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George Tells Legislature UVI Has 20-24 Days of Cash, Owes $5 Million to 484 Vendors

Safiya George told lawmakers Monday that UVI owes $5.05 million to 484 vendors, has 20 to 24 days of cash on hand and faces delayed audits, while seeking a revised allotment schedule and another $9.6 million beyond the governor's proposed appropriation.

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Nelcia Charlemagne August 04, 2026

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UVI President Dr. Safiya George testifies before the Legislature on Monday, addressing the university's accreditation show-cause notice, delayed audits, cash-flow strain and requests for revised allotments and additional funding. **By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.**

Appearing before the Legislature on Monday, University of the Virgin Islands President Dr. Safiya George disclosed that UVI owes more than $5 million to 484 vendors, has only 20 to 24 days of cash on hand and is seeking changes to the government's allotment schedule as it works through delayed audits and other financial deficiencies.

George also asked the Senate Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance to support an additional $9,606,324 beyond the $34,977,962 approved by the governor for UVI.

Chief Financial Officer Guadalupe Valencia told lawmakers that the university owes vendors a combined $5,048,854. Of that amount, $2.1 million has been outstanding for more than 90 days.

UVI's cash on hand is "down to 20-24 days," Valencia said, leaving the institution "dependent on our allotments for our operating revenues and expenses."

George said delays in receiving government funding have contributed to the university's cash-flow problems and affected financial measures reviewed by its accreditor.

"Delayed allotments have contributed to outstanding weekly operating payable, averaging between $12 - $14 million, thereby affecting financial performance ratios reviewed by MSCHE."

She asked that UVI receive either a "lump sum allotment sometime within the first quarter, or two evenly distributed allotments."

"This would allow us to do the work of the university without delay," George told Sen. Carla Joseph.

Joseph reminded her that the distribution of allotments is an "executive function" and that "everything is based on cash flow."

Financial Concerns Form Part of Accreditation Review

The financial disclosures came as UVI works to address a "Show Cause notification" issued by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The university remains accredited but must demonstrate by September 1 that it has addressed the commission's concerns.

George told lawmakers that UVI submitted a "comprehensive self-study" to MSCHE in February 2026 as part of its accreditation process.

A commission evaluation team visited the university in March and determined that UVI met "six out of seven MSCHE standards."

George said UVI did not meet Standard VI because of "missing or delayed financial audits, and particularly focused on growing concerns about cash liquidity to cover current operating expenses."

She repeatedly emphasized during Monday's hearing that the Show Cause process has not resulted in the loss of UVI's accreditation.

The university "remains accredited while it submits evidence that it has addressed the Commission's concerns," George said.

She also sought to reassure current and prospective students about the standing of UVI's academic programs.

"Our degrees have not lost their value, and our university has most definitely not lost its academic credibility."

She added that "this great university has not lost its capacity to lead."

George acknowledged the seriousness of the university's financial and reporting deficiencies.

"We don't take accountability lightly," she told lawmakers.

She said UVI would "get through Show Cause" and complete the required audits.

"We're sorry we're in the position that we're in, but we're not here to make any excuses,"

George stated. UVI Completes 2021 Audit

UVI's Division of Administration and Finance has completed the university's audited financial statements for fiscal year 2021, George said.

Work on the fiscal year 2022 audit has entered the "execution phase."

Audits for fiscal years 2023 through 2025 are in the "planning phases with our external audit firm," she said.

The university is working to complete its outstanding financial reporting and submit evidence of compliance to MSCHE before the September 1 deadline.

Spending Cut by $3.3 Million

George said UVI has "pursued a combination of cost-containment and revenue enhancement strategies" as it seeks to strengthen its finances.

Those measures include reducing nonessential travel, imposing "tighter control over service contracts," establishing card limits and "limiting non-essential expenses."

The university also plans to review physical plant and information technology maintenance contracts to "identify high-cost agreements and evaluate opportunities to outsource certain functions that are financially advantageous."

UVI has reduced overall expenditures by $3.3 million compared with the previous year.

George said the university's "greater focus is on building a culture and framework that will ensure continued excellence, compliance, and accountability…"

Tuition Adjustment and Government Appropriation

George said a tuition adjustment became necessary as UVI continued investing in academics and student services.

She explained that as the university invests in "maintaining excellence in education and enhancing student support services…a tuition adjustment was necessary."

UVI nevertheless continues to offer "one of the lowest tuition rates in the nation," she said.

Tuition revenue and the university’s annual government appropriation help cover operating expenses.

George expressed appreciation for the government funding but said the proposed appropriation does not address “several critical priorities and funding needs.”

The university’s fiscal year 2027 proposal includes $29,550,958 for general operations, $1.8 million for debt service and smaller allocations for specific programs, scholarships and security and maintenance at Brewers Beach, among other needs.

UVI Seeks Additional $9.6 Million

The university’s $9.6 million supplemental request includes $1,450,000 for salary increases, $800,000 to cover rising health insurance premiums and $1 million for additional Water and Power Authority expenses.

UVI is also seeking $1,337,858 to satisfy the local matching requirement for the Agricultural Extension and Co-op Extension programs.

Another $3 million is being requested for the V.I. Free Tuition Scholarship.

The university wants to restore the Valedictorian and Salutatorian Scholarship Program to its 2011 funding level and requested $400,966 for that purpose.

To support accreditation compliance beyond the current review, UVI is requesting an annual allocation of $100,000 to “fund a dedicated accreditation specialist responsible for compliance and continuity going forward.”

The supplemental request includes other recommendations. Committee Chairman Sen. Novelle Francis Jr. said the university’s requests would be “taken under advisement."