

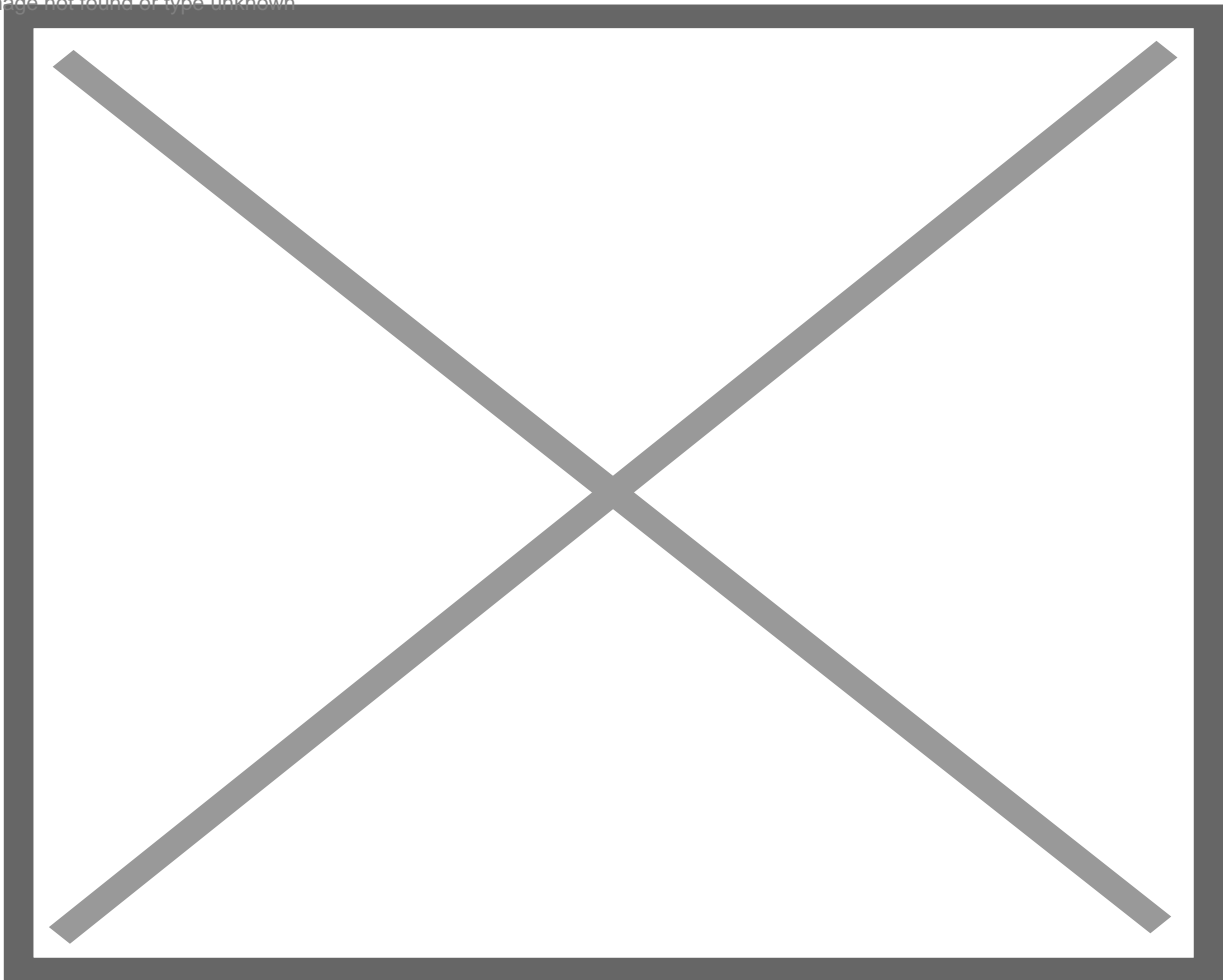
## UVI Scrambles to Complete Years of Overdue Federal Audits as Lawmakers Warn of Funding Jeopardy

**UVI President Safiya George told lawmakers the university is nearly done with its 2021 audit but still working on 2022–2024, prompting warnings from legislators that the delays could endanger tens of millions in future federal funding.**

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As lawmakers considered the FY2026 budget request from the University of the Virgin Islands, they learned that the institution of higher learning currently has at least four years of outstanding federal audits.

The UVI’s president, Safiya George, appeared before the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance on Thursday, where she told Senator Carla Joseph that “we are working feverishly on

our audits.” She assured lawmakers that “we have audit huddles every day.” “We have had to hire a number of additional consultants, six at the moment, in order to get up to speed,” Ms. George said. A cost associated with those consultants was not provided.

“We're, I would say, 99% almost completed with our 2021 audit. In general, we prepared the financial statements. We're giving those to our auditor, waiting for some feedback,” said the new president. UVI is also “simultaneously working on our 2022 audits.” As for the 2023 audit, the university is “tied at the hip with GERS so we are relying on them for some of the data that we need.” In fact, the Government Employees' Retirement System needs to supply the university with data for 2022 to 2024.

“I'm concerned with what I heard before I came back downstairs regarding the federal audits,” said Senator Kenneth Gittens. “This truly concerns me because it will jeopardize the university's ability to get any more federal funding.” UVI has [already lost millions](#) in previously promised federal funds, with tens of millions more at risk. He requested “specific steps” from the UVI.

Ms. George reiterated the aforementioned efforts. “We don't have an exact date of when we're able to submit 2022, 2023, [and] 2024 but we will be submitting 2021 in the next three weeks to our external auditors,” she said.

Nonetheless, she shared Sen. Gittens’s apprehensions. “We're very concerned about the potential negative impacts on having these delayed audits,” she admitted. “As soon as I started on August 1, honestly, that was an issue that faced me on day one.” Ms. George says she has been having conversations with the federal Department of Education to “be proactive and giving them updates on where we are.” It is UVI’s plan to “come back into compliance in order to complete the audits,” and is “maintaining open lines of communication.”