

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix "Desperately" Needs Medical School, Senator Says

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Ahead of tomorrow's special meeting of the University of the Virgin Islands' Board of Trustees, St. Croix Senator Nereida "Nellie" Rivera-O'Reilly submitted a letter to the Board and to Gov. de Jongh, pointedly requesting that the new medical school, already approved to be built in the Territory, be constructed on St. Croix. The senator suspects Thursday's meeting is being held to make a decision on the much-debated location of the medical school.

In the two-page communique, Rivera-O'Reilly said the shuttering of HOVENSA in 2012 resulted in an "exodus of resources and people" from St. Croix and that the island "desperately needs the long-term commitment from the University" in the form of the

medical school that would bring jobs and consumers to bolster the ailing economy.

Rivera-O'Reilly also wrote that St. Croix has more than the necessary space required to accommodate the medical teaching facility.

"The Albert Sheen Campus has ample space, with the UVI Technical Park and UVI's School of Nursing on campus, and St. Croix Educational Complex across the street," Rivera-O'Reilly said. She added that Juan Luis Hospital's proximity to the University makes the hospital an ideal space for expanding the medical school, "both within the



St. Croix RT Park

Furthermore, Rivera-O'Reilly said both the UVI campus and Juan Luis Hospital have been outfitted with the latest technology that would serve well the needs of the medical school.

"[They] have already been activated with viNGN, high-speed Access Points, providing the Medical School with the Internet band-width needed to serve the technical demands of its program," Rivera-O'Reilly wrote.

Additionally, the senator pointed out that the current physician's assistant program offered at the St. Croix campus of Barry University makes having a medical school on the island a logical next step.

"Barry University has already established its Physician's Assistants Program on St. Croix," Rivera-O'Reilly wrote. "Together, all of these factors will provide the synergy and resources needed to launch a successful Medical School."

In a final plea to those responsible for making the decision on the location of the Territory's first medical school, Rivera-O'Reilly concluded her letter by asking the trustees to be guided by compassion.

"As you consider your decision where to build the new Medical School I ask you to be pragmatic and compassionate," she said. "Not only is St. Croix the best place to locate this program, but St. Croix needs this project now more than ever."

[Letter to Attorney Henry C. Smock-re-UVI-Medical School.](#)

Meeting Details

Thursday, Sept. 11 at 10:00 a.m.

Room 303 of the Administration and Conference Center on St. Thomas

Conference room of the RTPark, 64 West Center, on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix

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