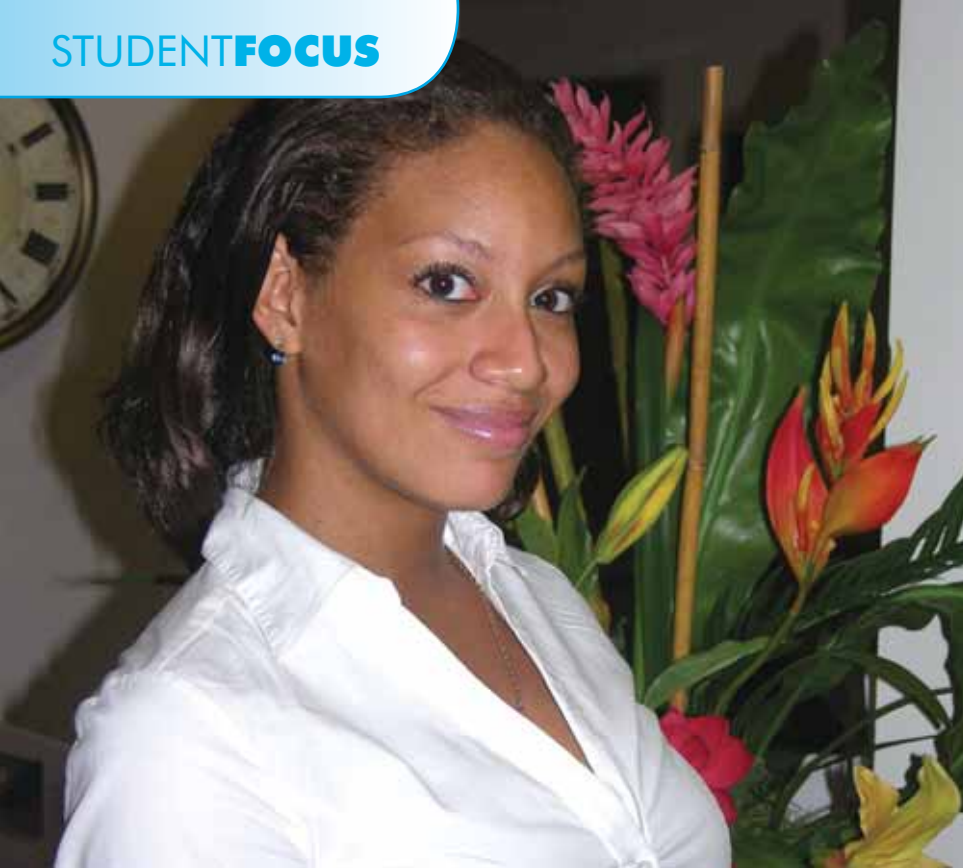
Osborne-Elliott is also the advisor for the honor society at UVI, and played a critical role in organizing the trip. She was instrumental in guiding the students in the fundraising process, finding donors, writing letters and preparing for the inaugural event. But all of the long hours of work were well worth it to her, she says.

"From a professional development standpoint, the trip inspired [the students] to be even more than they ever thought they could be," she says. "Just being part of history made everyone feel very humbled and privileged."

Moore and Wells left Washington with fuller perspectives on life. Aside from the sense of personal empowerment they acquired, they said the interactions they shared with people of all backgrounds made them optimistic about where America, including the Virgin Islands, is headed. For Moore, the key word for the trip would be unity.

"I now believe that there are events that can bring the American people together; that once we find our common denominator we can be equal, that the color of our skin or the texture of our hair will no longer define who we are or what we are capable of," she says. "I believe that all dreams are possible." ↗





UVI Lady Bucs team captain Angelina Prince.

## A Prince is the Queen of Bucs Women's Basketball

**"I'll be there busting my butt from day one, regardless of what new players come on." — Angelina Prince**

Some people are known for their brains; others are known for their brawn – few are known for both. In that case, Angelina Prince is an exception. The UVI senior is a model of athleticism and academia. She maintained a 3.82 grade point average, while leading the UVI Women's Basketball Team to intercollegiate league playoffs in 2008 and 2009.

"It's hard to describe the love you feel for a sport," says Prince, who started playing basketball at the age of 11 in Louisiana. She has a passion for sports that is difficult to express in words, she says. That passion shows in her statistics. She is the UVI Women's Basketball Team's top scorer and rebounder, averaging 15 points, 12 rebounds and three blocks.

"She's very talented on the basketball court," says UVI's Assistant Athletic Director

and Women's Basketball Head Coach Curtis Gilpin. There is potential for her to get even better, Gilpin adds. "She's not even aware of how good she can be!"

When Gilpin was on leave for most of the 2008-2009 pre-season training, Prince took over as team captain. "She organized and coordinated practices almost the entire season," Gilpin says.

Prince says it was a challenge balancing the role of a leader and a team member. While she wanted the young ladies to take the game seriously and stay on track, she didn't want to become too overbearing. With the cooperation of her team, it worked out. "No matter how much you can achieve as an individual, you cannot do anything without your team," Prince says.

Now, as a senior, the stakes are higher. "This is a big year for us," Prince says.

Much of the team's success will depend on the new recruits, as key players graduated and others transferred.

Also "added to the mix," as Prince describes it, was her surprise pregnancy. After her delivery in October, Prince says she'll be ready for training in December. She's confident that she and fiancé Nahshon Jeffers, who is captain of the UVI Men's Basketball team, will be fully geared up. "We should be able to give our full attention to the basketball teams," she says.

In addition to taking the team to new heights, the psychology major plans to maintain her GPA and enter graduate school in 2011 to study forensic psychology. Eventually she would like to work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

UVI worked hard to capture Prince as a player. "We saw her at Kean from like the 10th grade," Gilpin says. "We had an eye on her."

Prince, the salutatorian of her 2006 Ivanna Eudora Kean High School Class, completed her high school requirements a semester early and headed to UVI, where she joined the Women's Basketball Team.

After completing one semester at UVI, Prince headed to California, where she was born, and spent a year at Loyola Marymount University. When tuition increased and available grants dwindled, Prince headed back to St. Thomas and UVI. "I ended up staying because I like being home and I love UVI," she says.

At UVI she became a star athlete. "We look forward to her senior year and we know she wants to go out with a bang," Gilpin says. Prince is committed to making that happen. "I'll be there busting my butt from day one, regardless of what new players come on," she says. ➔



## UVI Brings Large Delegation to LAI Championships in Puerto Rico

It was a hallmark moment for athletics at the University of the Virgin Islands.

Although UVI had been a member of the Liga Atletica Interuniversitaria, also known as the Inter University Athletic League of Puerto Rico (LAI), for three years, this year was the first time that the University had brought along a large contingent of students and faculty for the week long, championship sporting event in Ponce called Las Justas de la LAI. The University of the Virgin Islands traveled with a delegation of more than 100 students, faculty and athletes. Teams in basketball, baseball, swimming, table tennis, dance and track and field compete in the tournament where the winner in each category is declared LAI champion.

The UVI women's basketball team made it to the playoffs, The 12-member dance team did "extremely well," in their first competition ever in Justas. The track and field team experienced the greatest success with Chadiola Chumney, a junior, who qualified for the 100-, 200- and 400-meter races. Creolar Jr Baptise, a sophomore, qualified for the 200-meter race and Donald Gibson, a freshman, qualified as a pole vaulter, .

One moving moment during the week long Justas event was when the dance team competed in the large arena, cheered on by a large delegation of UVI athletes, faculty and administrators.

