

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI To Postpone School Of Medicine's Accreditation Application

Education / **Published On July 28, 2016 10:11 AM /**

Staff **July 28, 2016**



University of the Virgin Islands President David Hall announced on Wednesday, July 27, the decision to postpone resubmitting its application for accreditation for the UVI School of Medicine (UVI-SOM) to the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) for one year. Originally, the UVI-SOM had planned to submit the application on Aug. 1, 2016.

This decision was based on a recommendation from Dr. Ben Sachs, dean of the UVI School of Medicine, and embraced by the Executive Committee of the UVI Board of Trustees. The recommendation was based primarily on not achieving an important fundraising goal. The budget for the School of Medicine, which must be approved by LCME, required that the University obtain \$10 million in pledges in addition to the \$30

million Kathuria gift agreement. This allows LCME to determine if a medical school is financially viable. Despite strong efforts, and the generosity of numerous individuals, the Medical School project has received only \$3 million in pledges, which is \$7 million short of the goal.

All of the other tasks associated with receiving preliminary accreditation, such as designing a curriculum, developing all necessary policies and addressing the concerns raised by LCME have been achieved. The application is complete, other than the financial section. Dr. Sachs and the SOM team worked extremely hard to move this project forward, and the University is very proud of their outstanding efforts. Once the fundraising goal is achieved, the team will continue its work of creating a first class and innovative medical school for the Virgin Islands.

“The decision to postpone our application was made after thoughtful consideration of the financial implications in delaying this process another year,” said President Hall. “While this delay moves the opening of the school to 2018, the University and its leadership remain committed to making this transformative initiative a reality.”

The preliminary stage of the LCME accreditation process was begun two years ago. As part of this process UVI accepted the challenge to secure a substantial amount of private funding to strengthen UVI’s application. The initial application for accreditation was denied last fall – a fairly common occurrence in this rigorous process. It is typical for the process of establishing and accrediting a new medical school to take five years or more. In UVI’s case, the process began April 11, 2014, when the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to allow President Hall to commence the development phase of the medical school. UVI leadership, based on the urgency of the territory’s health care needs, and the desire to support clinical care resources in the Virgin Islands, decided to expedite this process. The UVI-SOM development is still moving more rapidly than the usual timeline.

“The establishment of UVI-SOM was undertaken with the goal of transforming the level of medical care available in the Virgin Islands and the greater Caribbean region,” said President Hall. “The presence of a local medical school, with its faculty and additional research facilities, is known to stimulate improvements in the general level of medical care in a locality and also have a positive impact on economic development,” President Hall concluded. It is for these reasons that the University remains committed to this project and it solicits the continuous support of the local government, the community and private donors.

Feature Image: U.V.I.'s School of Medicine groundbreaking ceremony held in March at the St. Croix campus, and attended by local officials, business leaders, J.F.L. representatives, physicians and U.V.I. faculty and staff. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)