# Greatness by DESIGN



# UVI Self-Study 2017

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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HISTORICALLY AMERICAN.
UNIQUELY CARIBBEAN.
GLOBALLY INTERACTIVE.

# Executive Summary
## Overview of Chapters and Content

The following overview constructs a bridge for the readers of this self-study, who will either be versed in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, or knowledgeable about all that is the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) from strategic plan to management values. To support the readers, information from this page is duplicated at the beginning of each chapter on an unnumbered "blue page". It is the University's firm belief that by the end of the 100 pages, the reader will know both entities, and will see that the successes and opportunities of UVI depict the thoughtful and exceptional achievement of the MSCHE standards. The reader should have access to a copy of the strategic plan *Pathways to Greatness (DR-002), UVI Documentation Road Map (DR-000)* and Standards for Accreditation for ease of reference.

### Greatness by Design: UVI Self-Study 2017

Chapter One, **The Quest for Greatness**, opens with a quote from President David Hall at his inauguration ceremony, challenging the University community to dream with him. The chapter is an executive summary and introduction to the document, including an overview of the self-study process and the institution, as required in the Self-Study: Creating a Useful Process and Report. While describing the physical aspects of the University campuses, the text refers to spreadsheets in the documentation road map that fulfill Standard 6, criteria 4, and describes newly built or renovated buildings. This section also discusses the University's initiatives that are mentioned throughout the self-study and which dictate the organization of the self-study, including:

- *Pathways to Greatness*, UVI's current strategic plan.
  - Goal 2A of *Pathways to Greatness* is introduced, because it has become THE declarative statement about the students we want to graduate.
- *Management Values* that were adopted by the University and are the foundation of the services and programs offered
- *UVINext*, an initiative to institutionalize assessment and effectiveness. The first phase of the initiative is introduced in this chapter along with its report and recommendations.

Chapter Two, **Defining Greatness: UVI's Mission and Goals**, is a description of the current strategic plan, its process and communication methods for disseminating the plan and goals. This chapter introduces the University's mission in fulfillment of Standard I. The remaining chapters of the document describe how the University is fulfilling its mission by achieving the goals of the strategic plan. Each performance goal and measurable objective within *Pathways to Greatness* is addressed in the document, along with the progress towards goal attainment, the assessment measures and impacts, and relevant resource and planning information.

Chapter Three, **Shared Governance: The Structure to Achieve the University Mission**, outlines the achievement of Standard VII within the University's shared governance structure. Shared governance is a central tenet of the University and a significant consideration in the 2016 Self-Study. This chapter describes the process and the shared governance constituencies. In the discussion of each entity, the chapter highlights surveys and results used to assess the satisfaction and performance of the constituent groups, and communication processes. Significant changes in the organizational structure since the 2012 Periodic Review Report are also discussed. The chapter ends with a description of leadership groups and their position within shared governance, including information about the *UVINext* Task Force and the implementation of the *UVINext* initiative.

Chapter Four, **Achieving the Core Mission: Student Success through Excellent Teaching & Innovative Research**, uses a significant part of UVI's mission as the subtitle. This makes the point that the University lives and breathes the mission in its daily operation. This chapter describes the achievement of both Standards III and IV because they work in harmony at UVI. The chapter is organized by the first three tenets of *Pathways to Greatness* Goal 2A: academically excellent, globally sensitive, entrepreneurially focused. For each student learning criterion and student support experience, assessment data are used to demonstrate why programs were implemented, how success is measured, and how continuing improvements are being made to enhance the programs

Chapter Five, **Emotionally and Spiritually Balanced: Creating a Secure, Ethical and Supportive Environment**, establishes UVI's process of achieving Standard II, within the fourth tenet of *Pathways to Greatness* Goal 2A: emotionally and spiritually balanced. The analysis draws on the policies and practices of the University, the investments supporting employees, and actions to ensure all University constituents feel valued in a secure and ethical environment.

Chapter Six, **Committed to Serving the World: Achieving the Rest of the Mission**, provides data and analysis on the impact of the University on the Territory and the wider Caribbean with the final tenet of *Pathways to Greatness* Goal 2A: committed to serving the world. This chapter is necessary to demonstrate achievement of the community engagement aspect of the UVI mission, and meets criteria of Standard I.

Chapter Seven, **Moving the Needle: UVI as a High Performance Institution**, describes the University's resources, and institutionalized planning and improvement processes consistent with requirements of Standard VI. This chapter examines how the University is supporting its own organizational development, fiscal responsibility, and modern environment within its "plan, resource, and assess" cycle.

Chapter Eight, **Performance Assessment and Continuous Improvement on the Pathway**, delineates the formal processes used by the University for institutional and educational effectiveness, consistent with Standards V and VI. This chapter brings into focus how goals are assessed, and the activities that close the loop. UVI strongly believes that the discussion of the goals in the earlier chapters demonstrates both assessment and process for continuous improvement. Chapter Eight concludes with a discussion of the ongoing implementation and institutionalization of *UVINext* processes.