"It was great," says Jerry Smith, assistant athletic director at UVI. "Our 100 students sat in the arena among the sold out crowd of 13,780 , displaying their blue-and-white uniforms, showing off their school spirit. It was a proud moment."

"We are now in the planning stage to make next year's Justas event bigger and better," Smith says. "We see this as a way to increase school pride and increase attendance at school games. This can start a snowball effect around the campus. Next year, it would be good to have some members of the alumni attend the event with us."

UVI officials say the key to their growing success in Justas is to continue to improve the basketball teams, the dance team and the track and field teams. The Justas experience will benefit all UVI teams as they work to move up in the LAI standings.

"The experience of participating in Justas will help our teams improve," Smith says. "The experience they gained from performing in front of a large crowd in a big arena and competing against other top university teams will serve them well in the future"

Officials say they'll also launch a more aggressive communications and marketing campaign on both the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses and well as in both communities to increase support for the teams when they return in 2010 to the Justas events and for athletic programs in general.

"We will send out emails, increase the amount of flyers to give the students and the public, and advance notice of when we will have home games," Smith says. "We will also increase entertainment during the games."

Whether at UVI or at the Justas events, Smith says, it's an exciting time for athletics at UVI. ↗



The crowd roars as Alvaro DeLugo sinks the game-winning 3-pointer at the conclusion of the Bucs 73-70 win over Metropolitan University during Paradise Jam.



## Taking Bucs Basketball to a Higher Plane

**“UVI basketball is growing, and the growing will continue once we get the support. It will be an exciting time out there...”**

For Peter Sauer, the athletic director at the University of the Virgin Islands, success is improving the program each year.

So when Sauer talks about UVI basketball, a program

that has experienced a continued level of success in recent years, he speaks with pride because basketball, he says, is the flagship program at many universities.

“The basketball program has gotten better every year in LAI,” says Sauer, referring to UVI basketball as part of the prestigious LAI University League in Puerto Rico. “This was the first year our team played during the Paradise Jam.”

Paradise Jam is the big sporting event held annually at UVI’s state- of-the-art Sports and Fitness Center. It draws some of the nation’s top NCAA Division I men’s and women’s basketball teams. Nationally televised, Paradise Jam has become an unofficial road to the final four for some teams. UVI officials believe any exposure

for the UVI basketball program around the Paradise Jam event is a step forward and can only help build UVI’s program.

Before a nearly packed arena containing more than 2,000 fans, the UVI Bucs claimed a 73-70 win over Metropolitan University in their first-ever game during Paradise Jam. The crowd roared as Alvaro DeLugo shot the game-winning three pointer — with just two seconds remaining on the clock.

“We’re hopeful our teams can make the playoffs this year and take another step up. They’re certainly taking a step up by playing and winning during the Paradise Jam,” Sauer says. In 2006 UVI was accepted into the LAI University League. LAI is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. The LAI league membership includes ten universities in the University of Puerto Rico system and ten private universities in addition to the University of the Virgin Islands.

Last year, the UVI women’s basketball team made it to the playoffs in the Interuniversity League Games, commonly known as “Las Justas”, which are held in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

For UVI’s women’s basketball team, maintaining the status quo would not be a step forward, so the athletic department has been



UVI Bucs' Devon Luis (#21) leaps for the jump ball against Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico.



Jerry Smith



Sean Georges



Curtis Gilpin

## Taking Bucs Basketball to a Higher Plane - continued

spending a lot of time during the off season exploring ways to build a championship team which has proved both promising and challenging.

“We lost about four or five players. Three graduated and some are moving on. We’re recruiting heavily to get good student-athletes to UVI,” Gilpin says.

On of the top new recruits is Sydnei Rogers, who was the top high school basketball player in St. Croix in 2008 while attending Country Day School. Another top recruit, Ashley Birch, from Kansas will be joining the team. Angelina Prince, who has been one of the top players in the LAI league the last three years returns for her senior season. This year’s team looks to improve on last year’s team record of 10 wins and seven losses.

As for the men’s team, Coach Sean Georges says he hopes to take the team to the playoffs in the upcoming season. The men’s team, which had a record of 11 wins and five losses last season, may receive an invitation to the playoffs this year. For the past three seasons, the team has placed sixth in the division where only the top five teams qualify for the post season. This past summer Georges was busy building the nucleus of the 2009-1010 team that he believes will find success by being very disciplined and efficient. He says that the goals for the upcoming season are to improve in athleticism and shooting.

He recruited a point guard from St. Croix

named Ramon Castillo. “He brings an exciting style of play, which the fans will enjoy,” Georges says. Georges turned to the mainland, recruiting Max Cymmerent, a 6’3’ small forward from San Diego and Wilson Ferrence, a 6’4’ swing forward from St. Croix. Out of Dutch St.Maarten, Georges recruited 6’6’ Robinson Gassant. “These new players will fuse with my returns, and I hope this combination will create a spark,” says Georges, who has coached the team for eight years.

To be the flagship program, Georges says, UVI basketball must build a brand on and off the court.

One sign of the increased popularity in UVI basketball is the number of athletes who want to play for the team. Normally, the squad is fortunate to recruit 10 players on the team. This year, Georges is turning players away and currently has to reduce the 15 man roster to 12 by the first game of the season.

In the classrooms, away from the hardwood floors, the athletes are building Buccaneer pride.

Academically, Gilpin says, the women’s basketball team has been very, very strong. All of his players have grade point averages above 3.0 and two have GPAs above 3.6, which represents a good trend since the program started.

Jerry Smith, an assistant athletic director at UVI, says the men’s basketball team graduat-

ed 13 males since the program began, accounting for 30 percent of the men who graduated this past year from UVI.

“I think we are doing something right,” Smith says. “We implemented a good academic support program. We have study halls and greater communication with professors. And last year, we initiated our own computer/study hall in the department. These athletes do a lot. Some practices start as early as 7 a.m. and end at 9 p.m.”

Adds Georges, “Being a former player at the University of the Virgin Islands, it makes me feel proud to see the number of students who have graduated. It shows we are doing the right things as far as basketball and helping young males advance in life.”

UVI officials hope this success will generate more support from the student body, alumni and community.

“Our demeanor and the way we play have placed us in the light where teams take us very seriously,” Georges says. “People are taking basketball a little more seriously, and on campus support has been tremendous.”

The reality, Georges says, is that “UVI basketball is growing, and the growing will continue once we get the support. It will be an exciting time out there. We’re looking for support. Any support we get, whether you’re just in the stands or sending financial support, will be appreciated. This team is young and we just ask you to grow with us.” ➔

Houston Penn (#8) aims for two points



Devon Luis #21 takes it to the hoop for a slamdunk.



Houston Penn (#8) battles for the ball as teammates Joneil Warner (#15) and Kevin Abbott (#11) approach.



Jevon Thompson #8 prepares to serve.



Setter Campbell Douglas #9 makes his move.

## Building Success the Hard Way - UVI Volleyball

Jason Liburd, the volleyball coach at the University of the Virgin Islands, sat in his office late one Monday evening watching tapes from the team's first two games of the 2009-2010 season. In two home games, UVI lost by a few points.

With two losses, Liburd knows the goal of getting his team into the playoffs for the first time has become more difficult. But he still believes the possibilities are good for the team to enter the post season. Last year, with a record of four wins and six losses, the volleyball team missed the post season by one game. With 10 teams in the conference, Liburd's aim was to win at least five games and be ranked in the top five.

"I'm looking at the area where we gave away easy points," says Liburd, taking note of some mental gaffes by the team. "We were not in the right position for a defensive stop. We did not communicate with each other."

