

UVI Administers Student Survey

In order to find out how students are engaged at UVI, the University's Office of Institutional Research and Planning is administering the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

The survey will gather feedback from UVI freshman and senior students on both campuses. It will focus on the quality of student interactions with faculty and peers, how students spend their time, and what they gain educationally from classes and other activities. The results will help the University to assess the quality of its undergraduate programs and show where UVI needs improvement.

Students selected for the survey will receive custom-

ized letters of invitation and survey packages from the Provost. Students are urged to return the completed survey packages by the April 28 deadline. The names of all students who respond by the deadline, will be entered into a gift drawing. Gifts include an iPod Nano, a digital camera or one of 10 gift cards with a \$25 value.

The survey is being administered in collaboration with the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. To learn more about the NSSE visit the NSSE website: www.nsse.iub.edu. Individuals with questions about the project should contact Institutional Research & Planning at irp@uvi.edu.

Man Up continued

Pastor Skepple brought the message of perseverance. "Your life could be a success if you never give up," Skepple said. "As long as you are alive, don't give up. When you give up you can't win."

Charlotte Amalie High School 10th grader Malakai Fredericks said the conference allowed him to see the various options he has to succeed in life. He said he understands that in order for him to become a professional baseball player he has to take responsibility for his education. Fredericks plans to "work harder in classes by studying more." Rock City's speech and performance was the best part of the conference for Fredericks. Learning from their experience, Fredericks said he will be more appreciative of his parents' support.

All Saints School 9th grader Frederick Larsen said he was most impressed by Gray's ability to accomplish so much at a young age. Larsen said the points that the presenters made "about brotherhood, unity and being a man" are what will remain with him.

"The conference has had the ability to touch the lives of

more male students in the territory, at one time, than ever has been done before – to touch their lives with a positive energy that could change and transform the lives of many of those young men," said University of the Virgin Islands President Dr. David Hall.

Both conferences ended with the students giving a pledge to "man up" and to live honorable lives.

Co-hosted by UVI and the Virgin Islands Department of Education, the conference was sponsored by the Youth Enrichment Initiative of the Virgin Islands Lottery, First Bank Virgin Islands, The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services Division of Family Assistance, the West Indian Company Limited and the College Access Challenge Grant Program.

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Historic 'Man Up' Conference Touches Lives

It was a rainbow of colors in the UVI Sports and Fitness Center as uniform-clad young men from junior high and high schools throughout St. Thomas and St. John gathered for the historic Male Empowerment "Man Up" Conference on Feb. 8. On the St. Croix campus it was the same on Feb. 10, as the young men left their differences behind and embraced their similarities as they were motivated by other successful men. The message was the same to the more than 3,000 young men who gathered for two days – find your life's purpose, work hard and never give up.

"You are special. You were made to dominate. You were made to succeed," former NFL player Donovan Darius told the young men. "Inside each of you is greatness. It's up to you if you tap into it or not." Darius told his life story of growing up in Camden, New Jersey, with his mother, and a father who was in and out of his life. Athletics was an opportunity to better his life.

Each of the speakers connected with the young men in some way, from Darius, to keynoter Farrah Gray, to enter-



Above: More than 2,000 young men pack the St. Thomas campus Sports and Fitness Center for the Male Empowerment 'Man Up' Conference. Below: Young men listen intently to presenters at the event on St. Croix.



tainers Rock City, to Pastor Dexter Skepple. Coincidentally, each came from humble beginnings, and was able to overcome adversity to succeed.

"Brothers don't fight each other," keynoter Gray told the young men. "Brothers don't kill each other. Brothers don't pick red or blue. Brothers pick each other to support each other," he said. He spoke

about growing up poor in inner-city Chicago, watching his mother suffer a heart attack from the stress of working three jobs to support the family. Although the world expected little from him, he knew he had to make life better for his mother.

"Never allow anyone's perception of you to become your reality," said Gray, who earned his first million dollars through his company Farr-Out Foods. Young people are not the leaders of tomorrow, they are the leaders of today, Gray told them. "Find out what God put you here to do. Be the next you, because everybody else is taken," he said. People must ask themselves three questions in order to be successful, Gray said. "What comes easy to me, but hard to other people? What would I do and do it for free? How can I give back?"

As a child Darius asked his pastor to pray for him to be able to take care of his family. He said he has been grateful to have a 10-year NFL career.

"The harder I play, the more I'm thanking God for the gifts he gave me," Darius said. "The harder you work, the more grateful you become."

During the question and answer segment, Gray fielded

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Events Calendar

Feb. 28	Parent Conference	STX
March 4	U.S. EPA Conference	STX
March 10	Grant Writing Seminar	STT
March 12	Spring Research Symposium	STX
March 16	Human Resources Workshop	STX/STT
March 18	EPE Workshop	STX

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Man Up continued



Left to right: Rock City, center, holding microphones, invites young men to join them on stage while they perform; Pastor Dexter Skepple speaks; Farrab Gray is thanked by a young man for his motivation; Donovin Darius speaks.

several questions, including how he became a millionaire, what he did with his first million dollars and if he really believed that each of the students could become a millionaire.

"I don't believe you can be a millionaire," Gray answered. "I believe you can be a billionaire," he said. Gray promised an Addelita Cancryn Jr. High school student a scholarship for his confidence, after the student asked if Gray could give him a dollar, since he was a millionaire.

