



dateline: UVI

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UVI Gives Territory 'Stimulus Packages'

Facing one of the toughest economic times in history, University of the Virgin Islands graduates seemed optimistic and excited as they received their degrees at Commencement ceremonies on the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses on May 18 and 19, respectively. Amaris Chew, the class speaker on the St. Croix campus addressed the issue head-on.

"We have established something to boost our economy," Chew said. "We created the VI's own stimulus package. We call it the University of the Virgin Islands Class of 2009 and it is our job to stimulate this economy."

She urged fellow graduates to make the same investment to the community that their families and the community at-large have invested in them. Chew said that the graduates should continue to achieve more milestones. "The temptation to stop now is the greatest risk on our road to accomplishment," she said. "There are economies to save, health and environmental policies to be reconsidered, representative statuses to be acquired, faulty bureaucracies to deconstruct then reconstruct, violence to be stopped and most importantly children to raise."

St. Thomas campus class speaker Rick Grant likened commencement to an art show where the graduates were works of art, intricately created and ready to be auctioned. "We are about to leave the UVI studio. Please note, this does not signify completed portraits," Grant said, telling graduates to never settle for less than they are worth. "Be mindful to always dust yourselves off so your glory will be ever-present," he said. "Only sell to the highest bid-



UVI St. Thomas campus graduates prepare to leave the Sports and Fitness Center following the Commencement ceremony while well-wishers take pictures.

der because the proceeds will benefit our community." Framing of the portraits, he said, should be held off as long as possible.

Throughout his speech, Grant alluded to 29 "portraits" that stood out from among the group, 29 graduates who defy the odds. Everyone waited in anticipation for the 29 special graduates to be revealed. "The featured portraits of this art show – 29 male portraits. Rise and be recognized," Grant said to rousing applause, as the men stood. "We have made it to portrait status."

UVI President Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster highlighted some of the University's accomplishments over the past year. She also noted some of the firsts among the class of 2009, including the first graduates to earn associate in applied science degrees in criminal justice. Dr. Ragster said that graduates have been well prepared by UVI faculty and staff for conditions they are about to face in a changing world. She encouraged the graduates to "see challenges and problems as opportunities in disguise." Quoting Mohammed, Dr. Ragster said a man's true wealth is the good he does in the world.

See Commencement on Next Page

Reef Fest is Outdoor Classroom



VI Ecotours Guide Frank Galdo holds a beached puffer fish at the First Annual Reef Fest, held on May 17, at Smith Bay Park on St. Thomas. The day offered free snorkeling, kayaking, marine-themed games and exhibits, in an effort

to educate the community on preserving the territory's marine environment. The University of the Virgin Islands was a sponsor of the event.

Events Calendar

May 29-30	HIV/AIDS Awareness Activities	STX
June 3-4	Business Survival Workshop	STT
June 5	Small Business Awards	STT
June 13	UVI Board of Trustees Meeting	STT
June 25	Summer Session II Registration	STT/STX
June 26	Summer Session II Begins	STT/STX



Left: The UVI delegation at Paquito Montaner Stadium in Ponce, P.R., for the dance competition. Right: UVI President Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster leads the UVI delegation as it participates in the procession of schools.



UVI Comes Out Strong for Justas

Since joining the Liga Atletica Interuniversitaria, a university athletic league in Puerto Rico commonly referred to as LAI, the University of the Virgin Islands has participated annually in Justas – a sports competition that involves all of LAI participating schools. More than 10,000 students attend Justas each year, which has become a major social and sporting event in Puerto Rico.

This year, for the first time, UVI's delegation included more than just student athletes. More than 100 students, staff and faculty traveled with the athletes as a show of support at the April 25-26 event. Also for the first time, UVI participated in Justas' Dance Team Competition,

which was heavily supported by the UVI delegation.

On April 25, the UVI delegation, headed by UVI President Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster, participated in the procession of schools around the Paquito Montaner Stadium, to rousing applause. The trip was an occasion for UVI students from St. Croix and St. Thomas to come together to display their Buccaneer pride.

More than 20 universities from across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands compete in nearly 20 sporting events. The games end with the crowning of the university with the highest ranking in both the men's and women's divisions.

Commencement Continued

"Class of 2009, I charge you to go out in the world and do good."

The keynote speaker for both ceremonies was Hon. Denzil L. Douglas, the Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis. "You have put in place an essential cornerstone – a cornerstone for a safe and secure future," he said at the St. Thomas campus ceremony. "For that I commend you." Dr. Douglas said that the graduates will all help to shape the world.

While earning a degree is a triumphant stage of life,

Dr. Douglas told the graduates to be prepared for additional obstacles. "In the most successful lives there will be moments of private pain, private fear, private trials – moments of darkness," he said. The key to every successful person is that "each time they stumbled and fell, they got up," he said. "I ask that you step forward, determined to be a force of good in this world."

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