Liburd says he watches film clips with the team to highlight miscues. Then, when the team returns to the court to practice, he

goes over some of the plays they failed to execute. His strategy is for them not to repeat in the remaining games what they failed to do in the first two games.

"We should have won both matches," Liburd says. "We made too many unforced errors."

When Liburd became coach of the volleyball program in 1999, his initial goal was to build the program to the point where it is successful every year. That has not happened. There have been highs and lows. One low point occurred two years ago when UVI lost its women's volleyball program.

That low was a result of a major challenge that has hampered most of the athletic programs at UVI — the lack of scholarships to recruit top athletes to the University. Some of the other challenges include losing athletes to graduation, more competitive programs in the States, injuries and the small pool of volleyball players in the territory.

"We do not have a variety of athletes to

choose from," Liburd says. "Most of the time the really good ones want to leave and go to the States for school.

"Scholarshipwise, we don't have as much to offer as many other schools. To get outside talent to come in has become very tough."

Liburd says one selling point he uses to recruit athletes outside of the territory is UVI's tuition, which is lower than most schools.

Another selling point, one that UVI officials believe will help the volleyball program become successful, is the annual volleyball tournament held at the UVI Sports and Fitness Center over the Labor Day weekend. That tournament has been running for nine years and is growing every year. This year, 13 teams participated, the most in the tournament's history.

"Teams are coming from neighboring islands, places like Puerto Rico, the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten and St. Croix," Liburd says. "This year, four teams came from the U.S. The tournament is growing.





St. Clair Hodge #7 attacks a set from Campbell Douglas #9.

We're very excited. One year, we hope it will be the Paradise Jam of volleyball."

Another effort that Liburd hopes will help recruit and develop players is the coaching he does in the off-season for the Virgin Islands National Team. What he learns in the off season, he shares with the UVI team

during the season. Meanwhile, it's back to tapes and fundamentals, studying the strengths of his team and the weaknesses of other teams that will help him shape UVI's squad into a winner. It starts, he says, with displacing some of the Liga Atletica Interuniversitaria (LAI) powerhouse pro-

**"Scholarshipwise, we don't have as much to offer as many other schools. To get outside talent to come in has become very tough."** – Coach Jason Liburd

grams at Sacred Heart University in Puerto Rico, which has been the league's reigning champion the last couple of years, and American University in Puerto Rico, which consistently ranks high.

"Those are the top teams we have to be able to beat to become very successful," says Liburd, who is banking on experience over athleticism to improve the team's ranking. "We're still growing and there's a lot of room for us to grow. It's a work in progress, what we're doing here. I still think we have enough to make it to the playoffs, but we have to play good and solid volleyball." ✦

## Committed to The University of the Virgin Islands.

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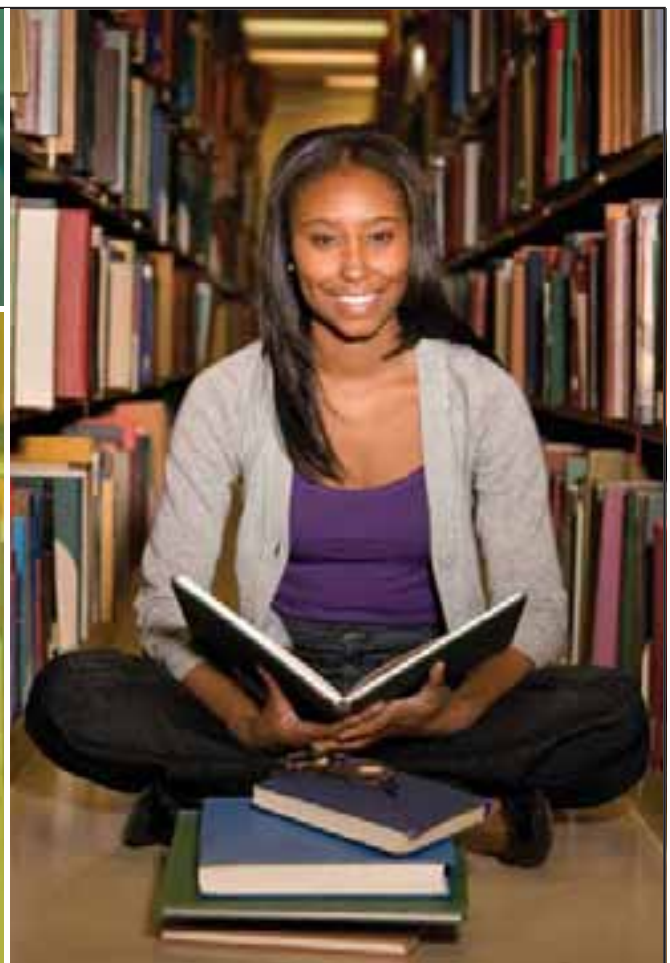


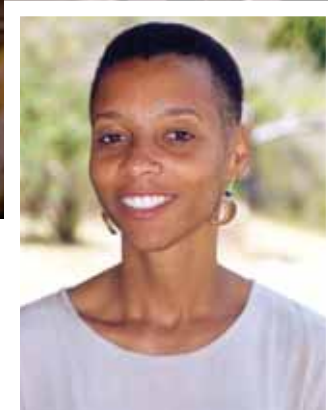
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Dean Camille McKayle

## Science Foundation Grants Yield First Fruits in Science and Math

When Jomo Richardson entered the University of the Virgin Islands in 2001, his goal was to become an engineer.

Today, Richardson, a native of the Virgin Islands, works as an electrical engineer within the Office of Electric Reliability for of the Federal Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Washington, D.C. FERC is an agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. Richardson participated in the review and approval mandatory reliability standards for power companies - an effort to enhance power system reliability, and minimize the chance of major blackouts, such as the one that struck New York City and a major portion of the Northeast in August 2003.

With his future looking so promising, Richardson probably could work in any number of places.

"I could work for the local power company, WAPA," Richardson said. "I know they have a lot of things going on. I could definitely go back if they hired me.

For Dr. Camille McKayle, the dean of UVI's science and mathematics division, this has to be music to her ears.

Richardson was one of the first UVI stu-

dents to benefit from a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant aimed at strengthening math and science programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), such as the University of the Virgin Islands, Hampton University and North Carolina A & T University.

When the National Science Foundation's HBCU-Undergraduate Program was announced in 1998, a group of UVI faculty and administrators in the Division of Science and Mathematics, led by Dr. McKayle, applied for a grant. One year later, UVI was awarded \$3.5 million to provide opportunities for students in the area of innovative curriculum and research. Since that initial grant, UVI has received several other major grants that are establishing the University as a leading institution in science and mathematics education.

Grants immediately enhanced the academic experience at the University, Dr. McKayle says. Students are offered one-on-one support. Faculty is supported with extensive training and research projects, and are encouraged to write grants and develop a special niche that will build UVI's reputation. The \$3.5 million grant also led UVI to offer a new major.

"We collaborated with other institutions to have a new engineering program, where students start their major here and end up at other engineering schools such as Columbia University in New York and Washington University in St. Louis, receiving bachelor's degrees from both UVI and the engineering school at the collaborating institution" Dr. McKayle says. "We created that collaboration then, and it is still going on today, and has expanded to include the University of Florida and the University of South Carolina."

Another plus for UVI students is that the University offer stipends for students to conduct research alongside a faculty member during the summer. The research project not only provides students with money but with experience.

