

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI's Student Government Association Installs New Officers With Pride, Joy

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ST. CROIX -- The event was low-key. Regular activities continued at the University of the Virgin Islands here without giving away that an important installing ceremony was underway at the pavilion next to the residence halls on Wednesday.

But those who bothered to pay attention would have appreciated the occasion as special to UVI's overall success, as the event -- installing of new officers into the institution's Student Government Association (SGA) -- remains an indelible part of school affairs and, in the overall scheme of things, its success.

Proceedings commenced just after 12:00 p.m. as senior and freshmen members of the association sat underneath the pavilion to first listen to remarks from various speakers and then to bind themselves by oath to continually support the group and play by its rules.

According to UVI, the SGA is recognized as the official representative of the student body and assists students by providing opportunities for each student to participate in activities which develop and realize individual potentialities and leadership skills. It also aids in providing a meaningful interpretation of the concept of the "University Community".

"As we embark on the 2015-2016 academic year, this is an opportunity for the UVI Student Government Association to take the lead in developing new and continuing past initiatives for UVI, said Dean of Student Affairs Stephanie Moore. "As we welcome you as student leaders, be confident in knowing you have joined a prestigious organization which offers skills that embody the core values of leadership: trust, patience, hard work, tenacity, reliability, passion, and teamwork."

The ceremony's keynote speaker, former SGA President Kevin Dixon, delivered a speech that sought to encourage new members to stay the course, while inspiring those already involved to remain committed. Dixon also revealed how being part of the association transformed his life by ingraining in him community involvement, and credits participation in said body as changing the trajectory of his life for the better.

"Just few years ago, when I entered the University of the Virgin Islands, I was like most students," Dixon began. "I came just for class, spent lots of time in the library with friends and then went home. I arrived at UVI just to get an education, reserved, and I was not active in the community. However, I can definitely say I left UVI transformed and exposed to a world of opportunities," he added.

Dixon explained that although he was a member of SGA for two years and wanted to become more involved, the thought of running for the leadership role of vice president of the group uncovered insecurities that had the potential of tempering an otherwise future filled with possibilities.

"Fear that I wouldn't accomplish enough, fear, that I wouldn't be successful. Fear that I would prove people right that I was too quiet, and didn't talk enough, and I wasn't fit for the position," Dixon admitted.

Nonetheless, the softly-spoken UVI alumni said he decided to "give my life for a cause greater than myself, and on that day, I became a champion of change. I made a commitment to myself to be a change agent, not just in the walls of this university, but in the wider community and the world."

He spoke of leadership, governance and programming, and implored the small gathering to take serious the role that they play in the success of UVI's students.

"As you leave here today, you must take up the work and make a commitment to the students to represent their ideas and voices," Dixon said. "Student Government Association, there is more work to do, hard work, freighting work, unending work, and uncertain work."

There were also remarks from Provost Dr. Camille McKayle, SGA President Sophia Johnson and brief remarks from other members.

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