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UVI Board Approves \$101M Budget and Unveils 2025–2030 Strategic Plan at Quarterly Meeting

UVI Board of Trustees approves \$101M budget, adopts five-year strategic plan, raises graduate application fees, honors Malcolm Kirwan with emeritus status, and allocates \$1.9M for maintenance projects during quarterly meeting on St. Thomas.

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The Orville E. Kean Campus in St. Thomas. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

In its regular quarterly meeting held on Saturday at the LaVerne E. Ragster Administration and Conference Center on the Orville E. Kean Campus, the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees took several major actions, including the approval of a five-year strategic plan and a \$101 million operating budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

According to a release issued late Saturday, UVI said the meeting saw unanimous votes across a range of agenda items. Chief among them was the approval of the university's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, titled Momentum: Charting a Course to a Grand Destination University Grounded in Excellence. According to UVI, the plan was developed with contributions from both internal and external stakeholders and is designed to guide the University using an agile approach that includes both short- and long-term goals. The finalized plan will be released publicly in the coming weeks.

Alongside the strategic plan, the board approved the university's \$101 million budget for the upcoming fiscal year. This budget includes tuition and legislative appropriations, along with federal, local, and private grants. It also incorporates capital projects that will continue to shape the University's infrastructure and educational offerings.

Another unanimous vote amended the Faculty Emeritus Policy to allow retired senior academic and administrative officials who made significant contributions during their service to be granted emeritus status. Following the amendment, the board conferred emeritus status on Malcolm C. Kirwan, who served as UVI's Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer from 1967 to 2005.

Kirwan's 38-year tenure spanned four university presidents and included several major achievements. These included leading the development of student residence halls on both campuses, construction of the Sports and Fitness Center, implementation of a self-sufficient water production system using reverse osmosis and underground wells, installation of a campus-wide fiber optic network, and oversight of disaster recovery efforts following Hurricanes Hugo and Marilyn.

In another measure aimed at enhancing UVI's graduate education offerings, the board approved an increase in graduate application fees to support the University's adoption of the Graduate Enrollment Management Centralized Application Service (Grad CAS). The general graduate application fee will rise from \$25 to \$45, while the business graduate application fee will increase from \$25 to \$65.

Dr. Leah Vanterpool, vice president of administration and finance and CFO, explained that the fee increase would provide necessary administrative support and access to a broader applicant pool. "The increase in the fee will give us the opportunity to have a greater pipeline for graduate applicants, as well as administrative support, that is needed, which is built into the Grad CAS," she said.

The board also voted to draw down \$1.9 million from the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Capital Financing Loan to address deferred maintenance projects across the University.

During the President's Report, UVI President Dr. Safiya George spotlighted recent student and faculty achievements and highlighted several ongoing university initiatives. As part of her customary acknowledgment, she presented the President's Appreciation Award to the members of the Inaugural/Investiture and Charter Day Committee and its subcommittees. The award, co-chaired by Dr. Kyza A. Callwood and Jeannine Francis-Brown, was in recognition of the team's work on the successful investiture ceremony and related events. "Your collective efforts were instrumental in the success of this historic event," President George said.

In executive session, the Board took the following actions:

- Approved two honorary degree recipients
- Approved an amendment to the honorary degree policy
- Received an update from the Planning Committee
- Received updates on personnel and legal matters

The Board of Trustees last convened in regular session on October 19, 2024.

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