Chapter Nine, **Transcending the Present Reality and Limitations**, takes its name from President David Hall's inaugural speech, quoted in the preamble to Chapter One, encouraging the institution to dream with him and thus transcend its reality and limitations. This closing chapter outlines the success of the University and the opportunities for continuous improvement. It also enumerates three recommendations that will be implemented during the next MSCHE accreditation cycle.

The diagram on the opposite page, under the umbrella of the University's mission, charts the chapter names within this document to the MSCHE standards, the Areas of Focus within *Pathways to Greatness*, and the *Seven Management Values*. It also denotes the overlap of the tenets from Goal 2A, *UVINext* phases, and identifies where each measurable objective of *Pathways to Greatness* is addressed.

Diagram of Self-Study document based on key components of the University mission

**Mission:UVI is** *a learner-centered institution dedicated to the success of its students* *and committed to enhancing the lives of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands*

## Greatness By Design Chapter

| Chapter One | Chapter Two | Chapter Three | Chapter Four | Chapter Five | Chapter Six | Chapter Seven | Chapter Eight | Chapter Nine |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Quest for Greatness | Defining Greatness: UVI's Mission and Goals | Shared Governance: The Structure to Achieve the University's Mission | Achieving the Core Mission: Student Success Through Excellent Teaching & Innovative Research | Emotionally and Spiritually Balanced: Creating a Secure, Ethical and Supportive Environment | Committed to Serving the World: Achieving the Rest of the Mission | Moving the Needle: UVI As A High Performance Institution | Performance Assessment and Continuous Improvement on the Pathway | Transcending the Present Reality and Limitations |

PTG:2A Graduates who are

Academically Excellent, Globally Sensitive, Entrepreneurially Focused

Emotionally and Spiritually Balanced

Committed to Serving the World

## MSCHE Standard

Executive Summary
Introduction with history and process
Standard VI: Physical Description

Standard I: Mission

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Standard I: Mission

Standard VI: Planning, Resources

Standard VI: Institutional Improvement
Standard V: Educational Effectiveness

Opportunities, Recommendations and Conclusion

## Standard I: Goals

## PTG Area of Focus

PTG Goals:
5A2,3C,5F

PTG Goals:
5B,3F2, 3F1,6B,5E,1C

PTG Goals:
1H1,1H2,1H3,1J
1M,1B,1K1,2C,3I2
1K2,1E,1G,1A,2G2
2B,2E,2C,2D,2H,2I1,2I2,
2A1,2A2,3E1,3E2,1L1

PTG 1: Academic Quality and Excellence
PTG 2: Student Development and Success

PTG Goals:
4B,5C

PTG 4: Safe University Environment
PTG 5: Human Dvelopment

PTG Goals:
3D,3H,3B,
6B2,1L2,1D,3I
3A,3G,6B
3C,3J,5D,4C

PTG 3: Community Engagement & Globalization

PTG Goals:
4D1,4D2,4A6
6C,4G,6E,
6B,6A,6F,6H

PTG 5: Organizational Development
PTG 6: Fiscal Sustainability and Growth
PTG 4: Modern University Environment

PTG Goals:
5A1,5A2,5F

PTG 5: Organizational and Human Development

## Management Value

**UVINext**
Report and Recommendations

**UVINext**
Task Force and Implementation

Management Value 4:
Informed Decision Making

Management Value 1: High Performing Institution

Management Value 3: Uncompromised Integrity
Management Value 2: Service Oriented
Management Value 7: Emotional and Spiritual Health

Management Value 4: Informed Decision Making
Management Value 5: Fiscal Responsibility
Management Value 1: High Performing Institution

**UVINext**
Continuation and Process

Management Value 6: Performance Assessment

# Self-Study Chapter One
# The Quest for Greatness

*"I am blessed to be the President of UVI and to build upon the wonderful foundation that my predecessors and so many others have constructed. Since the start of my presidency, I have asked the University of the Virgin Islands to dream with me; to set our sights on something that transcends our present reality and limitations. Therefore, the theme we have embraced for this inauguration and for my presidency is* **'The Quest for Greatness'.***"*

*--Dr. David Hall*

Chapter One, entitled **The Quest for Greatness**, opens with a quote from President David Hall at his inauguration ceremony, that challenges the University community to dream with him. The chapter is an executive summary and introduction to the document, including an overview of the self-study process and the institution, as required in Self Study: Creating a Useful Process and Report. While describing the physical aspects of the University campuses, we refer to spreadsheets in the documentation road map that fulfill Standard 6, criteria 4, and describes newly built or renovated buildings. This section also describes the University initiatives that are mentioned throughout the Self-Study, and which are used to organize the Self-Study. The initiatives include:

- *Pathways to Greatness*, UVI's current strategic plan.

- Goal 2A of *Pathways to Greatness* is introduced because it has become THE declarative statement about the students we want to graduate.

*"UVI will produce graduates who are academically excellent, globally sensitive, entrepreneurially focused, emotionally and spiritually balanced, and committed to serving the world."*

*--Pathways to Greatness, Goal 2A*

- *Management Values* that were adopted by the University, and are the foundation of the services and programs offered by the University.

