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UVI Students Shine on National Stage As Enrollment Gets a Boost

Education / **Published On October 23, 2023 06:50 AM /**

Staff Consortium **October 23, 2023**

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The University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees during its Saturday meeting unanimously approved its Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget, set at \$51.1 million. The Board also greenlit a fundraising target of \$4.5 million for 2024 and set an Alumni Giving Rate goal of 20 percent.

Furthermore, the board approved a \$3 million drawdown sourced from the HBCU Capital Financing Program Loan. This allocation is earmarked for capital enhancements to Quarters B, the MacLean Marine Center, and provisions for furniture, fixtures, and essential equipment for the Medical Research and Training Center on the Orville E. Kean Campus.

UVI President Dr. David Hall used the platform of the President's Report to spotlight the outstanding achievements of UVI students, faculty, and alumni. Noteworthy mentions included UVI students Jackeima Flemming and Michael Bell, who were honored with their selection into the prestigious 2023 HBCU White House Scholars cohort. These promising students not only attended the 2023 Annual National HBCU Week Conference but also represented the White House Initiative on HBCUs at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland.

Mr. Hall further acknowledged the academic strides of three UVI students enrolled in Boston University's Early Medical School Selection Program, three marine biology students who showcased their research internationally, and 12 students who engaged in STEM-related programs at prominent universities.

The session served as a platform to celebrate UVI alumni. Among those recognized were Michael Rosario for his outstanding defense at Boston University's School of Medicine, Shenee Martin for her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Lashonette Schjang for acing the Association of Social Work Board licensing exam.

The contributions of UVI's faculty were highlighted, with Dr. Hall stating, "I want to applaud our faculty not only for teaching but also for their conference presentations and publications which continue to demonstrate their level of productivity."

Mr. Hall presented the quarterly President's Appreciation Award to Dr. Kimarie Engerman, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Her efforts led to the full accreditation of UVI's Master of Social Work program, valid through June 2031. Underlining the program's success, Dr. Hall mentioned its seven graduates and lauded Dr. Engerman's continuous dedication.

Expressing her gratitude, Dr. Engerman acknowledged the UVI team and emphasized the program's vision, rooted in the ideas of former Senator Kurt Vialet and funded by the VI Legislature. She further stressed the program's potential impact in the territory and beyond.

The meeting also witnessed the board's unanimous decision to institute the UVI Teacher Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund Retirement Program Investment Committee. This body is entrusted with monitoring plan investment options in line with the investment policy statement.

Several matters were addressed in the executive session, including the confirmation of honorary degrees for 2024, endorsement of the University's wellness policy, approval of the 2024 Commencement speaker list, and updates on personnel and legal affairs.

The UVI Board of Trustees is set to reconvene on Saturday, March 9, 2023.