"It has just changed the atmosphere on campus by encouraging students to be active participants in their education," Dr. McKayle says. "In fact, many studies show that an undergraduate research experience is a great predictor for whether or not a student will continue on to graduate school, and our numbers show that a sizeable percentage of UVI graduates do go on to graduate school in science and mathematics."



Jomo Richardson (06)

headed for the summer to do research or where they plan to continue their education to pursue advanced degrees or to become engineers. The universities include some of the nation's top engineering programs and laboratories, such as Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, WA and schools like the University of Florida and the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

Richardson, who was a math major at UVI, remembers the summer research project in 2002, where he worked on computer codes and learned about optimizing computer graphics. That experience helped him gain admission to Columbia, where he majored in electrical engineering.

None of this, he says, would have happened if it was not for the NSF grant and the support from faculty such as Dr. McKayle, who was Richardson's freshman advisor.

"She provided me with books and materials explaining what civil and electrical engineers do and through that I picked electrical. I also had a class where she was the professor, and there was a seminar where students would have to give a presentation based on research and this was mainly in mathematics. Dr. McKayle helped me with my presentation and research. She has definitely been a very helpful person. I am glad when I went to UVI she was there."

"The dual degree is a tremendous opportunity for young people in the Virgin Islands who aspire to be engineers," says Richardson, who received both his mathematics degree from UVI and his electrical engineering degree from Columbia in 2006. "For me, it has been very rewarding, and I am very glad it existed."

Dr. McKayle, a native of Jamaica who earned her undergraduate degree at Bates College in Maine and her graduate degree at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, arrived at UVI in 1996 after working at Lafayette College in Easton, PA. She says the students drew her to UVI.

"They really appreciate you as faculty," she says. "They really want to learn and want you to push them. They wanted good teaching and I really appreciated that. I find that students don't just want a grade because they have paid the tuition, they want to learn the material. Also, the institution here is one that makes a difference in the community. It is truly The University of the Virgin Islands. It is important that what we do here is top quality. You are able to immediately see effects of what you do all around you as you live in the community."

This nurturing academic environment and dedication to the

Dr. McKayle says she is not sure how many students have benefitted from the NSF grants.

But what she can measure are the number of students who stand in her office, sharing the good news of where they are

broader VI community are what NSF officials saw when they visited UVI to determine if the University would be awarded the grant.

"I was impressed by the dedication and knowledge that everybody had about the local education system," said Duncan McBride, section head, division of undergraduate education for the NSF, who has visited the campus two times since UVI received the grant. "In general, it is a relatively economically poor group of students who need to take advantage of the only university in the islands. They need to stay in the islands to address particular problems they have."

Claudia Rankins, a program officer for the National Science Foundation's Historically Black College and University Undergraduate Program, said the NSF is pleased with the progress UVI has made with the grants.

"The fact is we gave UVI a second one of those implementation grants," said Rankins, who is on loan from Hampton University where she served as a physics professor and dean of the School of Science. "They received one and a second one, and we have released additional money to the university each year, which must mean UVI is doing a good job. If we don't see evidence of good things happening — and we expect extensive annual reporting — you would not get money from us. UVI is doing well and you have people like Camille McKayle seeing to it that things move forward."

NSF officials were so impressed with Dr. McKayle that they recruited her to Washington to work in the program. After her two-year stint was up, they asked her to remain for a third year.

Dr. McKayle enjoyed her tenure at the NSF, where she helped carry out the U.S. president's vision on education and where she was in a position to help other HBCUs, but more importantly to one day bring cutting edge concepts to UVI's faculty and students.

"It really showed us that we were making a difference with our students and doing a lot of things very well," Dr. McKayle says. "Now, we have a broader knowledge of what is going on nationally and in my role as dean, I can bring that here."

Because of UVI's success with other grant projects, and through the hard work of many faculty and staff, the National Science Foundation offered several other major grants to UVI, including one for \$11.5 million and another for \$275,000 in 2008.

"Our hope is that the marine science program will be a strong, vibrant program that serves the needs of the students in the Caribbean and that the students coming out of the program will be serving the needs of the Virgin Islands and other islands in their specialized knowledge they got in the program," said McBride, referring to a \$275,000 grant, which will support three students in the marine science division for five years. "It is good for the University but also the islands in general in retaining smart students and having them work in ways that support the local economy." ↗



by Dan Holly

# THE NUTS & BOLTS

## OF FINANCING A UVI EDUCATION THEN & NOW

When Malcolm Kirwan was a freshman at the University of the Virgin Islands, it was known as the College of the Virgin Islands and the total enrollment was about 60.

That was 1965, a couple of years after the college was established. Kirwan recalls that it was a different place back then. Tuition was only about \$200 for territorial residents. Students and faculty all ate lunch together. Each year, CVI sent the entire sophomore class on a field trip to the mainland.

“It was a family atmosphere,” Kirwan says.

The small size had its drawbacks, too.

Back then, CVI did not grant bachelor’s degrees, let alone advanced degrees. Students had to go off-island to complete their education. Top professors earned

annual salaries of about \$25,000.

Kirwan came back to CVI to work after earning his master’s degree and eventually became the vice president for Administration and Finance. He retired in 2005.

When CVI was established in 1962, he says, its focus was preparing the islands for self-determination. At the time, the Virgin Islands’ governor was appointed by the president of the United States. The territory did not elect its first governor until 1970.

“It was important to build a middle class because most of the people did not have a higher education,” Kirwan says, explaining that most island residents could not afford to send their children off-island to get a college degree.

“So CVI’s creation was part of an effort to move the Virgin Islands toward autonomy and self-determination,” Kirwan continued. “The institution played an important role in terms of creating an educated middle class.”

The college also aimed to meet certain specific objectives back then, Kirwan says, by educating students in construction technology to respond to a building boom in the 1960s, and producing home-grown teachers to reduce the territory’s dependence on teachers from elsewhere.

A freshman from 1965 would barely recognize the University of the Virgin Islands of today. The college began offering bachelor’s degrees in 1967, and master’s degrees in 1976. In 1986, the institution

Sports and Fitness Center



Melvin Evans Center



Sports and Fitness Center



# “When you have more buildings, you need more insurance coverage.”

— Vincent Samuel

changed its name to the University of the Virgin Islands to reflect the growth and diversification of its academic curricula, community and regional services and research programs.

UVI's enrollment has steadily increased. In the spring 2008 semester, more than 2,500 full-time, part-time and graduate students attended the University. UVI has also added new programs, and its facilities have grown and expanded to accommodate new students, faculty and staff.

Today, UVI's mission “has not changed so much as it has become more refined and focused,” says Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster, who served as UVI president from 2002 to 2009. UVI is more focused on making sure students succeed as well as serving the people of the territory and beyond.

As UVI's web site puts it, “The University's objective is to be recognized as the leading American institution of higher education in the Caribbean.”

A new program that demonstrates UVI's regional leadership is the master's program in Marine and Environmental Science that began in 2007.

“It helps us to leverage one of our most important assets,” Dr. Ragster says. “We live on an island in the middle of the Caribbean where the marine environment is extremely important.”

The Marine and Environmental Science program is part of Vision 2012, a blueprint for the University's improvement, which was adopted in 2006. The plan aims to transform UVI into “an exceptional U.S. institution of higher education dedicated to student success, committed to excellence, and pledged to enhancing the social and economic transformation of the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

When parents and students want to know why tuition has risen so quickly at the University of the Virgin Islands in recent years — with increases three of the past five years — administrators point to the changes UVI has seen over the years.