- *UVINext*, an initiative to institutionalize assessment and effectiveness. The first phase of the initiative is introduced in this chapter along with its report and recommendations.

**D**avid Hall took office as the fifth President of the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) on August 1, 2009. At his inauguration ceremony, the President declared:

> *"I am blessed to be the President of UVI and to build upon the wonderful foundation that my predecessors and so many others have constructed. Since the start of my presidency, I have asked the University of the Virgin Islands to dream with me; to set our sights on something that transcends our present reality and limitations. Therefore, the theme we have embraced for this inauguration and for my presidency is* **'The Quest for Greatness'."**

## About the Self-Study

The University of the Virgin Islands' decennial Self-Study is the opportunity to review the University's accomplishments. It is also the opportunity to use the process as a way to move forward – "to set our sights on something that transcends our present reality and limitations."   This self-study is part of an ongoing effort to implement activities that strengthen and improve the institution.  The University embraces the persistent quest of Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE or Middle States) to make the self-study process representative of institutional initiatives and improvement, rather than a checklist of criteria.  This allows UVI to demonstrate achievement of accreditation standards at the highest possible level.  UVI can not only say with confidence, "Our students are well-served; our community is well-served" as indicated in the preamble to the Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, but it can also say that our students and our institution are progressing on the pathway to greatness.  The University's version of this statement is:

> *"UVI will produce graduates who are academically excellent, globally sensitive, entrepreneurially focused, emotionally and spiritually balanced, and committed to serving the world."*
>
> *--Pathways to Greatness, Goal 2A*

Through well-defined accomplishments and relevant activities – UVI is achieving GREATNESS BY DESIGN.

### University Initiatives

This document demonstrates evidence of compliance with MSCHE standards based upon the progress and guidance of three important University initiatives that were launched as part of the quest for greatness.  President Hall introduced *Seven Management Values* (MV or Management Values) to the University community during his 2009 University Convocation address.   The Management Values were developed after conversations with University constituents about the challenges and needs, and were presented as a framework within which the University would deliver programs and services on its quest for greatness.  The *Seven Management Values* (DR-001) are:

1. High performance institution with a focus on quality
2. Service oriented
3. Uncompromised integrity
4. Informed decision-making
5. Fiscal responsibility
6. Performance assessment
7. Emotional and spiritual health

Adherence to and support for the Management Values will be noted throughout this self-study by indicating MV1-7, referencing the list above.  Using the framework of the *Seven Management Values* as the foundation, the President guided the UVI community through a university-wide process that completed the implementation of the former strategic plan, *Vision 2012,* and culminated with the development of the University's current strategic plan, *Strategic Plan 2017: Pathways to Greatness* (PTG, DR-002). PTG articulates UVI's aspirations and demonstrates compliance with MSCHE's accreditation standards.  Throughout this document, when PTG performance goals are referenced, relevant discussions will elucidate how achievement of the referenced goals both moves the University closer to achieving its mission, as well as fulfills one or more aspects of MSCHE's Standards.  *Pathways to Greatness* goals are abbreviated PTG:number for area of focus, letter for performance goal, number for measurable objective, i.e. (PTG:4D2).
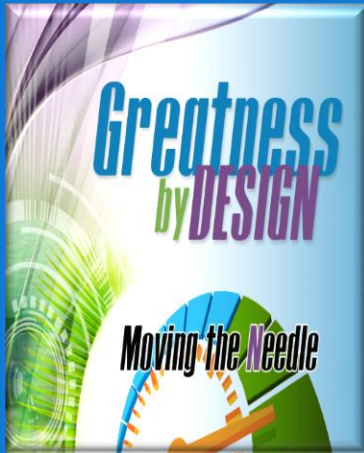
## Why GREATNESS BY DESIGN?

The Middles States Commission on Higher Education Re-Affirmation of Accreditation process at the University of the Virgin Islands is based on the concept that if the University is to achieve its strategic plan "*Pathways to Greatness*", there needs to be a calculated and measurable effort. The Accreditation process provides the vehicle for the University to test its measurements and procedures. It is an opportunity to make sure that UVI is making progress "on purpose" and that every action moves the needle on the measurements.

