

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Announces \$25 Million U.V.I. Sports And Events Center To Be Built On St. Croix Campus

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ST. CROIX -- The University of the Virgin Islands' Class of 2016 speaker, Akeem O. McIntosh, said during his talk that he longed for the day the institution would be able to house graduates in a complex with air conditioning. Little did he know that prior to his covert appeal to U.V.I. President David Hall and Governor Kenneth Mapp -- sitting on the same podium through which Mr. McIntosh made his veiled entreaty -- that the two men had discussed in detail plans for a center that would not only host commencement events on the St. Croix campus, but also sporting and other community affairs.

The Government of the Virgin Islands will fund a multipurpose sports facility on the grounds of U.V.I.'s St. Croix campus, which will be accessible to both students and the

public, Mr. Mapp announced on Friday during his talk at the commencement ceremony here.

"On Monday I'm having a meeting with some members of the Legislature to discuss, among other things, the capital budget that I'm about to send to the Legislature for funding of capital projects for the people of the Virgin Islands. In that budget it will contain \$25 million for the construction of the multipurpose sports complex here on the grounds of the University of the Virgin Islands," the governor said yesterday.

The audience erupted with cheers.

According to the governor, the U.V.I. facility won't affect [the development of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium](#), according to Governor Mapp, as funding for the latter has already been secured, and construction underway.

Mr. Mapp also announced that there were still vacancies in the government, even after his administration had filled some 590 vacant positions in 2015. And he made an appeal to the new graduates to bring their creativity and energy to help transform government into a more productive environment.

"This year we are attempting to fill 876 positions," he said. "We need those who are educated, those who have experience, those who are dedicated to their homeland, to take a chance and join the ranks of public service."

Another one of Mr. McIntosh's plea was that U.V.I.'s faculty, who he said hasn't seen a raise in more than ten years, would see their salaries increase soon. Governor Kenneth Mapp announced that indeed, after a request from U.V.I. leadership, that he would include an additional \$1.6 million in U.V.I.'s 2016 budget to fund those salary increases.

The university celebrated its 52nd commencement on Thursday and Friday in St. Thomas and St. Croix respectively.

Feature Image: Rendering of sports and events complex to be built at U.V.I., St. Croix

Image Credit: Government of the Virgin Islands.