Kirwan, a retired UVI vice president, is a consultant to the UVI Research and Technology Park Board of Directors. He and other long-time UVI administrators say it is necessary to understand how much UVI has grown and changed in order to understand why tuition is rising. Costs — and tuition — have risen not just because of inflation. They have risen as the University's mission has grown and evolved, Kirwan and others say.

Vincent Samuel, the current vice president for Administration and Finance, acknowledges that tuition increases are coming at a bad time, in the middle of a recession. But he wants parents,

students and the community to understand that the increases are necessary and to understand how the University's evolution affects costs.

New buildings push costs up more than people may realize, Samuel says. Among the new facilities in the past 10 years are the 3,500-seat Sports and Fitness Center, a \$10 million Administration and Conference Center on the St. Thomas campus and the Northwest Wing, a classroom and faculty office building on the St. Croix campus.

“When you have more buildings,” Samuel says, “you need more insurance coverage.”

After Hurricane Marilyn struck in 1995, the University saw the need to beef up its property insurance. UVI increased coverage after the hurricane to around \$50 million, he says. Annual insurance costs have risen to \$1.7 million, he noted.

All those buildings mean more utility costs, too.

And since the University buys electricity generated by gas turbines, the increasing cost of fuel drives up utility costs even more. Electricity costs for the two campuses run approximately \$300,000 per month, Samuel says.

Government aid has increased — between the years 2001 and 2008 federal and local grants doubled from \$9.1 million to \$18.1 million, according to annual UVI President's Reports. But government aid is a two-edged sword, Samuel says.

The University has added new programs along the way. While UVI often receives government grants to start the programs, eventually the University must spend money to keep the programs running. For instance, the Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning (CELL) program was established in 2002 with the help of federal funds. In 2007, UVI began supplying \$100,000 annually for the program through an appropriation from the territorial government, as well as a subsidy from the UVI operating budget.

CELL, which offers such courses as bookkeeping and computer skills, has proven to be popular. Enrollment has risen from 60 at the start to about 1,500 by the end of the 2005 fiscal year.

Growing academic offerings means more faculty and staff — UVI has more than 200 faculty members — and rising costs are not just a matter of more salaries; the salaries are also higher, Samuel says. It has been a long time since the University could get away with paying top professors \$25,000.

Several years ago UVI administrators found that UVI salaries were below average for universities in its class.

“We were so far behind that we had to do something...We want to



Malcolm Kirwan



**“It was important to build a middle class because most of the people did not have a higher education.”**

— Vincent Samuel

attract the best faculty. We want to attract the best staff,” Samuel says.

Top professors today earn six figures. But even after changes in the pay structure adopted in 2007, Samuel says, UVI remains slightly below average in terms of university salaries.

UVI traditionally has had trouble attracting faculty with Ph.D.s in certain disciplines, Samuel says. As salaries have risen, “we’ve done better,” he says.

As the world changes, UVI is trying to change along with it. As part of Vision 2012, UVI is committed to keeping up-to-date with information technology. Vision 2012, the University’s web site explains, offers “a blueprint which emphasizes the use of technology as a tool for enhancing teaching and learning and to improve the effectiveness of UVI’s educational and administrative process.”

Acquiring and maintaining technology, such as superfast internet connections, is more expensive on an island than on the mainland. But it’s something the University must do, says Samuel.

“We’re out in the ocean but we still want to be connected to the rest of the world,” says Samuel.

All of this has meant rising tuition. Back when Malcolm Kirwan was a freshman, Virgin Islands residents paid only \$201 annually for tuition, while nonresidents paid \$501. Today, residents pay \$3,600 and nonresidents \$10,800. Next year, Tuition will rise to \$3,750 and \$11,240 in 2010.

Despite all the progress, University administrators have not forgotten who their main customers are. One thing Samuel wants the public to know is that, while the University needs funds to cover rising costs, administrators have tried hard to keep down the amount that is acquired from tuition. He says that while the national average for tuition increases has been 6 percent, UVI increases in the last few years have not been more than 5 percent.

“Our clientele, many of them have come from families below the poverty line,” Samuel says. “We’re just not as aggressive in increasing our tuition as other places are.” ↗

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Associate Professor Paul Jobsis confers with GIS Analyst Stevie Henry about UVI's Geographic Information Systems Curriculum Development Project.

## New Curriculum Aims to Better Prepare Students as World Grows More Technology Dependent.

As the world continues to move deeper into the technology age, the University of the Virgin Islands is pursuing ways to keep its students on par with others around the globe, and to ensure that they possess the skills and knowledge necessary to compete for jobs when they graduate.

One solution school officials are considering is the integration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into the University's curriculum. GIS is a computer system (software, hardware, data and people) that is used to capture, store, analyze and display geographic data. By doing so, users can visualize and interpret data in ways that show relationships and trends. The system is commonly used to conduct surveys and reports in the political, criminal, educational and environmental fields.

Stevie Henry, activity director for the GIS Curriculum Development Project at UVI, has been working aggressively with committee members Dr. Tyler Smith, Dr. Marc Boumedine and Dr. Alan Lewit to introduce the curriculum at the University,

and believes that it will be very effective for students, if approved.

"The skills that the students are acquiring can be taken to another level if they are able to think spatially, and that is what GIS will help them to do," says Henry. "It is used by local and federal government agencies as well as in the private sector, and we realize that there is a need for GIS technicians in the territory. We want to make sure that our students are prepared to fill that need."

An example of how the GIS system is currently being used is in the tracking of the H1N1 virus, known as swine flu, which has shaken the world in recent months by infecting people in several countries at an alarming rate.

"Governments are monitoring the spread of the swine flu in their jurisdiction by mapping the number of infected persons then asking the question, 'Where did they come from and where did they go?'" Henry says. "By tracking where they came from, you can then track all of the people in that area and determine where they went during that period of time."

Another example of where GIS has been used is in the tracking of the migratory patterns and habitats of birds and fish. In presidential elections, experts have used it to study the voting habits of certain populations.

"The system allows you to integrate information from multiple sources," Henry says. "It is a technology that is becoming part of many disciplines. The popularity can be seen with Google maps."

He says the GIS Curriculum Development Committee has received advice from Dr. Alan Falconer at George Mason University on the integration of GIS technology in the University's curriculum. Having assessed the level of interest within the University community and territory in learning and using the technology, the committee's goal is to make it a part of the curriculum at UVI by the spring of 2010.

"We are scheduled to present in early fall a scenario of how it is going to be implemented in the university's curriculum," he says. "I am optimistic about it. What we are doing here is trying to give our students an edge with the use of this technology." ↗





Dr. Yegin Habtes

## Life Changing Technology; Financing Available

**“Our mission is to help people with disabilities so they can be taxpayers and job takers instead of welfare recipients.” – Dr. Yegin Habtes**

In some ways, Beryl Larsen is younger today than she was five years ago. Back then, she did not get out nearly as much as she does today because of her disability. She admits that having polio and being forced to use a wheelchair and a walker caused her to do a lot of sitting around. It was a chore just to go to the market and get groceries, she said.

But Larsen got a motorized scooter in 2004 and it changed her life. The 52-year-old woman doesn't do a lot of sitting around anymore.

“I go to the beach, I go to parties, I socialize with other people when there are functions,” Larsen says. “I go out there and enjoy myself. I don't stay at home. I go to the mall on weekends and shop for records. I go to the beauty salon . . . that's what makes me happy – doing things.”

Larsen is living testament to the success of the Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD). The Center, which was established in 1994, loaned Larsen money for the scooter under a program called the Virgin Islands Alternate Financing program (VIATF). The program lends people money for “assistive technology,” devices and equipment that help them lead normal lives.