**D**ata

**E**ffectiveness

**S**trategic Planning

Institutional **I**mprovement

**G**oals

Moving the **N**eedle

In 2013, an initiative began to address program rationalization, to understand the impacts, costs, and revenues generated by each program and service at the University. This fulfills PTG:5A2, *to embed institutional assessment within the fabric of the University by developing a system of benchmarks and metrics.* The initiative took the progress made in institutional effectiveness discussed in the MSCHE Periodic Review Report 2012 (PRR or 2012 PRR, DR-003) and elevated institutional effectiveness into a University-wide commitment. The initiative, known as *UVINext,* began with a comprehensive and collaborative assessment of all academic and administrative programs and service units by external consultants and internal administrative and academic committees working independently. *UVINext* culminated with a report entitled, *UVINext*: Academic Programs and Administrative Services Transformation (DR-004), which includes a ranking of units and programs and a series of recommendations for improvement. The document will be referred to as *UVINext:2014*. The Board of Trustees (herein after, Board or BOT) placed each unit ranked in the lowest quartile on a "Strict Scrutiny List" for further review. The recommendations in the report were reviewed by the BOT. The BOT approved those recommendations that it determined appropriate for implementation and the *UVINext* Task Force was charged to review units on Strict Scrutiny and oversee the implementation of the approved recommendations (DR-005). The *UVINext* initiative, led by the *UVINext* Task Force, has become the centerpiece of the University's assessment and is described throughout the self-study, as it sets the path for continuous improvement and becomes a catalyst to refine current processes and procedures.

It is against the backdrop of *Pathways to Greatness*, the *Seven Management Values*, and *UVINext* that the University undertook this decennial GREATNESS BY DESIGN Self-Study. Text and discussions address specific MSCHE standards and criteria throughout the Self-Study document. Many of the standards are addressed by the documents referred to or listed in the narrative from the **Documentation Road Map** (DR-000). These documents are numbered **DR-Number** and are active links to access documents. Each document is listed in the road map by standard in this three-digit number format. There are also references throughout the Self-Study when information from the Self-Study is necessary to provide evidence for the verification of compliance report, i.e. (Requirement of Affiliation,#). The completed Verification of Compliance with Accreditation Relevant Federal Regulations Institutional Report is in the documentation road map (DR-144).

## Self-Study Outcomes

The Self-Study was designed to address four specific outcomes that would move the institution along the pathway to greatness. The most important of these is to demonstrate how the University of the Virgin Islands achieves the Middle States standards for accreditation as it pursues its mission. Outcome four from UVI Self-Study Design (DR-006) promotes continuous improvement with a focus on "honoring our past and creating our future," thereby assuring the reaffirmation of accreditation. The other three outcomes described in this design document include:

> **Outcome 1:** While building upon a culture of continuous improvement, identify processes to improve data collection and recommend strategies that will improve the use of the data to better inform University decisions. These strategies will become the measurements for the next strategic plan.

Based on the analysis in this document and feedback from the MSCHE team visit, a recommended set of data dashboards will be created to demonstrate the adherence to each of the MSCHE standards. These dashboards will take into consideration the University's current Key Performance Indicators (KPI's, DR-007) and lessons learned from the previous strategic planning process (described in chapters two and seven), and will provide both the justification for the activities to be implemented in the next strategic plan, and the benchmarks to monitor success. The University's Board will approve what will become the final measurements. This process will support the University as it moves to annual reports to MSCHE by enforcing the use of accreditation standards as part of daily operations.

> **Outcome 2:** Create operational plans to embed the processes and concepts of *UVINext* into each University Component and Department that will allow them to engage in effectively measuring and monitoring academic programs and administrative services.

The self-study process made it clear that the University needs to better align its processes, resources and committees to more effectively demonstrate the achievement of MSCHE standards.This process will require *corresponding links between accreditation, strategic planning, resource allocation, organizational effectiveness and performance assessment* as required in PTG:5F. This document, called UVI ASPIRE (DR-008), will be presented to University constituents for input, and in its current form, is in the documentation road map. The implementation and expansion of UVI ASPIRE is discussed in Recommendation One in Chapter Nine.

> **Outcome 3:** As the institution rapidly moves towards the completion of *Pathways to Greatness,* the self-study process will provide insight into actions and initiatives that will become the foundation for the next strategic plan.

The development of the self-study document and its analysis revealed several potential improvements in the University processes and operations. Three of these have been developed as recommendations for the Self-Study and the remaining opportunities will serve as the foundation for the strategic plan that will succeed *Pathways to Greatness*. These are discussed in Chapter Nine. The BOT extended PTG to 2018 to accommodate this schedule and the use of the self-study process as the foundation for UVI's next strategic plan (DR-009). Chapter Nine discusses a proposed framework for this plan.

## Self-Study Process

UVI's President led the development of the self-study and tasked the university's Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Advisory Board (IEAAB), chartered in 2009 (DR-010), to provide oversight for the Self-Study project and the Self-Study Initiative Steering Committee (SSI or Steering Committee). The IEAAB was also tasked with vetting the three institutional recommendations submitted in this self-study, taking into consideration feedback and priorities from all constituencies. The Vice Provost for Research and Public Service and an Associate Professor of Education, on the Albert A. Sheen Campus, were appointed Co-Chairs of the SSI by the President in October 2014. As requested by MSCHE, chairpersons for each of the seven (7) Middle States standards were added to the Steering Committee in February 2015 after deliberation with IEAAB. The first task of the SSI was to develop the Self-Study Design. The design was approved by MSCHE in August of 2015. The chairperson for each standard brought
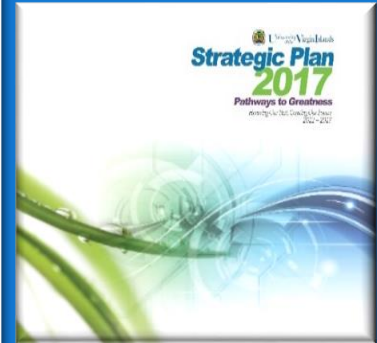
*Pathways to Greatness*

*Pathways to Greatness* (PTG) is the current strategic plan for the University of the Virgin Islands. The plan provides the road map for the operations and achievements of UVI.

