

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI To Host First 'Hackathon' Event, Winning Team To Receive \$500

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The University of the Virgin Islands will host its first annual "Hackfest" at the Administration and Conference Center on the St. Thomas Campus, Feb. 6-7.

According to Dr. Timothy Faley, the Kiril Sokoloff Distinguished Professor of Entrepreneurship at UVI, participating students will work around the clock to devise innovative solutions, such as webpage development, mobile apps and software development for a myriad of problems affecting local residents.

Hackathons first started in Silicon Valley and were brought to the mainstream by major technology companies like Google and Facebook. The events bring together computer

programmers and others involved in software development, including graphic designers, interface designers and project managers to collaborate on software project ideas.

"Tech companies such as Facebook, Linked In and Google hold hackathons monthly, working around the clock to generate new ideas," Dr. Faley said.

The UVI Hackfest idea was born after three students, who participated in Google's hackathon event last November, returned with a desire to share what they had learned with other students and members of the community.

UVI students will gather in teams on Friday, Feb. 6 to brainstorm ideas and work to execute their ideas. On Saturday, Feb. 7, a panel of judges will issue awards to the winning team. Entries will be judged on usefulness, creativity, imagination and execution.

The grand prize is \$500 and will be awarded to the team that comes up with the most "innovative technological idea."

The Hackfest is being coordinated by UVI's Innovation Design and Entrepreneurship Association, a student innovation and entrepreneurship club that was formed in 2014 and is comprised of students across a variety of disciplines who brainstorm ideas about entrepreneurship.

The event is being sponsored by [NEARix](#), described as a "Nearshore knowledge-based software development and consulting company that strategically aligns itself with other companies to deliver faster, better and more cost-effective solutions." The company is a beneficiary of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), with offices located at the EDA's incubator facility, near St. Croix's Henry E. Rohlsen Airport.

"NEARiX is proud to be involved in the vanguard of Virgin Islands technology history," said Leon Hughes, founder and CEO of NEARiX. "The first of many annual events, the UVI Hackathon 2015 represents the growing potential of great minds and companies alike throughout the Virgin Islands."

Residents are invited to Saturday evening's award ceremony to get a firsthand look at the winning idea. The event will begin at 5 p.m. at UVI's Administration and Conference Center.

Image Credit: *Huffington Post*