

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## UVI Pride Week: Obama Administration Official To Speak On St. Croix Campus

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Dr. George E. Cooper, executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), will be the guest speaker at the University of the Virgin Islands Pride Week rally Thurs., March 26 at 10 a.m., outside the Melvin H. Evans Center on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix.

He will speak on the value HBCUs have in higher education and the general community.

Dr. Cooper is the first member of President Barack Obama's HBCU Initiative to visit UVI, one of 105 HBCUs located in 20 states and the District of Columbia.

In 2010, President Obama signed an executive order renewing the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, with a goal of advancing equal opportunity in higher education, strengthening the capacity of HBCUs to provide the highest quality education, and increase opportunities for the institutions to participate in and benefit from federal programs.

The initiative has since fostered private-sector partnerships to promote academic research, and shares administrative and program practices within the HBCU community. Additionally, the initiative sponsors the HBCU All-Star Students Program, in which students serve as ambassadors by communicating with their peers about the value of education. Students are also encouraged to promote the HBCU Initiative as a networking resource.

In 2013, Dr. Cooper was appointed by the president to lead the HBCU Initiative. As executive director, Dr. Cooper serves as liaison between the executive branch and HBCUs across the nation, including the U.S. Virgin Islands. Dr. Cooper helps to shape policies and secure federal grants and contracts for HBCUs.

Prior to his appointment, Dr. Cooper was a senior fellow with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, where he reviewed key federal legislative initiatives of significance to HBCUs.

UVI Pride Week, celebrated March 23 – 27, is a celebratory display of school spirit through pep rallies, dance squads, speakers, athletic events, and cultural workshops on both UVI campuses. Pride Week is also a vehicle to expose high school students to the University through rallies at each of the four high schools in the territory.