

UVI Secures Teach-Out Agreements as Sept. 1 Show-Cause Deadline and Middle States Visit Approach

UVI has signed teach-out agreements to protect students if needed while preparing its Sept. 1 show-cause filing and Sept. 24 Middle States evaluation visit. UVI says it remains fully accredited and will appear before MSCHE on Nov. 19 to defend its status.

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The University of the Virgin Islands is nearing completion of its formal response to the accreditation show-cause notice issued in June, with a Sept. 1 submission deadline followed by a Middle States evaluation visit on Sept. 24 and an appearance before the accreditor's board on Nov. 19.

President Safiya George briefed UVI trustees on the university's progress during a special board meeting Tuesday, saying university officials have already engaged extensively with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

That engagement included a guided liaison visit on July 30 by an MSCHE commissioner.

University leadership and several consultants are now reviewing a "near final draft" of UVI's show-cause report ahead of the Sept. 1 deadline.

An MSCHE evaluation visit is expected Sept. 24, with a report on the outcome of that visit due the following day.

George and several other UVI representatives are then expected to appear before the Middle States board on Nov. 19 to present evidence and arguments supporting the university's continued accreditation.

UVI Remains Accredited During Review

George emphasized that UVI remains fully accredited while the show-cause process continues.

The university is also working through its outstanding financial audits. Work is currently underway on the fiscal year 2022 audit.

"The team is working around the clock evenings and weekends," Dr. George noted, expressing her gratitude for the auditors' hard work and dedication.

George also expressed confidence in the university's preparations for the November appearance before the accrediting body.

"We're continuing to make good progress with gathering the evidence that will be required by Middle States to demonstrate compliance with both Standard Six and Standard Seven, and also with the required teach-out plan that's necessary as part of this process, just as a contingency plan," she said.

Teach-Out Agreements Secured as Contingency

As part of the accreditation process, UVI is required to prepare a teach-out plan.

Such a plan establishes a mechanism allowing current students to complete their courses of study if an institution closes or stops accepting new students.

George said UVI has already secured a number of signed agreements with other institutions so that students would have options to continue their education if the contingency ever became necessary.

The teach-out arrangements form part of the documentation UVI is assembling for Middle States as it works to demonstrate compliance with Standards Six and Seven.

Board Chair Urges Trustees to Attend September Visit

Following George's update, UVI Board Chairman Henry Smock stressed the importance of the September evaluation visit.

Smock encouraged all trustees to be present during the visit to support the university through the review process.

Trustees also unanimously ratified an exemption from UVI's procurement rules that will allow the university to move more quickly in hiring accreditation experts, technical experts and financial advisors.

The exemption is intended to allow UVI to assemble the specialized assistance needed for a rapid response to the show-cause notice ahead of its September submission and evaluation deadlines and the Nov. 19 appearance before the Middle States board.