There are six areas of strategic focus, identified by numbers 1-6. Each of these areas is divided into individual performance goals delineated by capital letters. The performance goals, where necessary, are further divided into measurable objectives, noted as number.

The citation of these goals throughout the self-study document appears:

Pathways to Greatness     Measurable Objective

# PTG:1A2

Area of Focus     Performance Goal
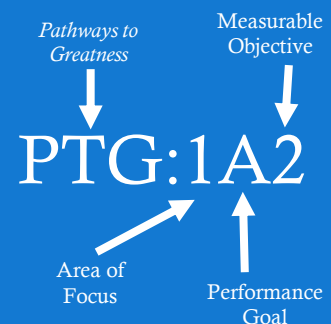
together sub-committee members to develop a report on its standard in September 2015. An editor for the Self-Study was appointed in 2015 and a content editor was added in summer 2016 to ensure that deadlines in the Self-Study Design were met. The University's Internal Auditor was added to the steering committee to lead the completion of the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation Relevant Federal Regulations Institutional Report, or Compliance Report, and to develop the separate requirement, including the compliance information required in Standard II.8a-d. The Vice President for Information Services and Institutional Assessment served as Editor-In-Chief of the self-study and assisted the Co-Chairs in conducting the business of the SSI. The institutional research staff, rounded out the steering committee and were responsible for the development and finalization of the documentation road map and verification of data.

The SSI subcommittee chairs led the development of material to support UVI's compliance with each standard. Each subcommittee developed an outline of its standard (due November 24, 2015) and then two drafts of each standard (due February 22 and April 22, 2016, respectively). The IEAAB and SSI Co-Chairs reviewed each draft and provided feedback. The University constituents, through presentation at two University Town Hall meetings (February 2015 and March 2016) also provided input. The SSI Co-Chairs consolidated subcommittee reports into a full draft, organized around University initiatives and mission-centered University achievements. This re-organized draft was presented to IEAAB for feedback on June 10, 2016. During summer 2016, data analysis within the document was reviewed and verified by institutional research staff, and editing continued to unify the document, remove duplication and maximize content impact. A review draft was presented to the President's Cabinet (the Cabinet will be defined in Chapter Three) on July 20, 2016 with revisions finalized during retreats on September 13 (all day) and 30, 2016 (half-day). The Steering Committee monitored changes in the document and continued to provide feedback during the Cabinet review. An updated draft was sent to the IEAAB and SSI on October 7, 2016 during a joint meeting, which also initiated the process to select recommendations for inclusion in the document. Feedback was then used to prepare a draft for the MSCHE Team Chair on October 17th. An additional town hall meeting was held on October 20, 2016 to present the document to University constituents, including meetings with students on each campus. Feedback and input from these groups, including the finalized recommendations from IEAAB, and the MSCHE Team Chair were used to complete a draft that was submitted to the UVI Board of Trustees on December 14, 2016 for final approval by the BOT January 19, 2017. This living document will receive further revisions and refinements until its delivery to the MSCHE Visiting Team on or about February 6, 2017, for their March 19-22, 2017 site visit.

## History and Description of University of the Virgin Islands

Founded in 1962, UVI is a public, liberal arts institution located in the United States Virgin Islands. The United States Congress awarded UVI land-grant status in 1972. In 1986, the College of the Virgin Islands (CVI) was renamed the University of the Virgin Islands to reflect the growth and diversification of its academic curricula, community and regional services, and research programs. That same year, the United States Congress named UVI one of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). UVI, therefore, holds the distinction of being the only HBCU outside of the continental United States.

As of fall 2016, the University offers more than fifty (50) academic programs including four (4) undergraduate certificate programs and four (4) special programs; thirty-eight (38) undergraduate, and eleven (11) graduate degree programs, including a doctoral program, through five (5) colleges and schools. Through a Board resolution in June of 2011 (DR-145), the University also established twelve (12) academic minors. UVI began its quest to open an accredited School of Medicine (UVISOM) in 2014. As of fall 2016, 2,416 students were enrolled across all University programs.

UVI operates as a one University with two campuses and multiple instructional sites. The campuses are equal parts of a whole, and each plays an important role in achieving the University's mission and supporting the culture of the Territory. There are campuses on the islands of St. Croix (STX) and St. Thomas (STT), with instructional sites on St. John (STJ) and Sint Maarten in the Lesser Antilles. Each of these sites and physical structures provides adequate space to realize the University's educational goals. Most UVI programs have presence on both campuses. These programs and places are described within this Self-Study in more detail as they relate to meeting MSCHE standards.