About 60 loans have been made under that program since it began in 2004, according to Dr. Yegin Habtes, VIUCEDD's executive director. Other recipients have used the loans to purchase hearing aids and equipment that make cars accessible for the disabled.

Employees of VIUCEDD found a common complaint when they would demonstrate assistive technology to disabled people, Dr. Habtes says: “People would say, ‘I could use this, but I can't afford it.’ We learned that there was a high correlation between disability and poverty.”

VIUCEDD was awarded a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which it used to establish an endowment. The Center established the VIATF program, under which Banco Popular agreed to lend the center's clients money at eight percent interest.

The Center uses its funds to bring the loans down to four percent.

The loans can be as little as \$300 and as much as \$15,000.

Juliette Rogers, an assistant vice president at Banco Popular, says the bank's participation in VIATF was the first of that nature for the bank. The \$300 minimum was lower than its normal minimum loans, and the eight percent was below prevailing rates at the time, she said.

She credits bank president Valentino McBean with being responsive to requests for help from the Center. Mr. McBean passed away Sept. 23, 2009.

The VIATF program is part of VIUCEDD's overall mission, Dr. Habtes says.

“Our mission is to help people with disabilities so they can be taxpayers and job takers instead of welfare recipients,” Dr. Habtes says. “We also create awareness in the community.”

Just as disabled people need to be trained and motivated, employers need to understand the capabilities of disabled people, Dr. Habtes says.

The center has offices on both St. Thomas and St. Croix. Dr. Habtes is happy with VIATF, so far, but he sees room for growth.

“It has helped people with disabilities,” he says. “We are making a difference with people who are middle-income to low-middle-income, but we are not really touching people who are very poor.”

Federal law requires that the aid be in the form of loans and not grants, Dr. Habtes said, and people who do not qualify for the loans cannot participate. He said the center has been trying to raise funds to help such people, but he said the slow economy has hurt fund-raising efforts.

Beryl Larsen did not need the motorized scooter to get her job working in the laundry room at the Schneider Regional Medical Center. But her outlook has improved, and she is helping to motivate others.

“They saw a lot of will power in me,” Larsen says. “They kept pushing me, and pushing me, and pushing me and I said, ‘OK, if I have someone pushing me like that I may as well go ahead and do it on my own.’”

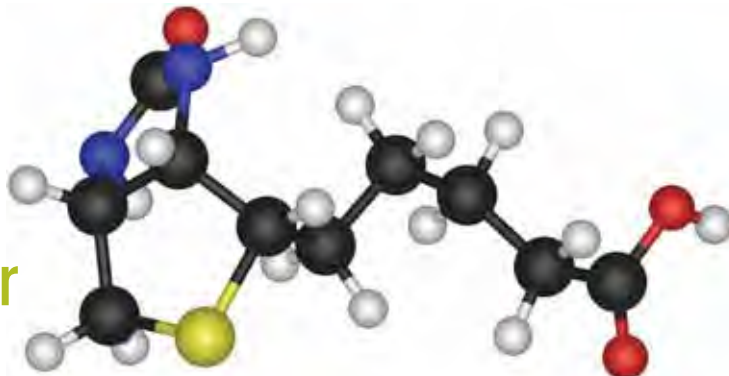
She has a message for other disabled people: “If they keep dwelling on their disability, they will have nothing.” ↗

## Chemistry Department Undergoes Massive Makeover

As the world moves deeper into the 21st century, the need for up-to-date, sophisticated technology in schools is greater than ever. This is especially true in the sciences, where students must be up to speed with the latest equipment and research methods in order to compete in their fields and to stand out to potential employers after graduation.

With that in mind, the University of the Virgin Islands is giving its Chemistry and Physical Sciences Department a makeover. With the help of a \$740,000 grant, the University's goal is to obtain certification from the American Chemical Society Certification (ACSC). This certification, which among other steps requires the acquisition of new equipment, is a type of national accreditation for chemistry programs. It will have long-lasting benefits for UVI, according to Dr. Stanley Latesky, chairman of the Chemistry and Physical Sciences Department and activity director for the project.

"Students who have the certification on their diplomas will be viewed pretty highly by schools," Dr. Latesky says. "The equipment will give them techniques that all students are expected to know how to use, and we can allow them to learn techniques for future employment and grad school."



According to Dr. Latesky, the University received analytical instrumentation useful for chromatography, which is the process of separating different mixtures or compounds. The equipment also is useful in the testing of organic contamination, inorganic contamination, and measuring impurities of water and several other examinations.

While the department is headed in the right direction, he says it still has a considerable way to go before it is capable of receiving the certification. More equipment is needed to ensure that all students – there are typically 30 to 40 chemistry majors – are given the tools to pursue their dreams.

"In order to get certification, we have to have a certain number of chemistry instruments in the department," Dr. Latesky says. "We wrote this proposal to obtain equipment and instruments in order to seek ACSC. We're still about a year or two away."

"I'm very optimistic about what we are doing here. Hopefully, with the certification we'll be able to recruit students to the University, and we can get the students who would otherwise go to the United States to stay." ↗



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## Welderufael Takes a Bite out of the Big Apple

“I loved the experience and had no regrets. I’m glad I was able to come to UVI.”

— Miriam Welderufael

From California to the Virgin Islands to New York - Miriam Welderufael's educational pursuits have taken her from coast to coast and the Caribbean. The UVI alumna recently landed an internship with *The Source*, a New York-based hip-hop magazine. She interns in the photography department and conducts research. “I haven’t started to write yet,” the award-winning writer says. “I hope to do that in the future.”

A few months later the chance to write came with a second internship at the Arts Engine, promoting social consciousness through the use of media. Welderufael said that since joining the editorial department there, her articles and blogs have been popping up on the website at [www.artsengine.net](http://www.artsengine.net).

Interning at *The Source* has taught her that learning how to learn is as important as what you have learned. “You have to adjust to whoever you work for,” Welderufael says. “It’s not just ‘here’s my degree, I can do it’.”

Welderufael began her college education as a student at California Polytechnic University of Pomona. It was there that she

learned of the National Student Exchange Program. The decision to complete an exchange semester at the University of the Virgin Islands was easy. In the program’s brochure she went straight to the “V” for Virgin Islands in the alphabetical listing of states with participating schools. Having fallen in love with St. Thomas a few years earlier, she said attending any university in the Virgin Islands would have worked for her.

The communications major enrolled on UVI’s St. Croix campus in fall 2006 and stayed for two semesters. During that time she was a reporter for the student newspaper the *UVI Voice*. Then she became the newspaper’s managing editor. “The opportunities were coming and I decided to stay where the opportunities were,” Welderufael says.

At California Polytechnic University where the current student enrollment is 21,000 students, “opportunities like that aren’t usually presented to a sophomore,” she says. Welderufael was part of the team that led the revived *UVI Voice* to winning national awards at the Annual National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Student Newspaper Conference.

In addition to being the editor of a nationally recognized publication, at UVI Welderufael also had several opportunities to travel and meet people from all walks of life. As a Thurgood Marshall Scholar she went to Maryland and Florida with the *UVI Voice*. She also spent a year on the St. Thomas campus.

“I loved the experience and had no regrets. I’m glad I was able to come to UVI,” she says.