The young men sat in rapt attention as they listened to Rock City – brothers Timothy and Theron Thomas who were born and raised in St. Thomas. The duo are now successful musicians and entertainers, writing hits for Jennifer Hudson, Usher, Justin Bieber, Drake, Chris Brown, the Pussycat Dolls and Keri Hilson, among many others. They have created a signature sound infusing hip hop and R&B

with Caribbean flavor, but life has not always been harmonious for the brothers. They reminisced about their first bed coming from the dump, but how happy they were just to have a bed.

"My mother always worked two jobs; my father worked at the legislature, but we were always broke," Theron said. Wanting to make life better for themselves and their parents, the brothers endured sleeping in train stations, working minimum wage jobs and performing for free as they climbed to the top.

"Even if you aren't motivated for yourself, do it for your mother, father, grandmother, aunt, uncle, cousin, anybody who helped raise you," Theron said.

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Siblings are Vital to People with Disabilities, Conference Reveals

Children's first friends are usually their siblings. The same is true for children with disabilities. While support groups exist for parents and caregivers of people with disabilities, there are limited resources for siblings of people with disabilities. The Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VI-UCEDD) at the University of the Virgin Islands recently hosted a conference to address the issue. The "Siblings of Persons With Disabilities: Support for the Other Family Members" conference was held on Feb. 7, on St. Thomas and Feb. 9, on St. Croix.

"Siblings are the next generation of support for people with disabilities, but they are often forgotten," said Katie Arnold of the Sibling Leadership Network at the Illinois University Center of Excellence in Disabilities. Arnold was the conference's keynote speaker and facilitator. Siblings play an important role in the life of people with disabilities, she said. Siblings provide support, guidance and instruction when they are young. As they become older and their parents die, siblings often become responsible

for their siblings with disabilities.

Arnold used her own life as an example. Arnold learned that her parents' will said that she and her brother must act as co-guardians to their sister who has a disability when they died. It was the first time Arnold had heard about that plan. It was also emotional to talk about the inevitable – her parents' death. "That meeting was a bit uncomfortable for me," Arnold said.

What Arnold's family learned is that they should allow their sister to make as many decisions as she could and that they should write down decisions that were made for future reference. They also had to decide exactly who would get to make decisions. There will be conflicts as a family speaks about such issues, but it's necessary to work through "for a peace of mind of everyone in the family," Arnold said.

Arnold provided several resources for the audience, including information on a special needs trust and the support websites: www.siblingsupport.org and www.siblingleadership.org.

'40 Years Growing Strong' Agrifest Dazzles



Agrifest 2011 will be hard to top. The 40th annual celebration of all things agricultural attracted thousands to the fairgrounds on St. Croix. Reinardo Vasquez was named Crop Farmer of the Year for his work on his 2.6 acre farm. Henry Schuster Jr., was named Livestock Farmer of the Year for his work on the Schuster Farm. Keosha "Crucian Empress" Quinn won Agrifest's first ever Youth Calypso Competition. The three-day celebration was held Feb. 19-21. Pictured clockwise: Dignitaries cut the ribbon to officially open Agrifest; Hope Vale Farms offers a vast sampling; a cow relaxes; bright colors of produce were prominent throughout. UVI is a sponsor of Agrifest.

Meet UVI Student Trustee: Elizabeth Pichardo

There is nothing typical about Elizabeth Pichardo. A non-traditional UVI student, Pichardo pursued a career in the hospitality industry before returning to university to complete her bachelor's degree.

When she started UVI in 2008, she got involved with activities on the St. Croix campus. She was a champion of the Master's in Psychology degree, which became available. She soon ran for a spot on the UVI Board of



Elizabeth Pichardo

Trustees and became the Student Representative on the Board in 2010.

Pichardo wants UVI students to be more involved in student government, and student government to be more involved with student advancement. A member of the Board's Academic Research and Student Affairs sub-committee, Pichardo worked on the development of policies to award honorary degrees and establish the bachelor's degree in Hotel and Tourism Management.

Pichardo hopes to continue serving students even after her term expires in June.

Celebrate UVI Going Green at Afternoon on the Green

The community is invited to "Join UVI in Going Green" at Afternoon on the Green at noon on Sunday, March 13, on the St. Thomas campus' Herman E. Moore Golf Course. The food, fun and family event that Afternoon on the Green is known for promises to meet every expectation at the 22nd annual event.

Dozens of dishes prepared by the territory's best cooks will be available for \$3 a sample. Pastries and drinks will also be on sale. The Grill-Off competition will be continued for a second year and the Ital Dub Master competition returns. Patrons who purchase \$10 worth of tickets will be allowed to judge the food.

Entertainment includes the Top Notch Band, the Bigg Thymerz Band, the Becca Darling Band, and the Mungo

Niles Cultural Dancers. There will also be a Children's Activity Center, with bouncers, face painting and games. The Academic Tent will feature interactive displays from UVI's colleges and schools and various UVI departments, including Admissions and Recruitment.

The "Join UVI in Going Green" theme was selected to reflect the University's commitment to energy and resource conservation.

Afternoon on the Green depends on community support. Any member of the community, organization or business can contribute food, drinks, money or volunteer at the event. For more information or to contribute call 693-1040.