The 388-acre *St. Thomas Campus* is located three miles west of the town of Charlotte Amalie, overlooking John Brewers Bay on the island of St. Thomas. In addition to the buildings described in DR-011, this campus includes the Herman E. Moore Golf Course, Brewers Bay beach, tennis courts and a basketball court for student use as part of athletic and recreation programs. On St. Thomas, but off of the main campus, are the offices for the Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center (VI-SBDC) and the Etelman House Observatory, which is operated by the College of Science and Mathematics (CSM). Of specific note on the St. Thomas Campus is the addition of a 100-bed residential facility, West Hall, which was completed in 2012 and has been at capacity since its opening. Additionally, there were several notable renovation projects completed between 2011 and 2016, specifically: ADA compliance renovation project of upper and lower campus (2011); renovations of the Social Science building which upgraded 13 faculty offices (2013); $1.5M renovation of the Reichhold Center for the Arts that includes ADA compliance is in process (2015-2016); renovations to the Dining Pavilion to improve the students' dining experience; renovations to Penha House to house the WUVI radio station; and facilities upgrade, additional research facility and extension of the dock, and a new boat launch slip at the MacLean Science Center. In addition, construction is underway on a School of Medicine Classroom Building.

The 130-acre *Albert A. Sheen Campus* (AAS) is located at Estate Golden Grove, midway between the towns of Christiansted and Frederiksted, on the island of St. Croix. In addition to the buildings and square footage listed in DR-012, behind the Student Center are outdoor basketball, volleyball and tennis courts, and soccer fields used for physical education classes, intramural athletics and recreation, which were established in 2012. Also on St. Croix, but off of the main campus, are the offices of the VI-SBDC, Center for Community Engagement and Life-long Learning (UVICELL), and the Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD). Of particular note on the AAS Campus is the UVI Research and Technology Park (RTPark) building which houses the College of Science and Mathematics and its faculty offices, classrooms and laboratories since fall 2013. This relocation satisfied the critical need for space for the science programs. In addition, planning is underway for construction of a School of Medicine Simulation Center.

The *St. John Academic Center (STJAC)* is located on the island of St. John and provides classroom and library services to support academic programs (DR-013). The Center shares space with the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources. While faculty are primarily on the two campuses, the Academic Center allows students on St. John to attend classes when they are offered via videoconference, significantly reducing the commute, that includes a ferry ride, and ground transportation to the St. Thomas campus. Although the Center serves fewer than 30 students per year, it provides an important outreach to meet the educational needs of St. John. The St. John Academic Center opened in 2010, and was developed through the allocation of part of a five-year Title III Grant. The University also maintains the *Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station (VIERS)* on St. John, and offices for the Cooperative Extension Services (CES) in Cruz Bay. Both are described in more detail in Chapter Six.

In fall 2015, UVI revamped its relationship with the University of St. Martin (USM) by offering undergraduate and graduate education and business courses to UVI students on the USM campus on Sint Maarten. The agreement, titled *UVI at USM*, is part of a strategic effort to expand opportunities for more individuals to have access to a UVI program of study and degree and to increase University revenues (DR-014). It also fulfills PTG:3C to *strengthen partnerships* with Caribbean neighbors. *UVI at USM* offers St. Martin/Sint Maarten neighbors the same quality education offered at all UVI locations. Courses are taught by UVI faculty either online or on site in St. Martin. In spring 2017, *UVI at USM* is serving 41 students.

As the only public institution and only accredited institution of higher education in the U.S. Virgin Islands, UVI has community and external engagement as a priority, and views this engagement as central to academic excellence and student learning.

UVI's size enhances its ability to offer a wide array of programs and services, while continuing to provide a personal, meaningful experience for its students.

# Self-Study Chapter Nine
# Transcending the Present Reality and Limitations

*"I am blessed to be the President of UVI and to build upon the wonderful foundation that my predecessors and so many others have constructed. Since the start of my presidency, I have asked the University of the Virgin Islands to dream with me; to set our sights on something that transcends our present reality and limitations. Therefore, the theme we have embraced for this inauguration and for my presidency is **'The Quest for Greatness'**."*

*--Dr. David Hall*

Chapter Nine, **Transcending the Present Reality and Limitations**, takes its name from President David Hall's inauguration speech, quoted in the preamble to Chapter One, encouraging the institution to dream with him and thus transcend its reality and limitations. This closing chapter outlines the success of the University and the opportunities for continuous improvement. It also itemizes three recommendations that will be followed during the next MSCHE accreditation cycle.

Through the development of this Self-Study, it is clear that in its accomplishments, the University has made significant strides since its last decennial MSCHE visit in 2007. It has substantially improved programs, and options for students since the 2012 PRR. It has taken on the process of changing its culture and way of doing business. In examining its accomplishments alone, there is clear evidence of the extensive successes and unique possibilities along this pathway to greatness. UVI has, indeed, transcended its own reality and limitations.