Now that she has earned a Bachelor of Arts in communications, Welderufael is learning as much as she can at *The Source* and at Arts Engine while looking for a full-time job and applying to graduate schools. At graduate school she plans to study social media and documentary filmmaking. ➔



A Division of Nursing Education class circa 1977



# NURSING DIVISION by Denise Stewart

## CELEBRATES 40 YEARS of TEACHING, TRAINING

*Professors and administrators of the UVI Division of Nursing say their goals are clear. They want to provide a quality education program that prepares nurses to serve in diverse communities whether they are in the Caribbean or miles away.*

Since its inception in 1968, the Nursing Division has been equipping healthcare professionals to serve communities around the globe.

The growth in the nursing program has paralleled the growth of the University and its presence in the community, says Dr. Maxine Nunez, a long-time faculty member and former chair of the Division.

“Because the nursing program requires certain prerequisite courses, some of those same courses benefit students seeking degrees in other disciplines,” Nunez says.

Dr. Cheryl Franklin, the current dean of the Nursing Division says UVI’s nursing program is stepping up to the challenge of meeting a growing worldwide demand for trained nurses.

“Nursing is the helping discipline and what has happened over the years is that it has evolved from a helping service into a high demand profession. Being a nurse gives you any number of venues to expand; you can be a nurse anesthetist, a nurse practitioner, you can work in hospitals with patients as a bedside nurse. You can be a nurse consultant, a nurse midwife, a school nurse or you can be an entrepreneur,” she says. “The world is your oyster. It depends on which way you want to go.”

As the program expanded its academic offerings, it also expanded the experi-



Dean Cheryl Franklin

ences for students and graduates. UVI offers several degree options for nursing students. Candidates can pursue fields of study leading to a Bachelor of Science or an Associate of Science degree. They can also pursue a Bachelor of Science completion degree if nurses have successfully completed an associated degree or diploma program and currently hold a valid RN license (RN-BSN completion program).

In addition, Licensed Practical Nurses can enter the LPN to ASN Program and the LPN to BSN.

The Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas relies on the UVI pipeline to supply healthcare professionals, who are so often in short supply. Schneider Regional is made up of three separate entities – the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital, the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute and the

Myrah Keating Smith Clinic on St. John.

At the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix the chief of Nursing estimates one-fifth of the registered nurses there came from UVI.

There are currently about 200 nurses on staff at Schneider, said Blondell Williams, Schneider Regional’s Vice President for Nursing and Patient Care. About 40 percent of the positions are filled by travel nurses, she says. A majority of the others are UVI graduates.

Of the 16 students who graduated in 2009, 11 took the licensure exam and 10 are employed at Schneider, said Janzie Allmacher, MSN, RN, and chair of the Associate of Science in Nursing Program.

“We’ve always had a partnership with UVI in the education of nursing students,” Williams says. “This helps with staffing, ensuring that we will have an adequate supply of nurses in the future.”

The relationship between Schneider and UVI nursing students begins after a student’s sophomore year with an externship, giving them early exposure to the hospital environment, Williams says. UVI nurses also do their clinical work at Schneider.

At Juan Luis Hospital, Nursing Chief Wendy O’Brien-O’Reilly shares a similar story.

“The relationship between UVI and the hospital is one that is mutually



...serving because we get a lot of UVI students for our nursing program,” she says. “The hospital does everything it can to support the student nurses.”

And, for the first time in 2008, Juan Luis Hospital offered an orientation program for newly graduated UVI nursing students. Nurse Residency Coordinator Kathryn Collins, RN, BSN, MS, says six students took advantage of the four-month training class.

Those who successfully complete the training were given an option for additional training in a specialty field. Normally, Collins said, new graduates would have to wait until they had built up more generalized experience before becoming nurse specialists.

Specialty training extends the time the graduates spend both in the classroom, in clinical settings and on the hospital ward. O’Brien-O’Reilly says graduate nurses at Juan Luis have expressed an interest in working in critical care, the emergency room and surgery.

Both programs are funded by a grant from the Bennie and Martha Benjamin Foundation. Bennie Benjamin, a native of St. Croix, became a successful songwriter

in the 1920s. Before his death in 1989, Benjamin set up the foundation to help enhance healthcare in the Virgin Islands.

“We’ve put in an application with the Benjamin Foundation for this year. We’re hoping to get 10,” she says.

Once students complete their UVI nursing program, they can participate in the graduate nursing program at Schneider, which also is funded by the Benjamin Foundation. The recent graduates work at the hospital and study for their licensure exam with the support of other healthcare professionals. Participants commit to working two years at the hospital once they have passed their licensure exam.

Williams, who has worked with hundreds of nurses over the years, says post graduate training helps the new nurses transition into the medical center’s workforce. “Because we work with the nurses at different phases, by the time they graduate, we know them and they know us. We’re like family,” Williams says.

With the education she gained through the University of the Virgin Islands Division of Nursing, Atisha Lanclos has made the transition. She works as clinical informatics

coordinator at Schneider Hospital, analyzing data, preparing reports and setting up computer programs designed to enhance the delivery of patient care.

Lanclos, who received a BSN from UVI in 1999, is living testimony to the success of the nursing program. “UVI gave me my foundation,” says Lanclos, “I learned what to do and how to give patient care, and I learned the role of a nurse.”

For Indira Herbert, UVI provided a way to address violence in the territory as a public health problem. Herbert says she was personally affected by senseless acts of violence during her childhood. For her senior leadership clinical project Herbert set out to tackle some of the underlying issues by teaching at-risk students.

As a student nurse Herbert spent one week each at Bertha Boschulte Middle School and at Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, teaching students about nonviolence. Students learned about respect and responsibility, anger management, conflict resolution, bullying and gangs.

“I wanted to be an active part in this whole nonviolence movement, in spreading the word about nonviolence,” she says.



Dr. Gloria Callwood

**“ UVI’s Division of Nursing is obligated to living up to the standards and we work very hard to live up to them. ” — Dean Cheryl Franklin**

Students told her that they needed more information about nonviolence and they needed it more often.

After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, Herbert says she will work at Schneider Hospital for two years before furthering her education in a specialty nursing area.

Allmacher says UVI has seen an increase in the number of nursing students. In years past, there would be about 12 first semester students in the program. Last year there were 27 first semester students in the fall. This year, Allmacher says, there are 35.

The dean of the division agrees. “The numbers in the baccalaureate program have increased as well,” Dr. Franklin says. “Since last year we had a beginning nursing class of 50 students. That is at least 100 percent growth in the program.”

She says the nursing program student body mirrors the mix in other parts of the university’s demographics, largely Virgin Islands students joined by those from the Eastern Caribbean. But, she says, they are now being joined by larger numbers of transfer students from the U.S. mainland.

“From as far away as Portland, Oregon,” Dr. Franklin says.

Nationally, prospective nursing school students can face a two- to three-year waiting period for admission to a pre-professional program. UVI students don’t face a waiting list, but they must complete a rigorous set of prerequisite courses before applying for admission into the nursing program, Allmacher says.

The Division of Nursing also has a five-year

relationship with Johns Hopkins University. Nurses from John Hopkins visit UVI to get immersed in the diverse culture of healthcare on the island. In exchange, students from UVI visit the Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to experience the inner-city healthcare environment, Allmacher said.

“A major part of nursing is cultural competence,” said Allmacher, who moved to the Virgin Islands from New York 16 years ago. “Nurses must be able to understand the culture of the population they serve, which often impacts a patient’s perception of illness, and home remedies or natural cures they may try before seeking professional care.”

The Johns Hopkins students are amazed at what they learn on their visits to the island, the professor said. This year, Allmacher took six UVI students to Johns Hopkins. “The experience was transformative. It gives students a broader perspective.”

