

The Virgin Islands Consortium

At Board Meeting, UVI Decides To Reapply For Accreditation Status For School Of Medicine

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ST. CROIX -- The University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees, during an executive session of a special meeting held on Dec. 8, decided that UVI would reapply to the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) for preliminary accreditation status for the UVI School of Medicine, according to a press release UVI issued on Tuesday night. But UVI would only move forward after getting a consensus of support from the key stakeholders, the release also made known.

UVI President David Hall said that over the last month and a half he met with and received support for the UVI SOM from Gov. Kenneth Mapp, the Senate, the LCME, FirstBank VI, the Foundation of the University of the Virgin Islands (FUVI), the Historically

Black Colleges and University's Loan Program, and Dr. Chirinjeev Kathuria, who pledged a \$30 Million gift to the SOM.

The University is now gearing-up to reapply and is putting plans in place to make sure to address the various concerns that were raised during the first application process. UVI will reapply in August of 2016, based on the LCME's one year rule, which prevents an entity that has not receive preliminary accreditation from reapplying before a year.

"We will continue to work very closely with all of those key entities, from the Legislature to the Governor to FirstBank and the FUVI, to make sure we are successful this next time around," said President Hall.

"We were very disappointed with the prior decision, but we are still committed to the fact that this is an important project for the territory and for the University and we are going to give it another try," he said. "We are going to go into it with faith, commitment and hard work to do an even better job that we did the last time around."

On Oct. 13, the LCME Advisory Board [voted not to grant preliminary accreditation to the UVI SOM](#). The LCME found various areas of insufficient progress towards compliance/noncompliance.

Some key examples are:

- In order to shorten the timeline for the University's application, UVI purchased curriculum and assessment tools from a new school, the University of Central Florida (UCF). In so doing, it also allowed UVI to concentrate as much on how it teaches as what it teaches. The site visit team felt that the University had not allowed sufficient time for UVI to absorb the UCF curriculum.
- No scholarship funding to reduce the debt burden of the students when they graduate
- To ensure medical student diversity, the University needed to show that UVI has pipeline programs
- The faculty and student handbooks were incomplete
- The application described the curriculum committee membership that was not consistent with the school's by-laws
- Insufficient support staff hired by June 2015
- UVI had appointed too many medical school full professors (40 out of 137).

An underlying theme to their comments was that UVI has been working to create a School of Medicine in a very short period of time. Other schools undergo this process, normally, in two to three years.

President Hall said that part of the University's challenge moving forward is to address the concerns raised by the LCME. "Additional resources are needed and we are going to have to focus on securing philanthropic gifts and other types of gifts for the School of Medicine," he said adding that UVI will be working on securing additional resources. "I am encouraged that even in the face of a denial, when I met with various groups, people were still supportive of us and that says a lot about this community and about the leadership in this community. People want something better for the people of the Virgin Islands."

The UVI SOM may be able to open in 2017, but if there are any delays from UVI or the LCME, the SOM may have to open in 2018 instead.

In executive session, the UVI Board of Trustees passed a motion relating to certain budgetary issues for the University and approved the minutes from the Aug. 25, Aug. 29 and Oct. 24, executive session meetings.

The special meeting was held on the St. Thomas Campus, with several trustees joining via teleconference. The Board of Trustees last met on Oct. 24, on St. Croix.

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