Part of the Self-Study process, however, is to take a critical look at the processes behind and the impact of these accomplishments, and the impact on the institution from the world around it. In his State of the University Address on August 19, 2016, President David Hall stated,

> *"If we were honest with ourselves, and with each other, we would have to conclude that these are very challenging times for UVI. In the words of my favorite Roberta Flack song, 'these are trying times'. Budgets are tight or out of balance, people are taking on the responsibilities of others because of unfilled vacancies and hiring freezes."*

Many impacts have been discussed in the previous pages. The University has encountered many difficult and disheartening circumstances, both collectively and individually, as it challenged its reality and dreamt of bringing superior practices in higher education to these shores. The President shared a quote by Marianne Williamson, which is contained in her book, Tears to Triumph. In the book she states:

> *"In order to create their beautiful [feathers], peacocks sometimes eat thorns. Hard, pointed, razor-like objects are processed in their stomachs and then contribute to feathers with colors and shapes unmatched throughout nature for their extraordinary beauty."*

For UVI, the analogy of the peacock feathers also holds true. The pathway to greatness is uphill, and the accompanying hardships serve to propel the drive for successes that undergirds and fuels work of all members of the University community. It is the dark moments that reveal the true light of an institution. This darkness, that would naturally tear away the focus and determination of the University, will provide the meaning which will hold it together. In trying times, such as these, the very soul of the institution is tested. The University of the Virgin Islands has the capacity to meet this test, to continue its journey, and to achieve its dreams. The unmatched, extraordinary beauty of UVI will emerge from the hardship it has endured. Despite challenges encountered on the pathway to greatness, this decennial Self-Study reminds the institution to pursue and celebrate programs that are the bedrock of its existence.

In the overall evaluation of the MSCHE seven standards, the University has clearly met both the letter, and the intention, of the individual standards. Yet, the review reveals amazing opportunities that demand inclusion for improving the journey towards, and outcome of, its pursuit of greatness. Within the context of each standard, the challenge for continuous improvement has been embraced, and work towards that improvement is underway. From a continuous improvement perspective, based on the work and discussion from the Steering Committee, the University has identified three recommendations for active pursuit as part of the MSCHE decennial review.

## Keep the Needle Moving on the Self-Study

Perhaps the most immediate work, that the University will undertake at the end of the self-study process, is the completion of the next strategic plan. This is an opportunity to take what has been learned in the analysis of the Self-Study and form the 2018 strategic plan. While this planning effort does not yet have a name, it asks the question, "What are the pillars of success that the University needs to adopt, to provide continuity of the University and its programs, extension of services and programs to meet its mission, and transformation of what it means to be the University of the Virgin Islands on its quest for greatness?" Six basic pillars to support the continuing quest for greatness have been identified in this Self-Study:

- **Innovations and distinction**
  There are many things that are special about the University of the Virgin Islands. The University must focus its energy on the innovative approaches that it takes, and make them the signature of the institution. Such initiatives could include:

- o At least 50% of all students are involved in some aspect of entrepreneurial, research and innovative activities.
  - o Innovation Centers are greatly expanded, and housed in facilities that students and the community access on a regular basis; and products, inventions, and ideas are developed; and technology transfer occurs.
  - o Degree programs are ranked nationally, and are some of the most distinctive and innovative programs in the nation.

- **Academic leadership and excellence**
  The University faculty and curriculum are the drivers of the institution. UVI must continue to grow programs and research that establish the institution as a leader in scholarly research and teaching excellence. Such initiatives could include:
  - o School of Medicine is fully operational and accredited, and other health science degrees are offered.
  - o Online degrees, in multiple fields, are offered, and student enrollment, in this area, matches the number of traditional students.
  - o Faculty course loads are strategically reduced to facilitate increased research and publications.
  - o Additional doctoral programs, in distinctive areas, are adopted.
  - o UVI is a national leader for the advancement of STEM education for students of color.

- **Student success and achievement**
  The University will graduate students who are academically excellent, globally sensitive, emotionally and spiritually balanced and committed to serving the world. These students will be able to demonstrate these qualities, provide evidence of how they were achieved, and represent the success of a holistic approach to learning.

- **Measurement, analysis, knowledge management and results**
  Accrediting agencies, governments, and stakeholders want to understand what the University is doing and why it is being done. UVI must move itself to embrace all aspects of assessment, and manage results and continuous improvements. It needs to become THE example of how data are used effectively to support its mission and strategic goals.

- **Operational efficiencies and focus**
  The University should operate in an environment where processes are aligned, and documented results are expected. The improvements undertaken in the new strategic plan should: 1) simplify workflows and maximize impact; 2) generate funding resources that support overall operational growth; and 3) allow all constituents to transparently view, and participate in both processes and results.

- **Valuing of the people and relationships**
  The value driven environment of the University includes how it governs itself, the environment it builds for its students and employees, and how it interacts with the community. UVI needs to manifest the valuing of people and relationships in its curriculum, assessment, and its very existence. Results of this pillar may include:
  - o The integration of emotional and spiritual values is the systematic basis of general education requirements.
  - o Service learning is a requirement for graduation.
  - o A comprehensive employee wellness program is adopted and implemented.

## Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

### Recommendation One:

**Implement a streamlined process, that maximizes the impacts of budgeting, planning and assessment, and fully utilizes the shared-governance framework.**

While much progress has been made by the University in assessment and shared governance processes, there are opportunities to enhance assessment and improve processes that strengthen the institution's operations, and improve accountability and decision-making responsibilities. The University has many tools and initiatives in place to achieve this growth – such as *UVINext* – but they need to be fully integrated into the fabric and operations of the University, and seamlessly implemented, to capture evidence of achievement. This will enhance the University's ability to achieve the goals of standards VI and VII. The development of the UVI ASPIRE draft is

good progress towards the achievement of this recommendation. The draft should be fully vetted through the shared governance process, including constituencies and leadership teams, to make sure concerns of the consituents are addressed. This will allow the entire University to understand their role and the role of the selected committees within the process. An assessment process should be written into the ASPIRE document to capture and continually improve the important operations of the University. This should include a baseline survey of the understanding of the existing processes, so that it can be compared to a similar survey, once the ASPIRE process is fully implemented. The implementation should be completed by the four-year peer review, so the progress can be fully reported in the University's next self-study.

## Recommendation Two:

**Intentionally integrate the student experience (academic, support services and co-curricular activities) to create a holistic approach to measurable achievement of Pathways to Greatness, Goal 2A.**

Currently, UVI has initiatives in place to enhance the capture and utilization of student success data, that have the potential to improve the student experience at UVI, positively inform student services, and impact student retention. While the Self-Study demonstrates successes of the current operations, and UVI provides a variety of options for students, the improved use of data and assessment information in program development and advising could transform UVI into a model for student success. Working together in a seamless way, UVI's Schools and Colleges must collaborate, with Student Affairs and other university entities, to ensure that relevant, experiential learning is provided; and that it contributes to overall student outcomes that impact holistic development of the UVI graduate. This will foster the integration of standards III and IV, as well as expand the implementation of standard V to extra and co-curricular activities. The implementation, of a holistic approach to student success and achievement, would set the University apart from its peers, instiutional and aspirational, and make it a model for a student-centered approach to higher education. A benchmark should be created to measure how current students perceive their achievement of PTG:2A. Progress toward students attaining the attributes described in PTG:2A would be measured mid-way, and again at graduation. Focus on PTG:2A would ensure that the entire University embraces the goal, and each entity would see their role in moving the needle towards achieving the goal.

## Recommendation Three:

**Improve fiscal stability and accountability.**

Fiscal stability remains critical for the University, and the Self-Study shows evidence of challenges, with respect to the requisite level of resources, to enable the University to achieve its strategic goals. Growing long-term obligations, such as pension plan contributions, healthcare benefits, compensation and increasing operational expenses, continue to strain the finances of the University, highlighting that careful consideration must be given to the short-term and long-term consequences of key decisions. In addition to growing existing revenue streams and creating new ones, the University's resource allocation process could be strengthened through an ongoing comprehensive budget review, and assessment of the linkage between budgeting and strategic planning. The outcomes of these processes should be shared with constituent groups to further enhance the University's transparency and accountability goals. This recommendation will strengthen the achievement of standards VI, I, and II, but it will also provide an improved platform to support the University's continued ability to meet standards III, IV, and V. It will build a strong financial base, that would enable the University to achieve its mission, and remain financially viable.

## Conclusion

UVI's anchor is its students, and it exists to serve students, and to ensure they excel, and that their dreams are not short circuited. UVI exists so that those, who others may have rejected, become the head of the academic cornerstone of life. UVI exists so that its students, who are being wooed by the most prestigious institutions in the country, can be academically inspired and challenged here, as much as they would if they had left these beautiful islands. UVI exists so that no student, or their dreams, falls through the cracks of the educational process.

UVI is critically important to the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Caribbean, and the mainland during these challenging political and social times. UVI must be the voice of reason. It must bring facts and analysis, to challenge fear and hyperbole. It must lead with its heart, yet always use its head. It must look within, and correct its internal

challenges, without forgetting that it ultimately exists to serve others. The resilience of the institution is even greater than it was during the last decennial visit, and this resilience is exceeded only by an abundance of creative energy. The sharp and uncomfortable objects, it has consumed, will only make the University more beautiful, more creative, and more resilient. The soul of UVI is intact, and will continue to inspire as it charts the next stage on the quest for greatness.

UVI must also focus on the needs of those who are serving its students. Its faculty, staff, and administrators, who have carried, and continue to carry a very heavy load, must be nurtured and supported. The institution's success is due to their collective sacrifices and dedication. They are the soul of the University and during "trying times," the University must pour its soul, and resources, into the well from whence it draws its strength.

## University of the Virgin Islands

### Pillars of Greatness

- Innovation & Distinction
- Measurement, Analysis &Knowledge Management &Results
- Student Success & Achievement
- Academic Leadership & Excellence
- Operational Efficiencies & Focus
- Valuing People & Relationships

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## Accompanying Hotlinked Documents