

Adam O Named Keynote Speaker for UVI's 2026 Commencement Ceremonies

The St. Croix singer, songwriter, producer, entrepreneur, and U.S. Marine Corps veteran will address UVI's Class of 2026 during commencement ceremonies on St. Thomas on May 14 and St. Croix on May 15.

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The University of the Virgin Islands has selected internationally acclaimed Virgin Islands artist and cultural ambassador Adam O'Neal, known widely as "Adam O," to deliver the keynote address at its 2026 Commencement Ceremonies, placing a St. Croix-born performer, U.S. Marine Corps veteran, and entrepreneur at the center of this year's graduation celebration.

UVI announced that Adam O will address the Class of 2026 during ceremonies on both islands. Commencement on St. Thomas is scheduled for May 14 on the Orville E. Kean Campus, while St. Croix's ceremony will take place May 15 at the Island Center of St. Croix in Christiansted. Both events will begin at 1 p.m.

The university's choice highlights a figure whose career spans military service and international music success. A native of St. Croix with strong ties to the British Virgin Islands, Adam O has built a globally recognized career as a singer, songwriter, and producer, helping to elevate Caribbean music on the world stage.

He is known for performances and recordings that blend Soca, Kompa, Zouk, Afro-Caribbean rhythms, and R&B. His catalog includes songs such as "Warming Up," "She Ready," "Stress Bout Dat," and "Wine & Dip." According to the release, "Warming Up" alone has surpassed 6 million streams, while his overall body of work has drawn more than 18 million streams across platforms and over 14 million views on YouTube.

Before his rise in music, Adam O served in the United States Marine Corps for ten years and attained the rank of Staff Sergeant. During that time, he completed two deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as an aviation helicopter mechanic. The university said his military background continues to influence his leadership, discipline, and pursuit of excellence.

"Adam O represents the very best of the Virgin Islands—talent, resilience, innovation, and service," said UVI President Dr. Safiya George. "His journey from military service to international stages serves as a powerful example for our graduates as they prepare to lead, create, and make meaningful contributions to society."

Throughout his career, Adam O has appeared on major stages across the Caribbean and internationally, including Trinidad Carnival, the St. Kitts Music Festival, and the Uber Soca Cruise. He has also worked with leading artists and producers and has received numerous honors for both his music and his cultural influence.

The release lists those recognitions as including the 2025 Virgin Islands Icon Award, Trailblazer Award, CIBC National Music Festival Award for Musical Performance, Stage Award for Performer of the Year, and the 2024 British Virgin Islands Road March title. He is also a former Soca Monarch Champion.

Outside of music, UVI described Adam O as a visionary entrepreneur and community advocate. Through Adam O Entertainment, he manages his creative and business ventures while continuing to mentor young people and support philanthropic efforts across the Virgin Islands. The university also pointed to his support for organizations and initiatives including the Boys & Girls Club of St. Croix and other community-focused programs as part of his ongoing commitment to giving back.

As keynote speaker, Adam O is expected to deliver remarks focused on perseverance, purpose, and the value of embracing cultural identity while pursuing global impact.

The commencement ceremonies will mark the achievements of the Class of 2026 and, according to UVI, recognize graduates' readiness to make meaningful contributions to their communities and professions.