

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Executive Director Reveals New Direction For UVI's RTPark

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At a stakeholder reception held March 11 on St. Thomas' UVI campus, Dr. Gillian Marcelle, the newly minted executive director of the University of the Virgin Islands Research and Technology Park (RTPark), unveiled the direction she plans to take the entity.

In presenting the new vision, Dr. Marcelle dubbed her efforts "RTPark Rebooted: RTPark 2.0."

"The Research and Technology Park is an economic development agency with a unique positioning – designed as a partnership between government, academia and the private

sector – and charged with fostering and facilitating economic diversification in a specialist area,” Dr. Marcelle said. “Success for the RTPark will mean that the Virgin Islands will have a platform of economic activity that creates wealth, generates knowledge, and inspires and draws on the innate creativity and talent recognizing that we are in the Caribbean. The RTPark will become an integral part of the fabric and landscape of the Virgin Islands.”

The executive director outlined five areas of focus for the park, including: governance and management; business development; stakeholder engagement; technology, facilities and infrastructure; and finance and administration.

According to Dr. Marcelle, the RTPark will continue to attract investment in knowledge-based economic activity, and will serve as an incubator for start-up firms. It will also provide technology for development advisory expertise to the territory’s political leadership, and park tenants will be encouraged to share knowledge, undertake joint projects, and exchange ideas.

“The RTPark with its stunning flagship building on the St. Croix campus, has another responsibility, which is perhaps its most important,” Dr. Marcelle said, “that is to demystify technology.”

Dr. Marcelle pointed out that technology can seem daunting at times, however she said people living in the Caribbean must learn to “punch beyond our weight” through the design and deployment of technological systems.

She added: “We want to be part of a movement at the RTPark, starting with the young people. Whether its solar technology, the functioning of wind turbines, sound engineering, digital Internet based advertising, energy trading, telecommunication hosting services, data center management, smart-grid technologies for promoting energy efficiency, biomedical device design – the RTPark will become a site of discovery and learning so that no citizen or resident of the Virgin Islands believes that something is hands-off.”

RTPark Board of Directors Chairman Edward Thomas said he is confident in the future of the Park after overcoming challenges faced in 2013 and 2014.

“We’re back on our feet,” Thomas said at the reception. “We’ve hired a new executive director and we are moving forward.”

By way of background, Dr. Marcelle is a senior executive, economic development policy advisor and scholar with more than 20 years of global experience. She trained as an economist at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and the Kiel Institute of World Economics, Germany. Dr. Marcelle also earned an MBA at George Washington University and read for her doctorate in Science and Technology Policy at the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University (UK).

Her extensive resume includes positions held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Wits University in South Africa; along with managing national and international clients of her own economic development advisory practice. Some of her clients include the United Nations and the World Bank.

“One of the things that impressed us the most was the combination of all of those skills in one person, who we felt was prime to take the park to the next level,” UVI President David Hall said of Dr. Marcelle at the event. “We see the future as a bright one for the park and the university.”

For more information about the UVI RTPark, call 340-692-4300.

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