

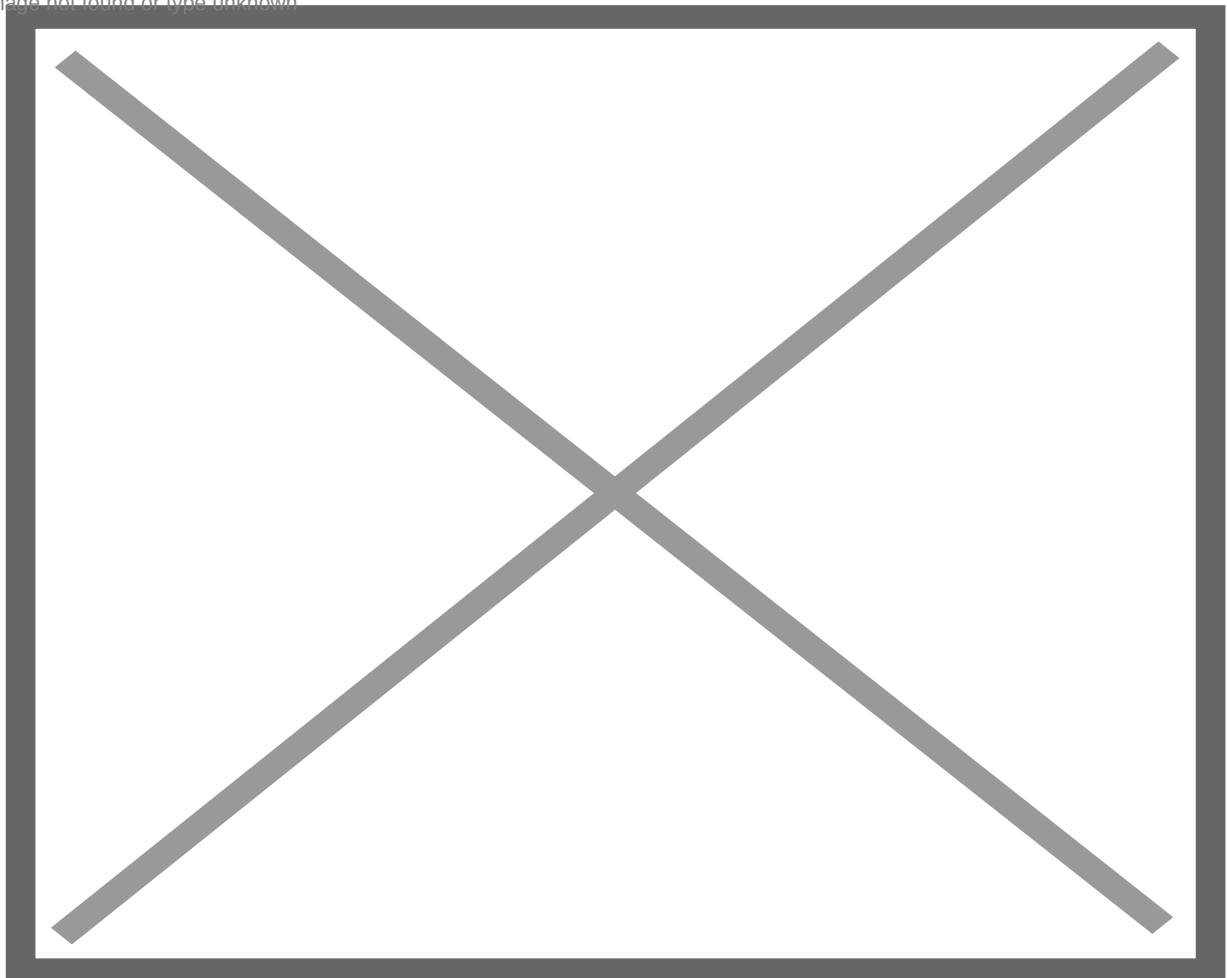
UVI Student Government to Host AfroMode, Culminating in Miss Black Virgin Islands 2026 Coronation

UVI's Student Government Association will present AfroMode, an African fashion show celebrating Black and Virgin Islands culture, on Feb. 28 on St. Thomas, culminating in the coronation of Majestik Freedom as Miss Black Virgin Islands 2026.

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ST. THOMAS — The University of the Virgin Islands Student Government Association will host AfroMode, an African Fashion Show centered on Black and Virgin Islands culture, on Saturday, Feb. 28, at the 13D Research and Innovation Center on UVI's Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas. The student-led event will culminate in the Miss Black Virgin Islands 2026 Coronation.

AfroMode is designed as a cultural showcase highlighting African and Virgin Islands heritage through fashion, performance, and pageantry. Organizers describe the event as both a celebration and an educational platform, emphasizing student leadership, artistic expression, and cultural awareness within the university community.

The evening will conclude with the coronation of Majestik Freedom as Miss Black Virgin Islands 2026. Freedom is a member of the Black Heritage Committee, a 2025 UVI graduate in Fine Arts and Education, and is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership.

Beyond its cultural focus, the event also serves as a fundraiser and reflects the university's broader commitment to student leadership development, cultural education, and academic advancement.

"I am excited about this event, as it represents the heart of student leadership and cultural expression at UVI," said Jenai Brooks, president of the Student Government Association. "Events like this aim to enrich our campus life by creating a space for students to celebrate their identity, build community, and learn from each other outside of the classroom."

According to organizers, AfroMode is intended to extend beyond a single evening, reinforcing ongoing efforts to integrate cultural education into campus life.

"AfroMode represents more than a fashion show—it is a living expression of identity, heritage, and pride," said Dara Monifah Cooper, advisor to the UVI Black Heritage Committee. "Through this celebration, we uplift students, honor Black and Caribbean culture, and invest in future leaders. As the only institution of higher learning in the territory, it is our responsibility to educate year-round, which is why the Black Heritage Committee is a standing committee of the Student Government Association and not simply a seasonal club."

Doors for the event will open at 4 p.m., with vendors available ahead of the 5 p.m. showtime. The program will conclude with the official coronation ceremony, during which former Miss Black USA Virgin Islands titleholder Bria James will crown the new Miss Black Virgin Islands 2026.

University officials also noted the broader historical significance of the event's timing.

"This event coincides with the 100th anniversary of the national observance of Black History Month in the United States," said Dr. Leslyn Tonge, dean of Students on the Orville E. Kean Campus. "As the only Historically Black College and University outside of the continental United States, students and the broader community are invited to join us as we learn more about our rich African and Caribbean heritage. This will be a glimpse of the Black Heritage Committee's ongoing efforts to put Black excellence on display."

Several local businesses and student brands are supporting the event. Clothing and accessory sponsors include New Africa Market, Miss Naturalista, All Around You Bush Tea, K. Elinah Accessories, and Amour Magique. Student brands, including Elev-8, will also participate. Conch Shell Media LLC is providing strategic marketing support.

Individuals seeking additional information regarding the event, sponsorship opportunities, or vendor participation are encouraged to contact Dara Monifah Cooper, Black Heritage Committee advisor, at (340) 693-1083.