There is also a budding exchange student program set up with Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Franklin says there are currently two baccalaureate students living on campus there, taking a Community Health Nursing Course, while two Case Western students are spending a semester studying at UVI.

“They have to learn the nuances of that culture, just like the students have to learn the culture here. It enriches their lives, broadens their horizons and lets them learn what the nursing experience is like there,” Dr. Franklin says.

The Nursing Division has also helped to expand the University’s influence over public health policy. In 2007 UVI established the

Caribbean Exploratory NCMHD Research Center. The Center’s goal is to facilitate research and education on health disparities in the territory.

Using a grant from the National Center on Minority Health Disparities, the Center focuses on community outreach and education. It mentors and trains researchers, including UVI students, and evaluates the efforts of academic, institutional and community partners to improve the health of Virgin Islanders. The center is currently under the leadership of Dr. Gloria Callwood, an associate professor and former chair of the Division of Nursing.

In the Dean’s opinion, this is just one example of what can be done to serve the local community and the nursing profession.

“The nursing program has unlimited potential,” she says.

Realizing that potential means facing several challenges; hiring more faculty, finding more classroom space and securing more training opportunities. Because the program’s been accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, the way these objectives are met must be according to standard. As an example, Dr. Franklin points out that for every eight nursing students placed in a clinical setting, one faculty member must be at hand.

“And this is a tremendous workload and responsibility,” she says. But setting that standard, is the goal.

“UVI’s Division of Nursing is obligated to living up to the standards and we work very hard to do just that,” Dr. Franklin says. ❏



## Smooth Kreationz Takes Small Business to New Heights

**H**is business may have begun in a shack with a leaky roof, but thanks to sound business planning, the sky's the limit for the proprietor of a graphic design firm known as Smooth Kreationz.

Ashley Allen, the owner of Smooth Kreationz, was recently named SBDC Small Business Person of the Year by UVI's Small Business Development Center. SBDC State Director Leonor Dottin says the decision to select Allen as SBDC Small Business Person of the Year was the result of having witnessed three things – the company's overall growth, customer service and repayment ability.

"They have really grown their business," Dottin says of Allen and Smooth Kreationz' general manager, Edgar Smart Jr. Allen says it was leadership that led to that distinction. "How we took initiative in certain things in business, becoming an Economic Development Commission (EDC) company,— that was a big achievement in the public eye and in our eyes as well," he says. Companies must meet rigorous requirements in order to receive benefits from the Virgin Islands Economic Development Commission.

Imagery is the name of the game at Smooth Kreationz. Visitors get that message from the time they approach the

door of the 58,000 sq. ft. industrial space on a hilltop overlooking Sub Base. It's situated in the St. Thomas Industrial Park operated by the VI Economic Development Authority. The park offers rental space to EDC beneficiaries.

A tour of the space shows the many ways creativity comes to life for the graphics company. A computer station behind a cubicle feeds pictures and text into printers. They roll out onto glossy sheets, ready for the next step in the creative process. Stacked up in another room are mounting boards. There are inch-thick PVC backings, there's corrugated plastic, and thin sheets that are transformed into decals, signs and slogans for mounting to windshields. Sheets of illustrated plastic are wrapped around whole vehicles, each printed with a different section which, when put together, turn a car or truck into a rolling billboard. On a more modest scale the computer generated artwork turns into posters, brochures and business cards, even labels for bottles and jars.

In the creative suites sits a team of fresh-faced artists. Lining the walls are posters they've created, which, Allen says, are examples of his leadership in action. His idea is to grab local talent before they

graduate from school and head off to the U.S. mainland, giving young people a reason to stay home and build their dreams.

"We take the business and groom who's around," Allen says.

Smart, a graphic designer by training, says it took him about three months to learn the process of generating artwork on vinyl, mounting it, cutting it with razors using a tool similar to one used by architects.

"It's a pretty simple process once you get used to it," he says. "My first year, we were primarily doing die cutting alone before we got the digital printer. It took me, to do it comfortably, about three months before I could do it, unsupervised. The digital printer, it was a little trickier – learning the ripping software, the graphic design software. I have a background in graphic design so it wasn't too hard to get familiar with the sign making programs. It can take about a month, two months to get familiar with the programs before you can start operating the digital printer," Smart says.

Since taking occupancy in the industrial park last December, Allen says Smooth Kreationz has serviced accounts from the private sector, local and federal governments, and the aviation and charter yacht communities as well.

Smooth Kreationz is also seeking clients in the Eastern Caribbean and on the U.S. mainland, in Orlando. Dottin says they have already developed a strategic plan working with the Georgia SBDC.

It's the mission of SBDC counselors to ask business owners key questions that help them put their business vision into focus. The state director says they're asked if they have done feasibility studies or formulated marketing plans. Counselors educate their clients about funding strategies and stress that loans and grants are not enough. "You need to have money to start a business," Dottin says.

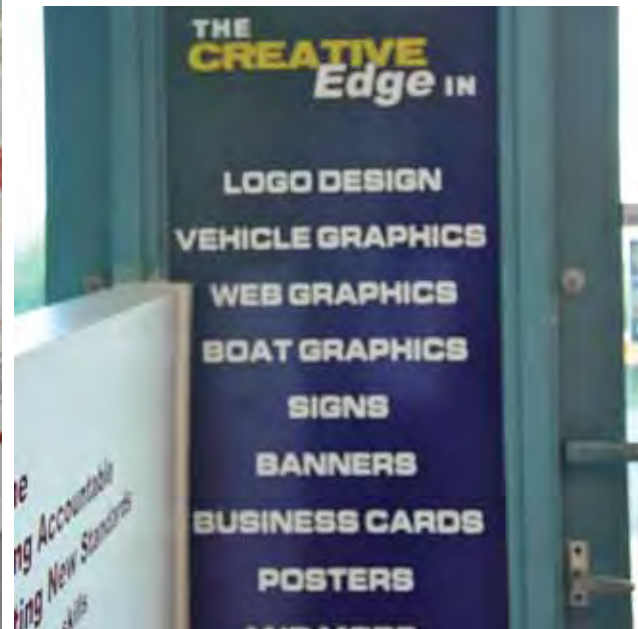
That focus helped Smooth Kreationz take important steps, Allen says. "They guided us with the right tools, making sure we did a business plan so we could forecast and have a vision, or mission, that we know where we're going and how to get there" ➔



General Manager Edgar Smart (foreground) and Smooth Kreationz Owner Ashley Allen.



Hasani Lockhart pays close attention to a detail





**Dr. David Hall began his tenure as the fifth President of the University of the Virgin Islands on August 1, 2009.**

The UVI Board of Trustees, UVI faculty, staff and students, welcomed the Hall family during a week of activities on both campuses.

On the first day of orientation for new students, Dr. Hall said he was honored to be selected as president of UVI. "The greatest asset of an institution is its people, and I have been extremely impressed by the quality and authenticity of the people I have met at UVI," he said.

"Excellence cannot be a luxury for us; it must be our unyielding mandate," he added. "Yet I believe that we not only have within our grasp the potential to become an excellent University, but we also have within our reach the possibility of becoming a great University. Excellence means that we consistently achieve and maintain the highest standards of our profession. But greatness suggests that we have become the envy of other institutions throughout the world because of our distinctive impact."

The installation ceremony marking Dr. Hall's inauguration will take place on Saturday, March 6, 2010 at the Reichhold Center for the Arts.



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The Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center is a partnership program of the U.S. Small Business Administration and the University of the Virgin Islands.



Aerial photograph of the UVI St. Croix campus by Quiana Duncan

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