

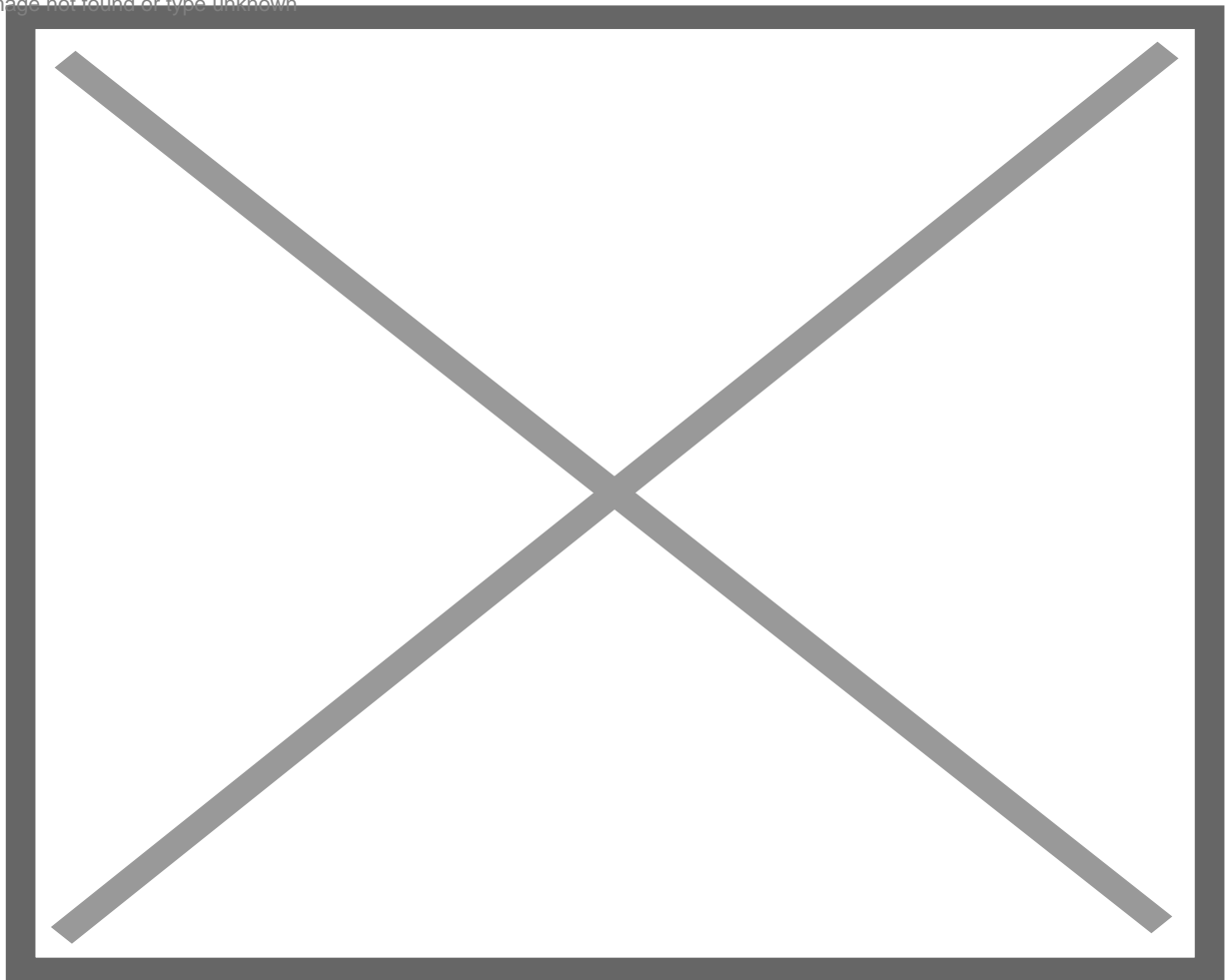
UVI Summer Bridge Graduates Honored in Ceremony

Graduation ceremony honors students for completing the intensive 5-week program aimed at honing academic and study skills

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The latest cohort of students to successfully complete the University of the Virgin Islands' Summer Bridge Program were celebrated in a graduation ceremony held on Friday.?

“Congratulations on making it this far,” UVI’s Dean of Student Success Pamela Moolenaar-Wirsiy told the graduating students. “Y’all are future alums.”

The 5-week program, according to UVI, helps incoming freshmen “jump-start their college careers” by honing their skills in the areas of math, reading, and writing. Participants also learn techniques for success at college, including time management, effective study habits, and developing testing skills. “As a result, Summer Bridge students...will more likely forgo taking

remedial, non-credit courses” when their first semester at university begins, UVI said.

Moolenaar-Wirsiy encouraged the students to pursue their passions at UVI, even if those interests were not part of their registered course of study. Meanwhile, Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs Camille McKayle noted that the graduates’ very participation in the Summer Bridge program proves that “you care about your education and that you want to get ahead.” She also encouraged incoming freshmen to explore their interests, explaining that many first-year students change their majors several times before settling on a particular subject area. “You know what it is? Okay. It is okay,” McKayle reassured graduates.

“Don’t just think that you came here for one thing,” she explained, noting UVI’s vast array of options when it comes to areas of study. The provost explained that students can even create their own major, customizing their educational pathway based on their particular interests. McKayle also advised of the opportunity to spend time attending classes in other universities in the United States and beyond via UVI’s national student exchange, all while benefiting from the university’s free tuition for qualifying students.

She urged students to expand their horizons by exploring everything the university has to offer. “Find something that surprises you about UVI. There are courses we teach here that don't even exist in your high school,” she stated.?

JaHerah Chelcher, crowned Ms. St. Croix Central High School in 2023, was among the participants in this year’s Summer Bridge program for UVI. Noting that her decision to register came after encouragement from her mother and other family members, Ms. Chelcher recounted “late nights filled with homework and studying” in order to test out of introductory courses. “Those long nights often involved tears, especially when I received some of those test scores back and they were not the best,” she said. However, the challenging material taught her that “I did not have to be perfect, and learning and trying my best was the first focus.” Ms. Chelcher, who said that she aims to study biology and subsequently become an ultrasound technician, recommended the program to all high school students.

The graduation ceremony continued with awards for students who made their mark in some way during the course of the program. Students were recognized for their willingness to help others in their studies, for having the best smile and most upbeat attitude, and even for being “the biggest gamer” among the cohort. The light-hearted ceremony concluded with a video showing highlights of the students’ journey over the past five weeks.