

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI St. Thomas Will Attempt Resumption Of Classes In Two Weeks 'In One Form Or Another'

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The University of the Virgin Islands, in the wake of Hurricane Irma, said on Friday that it's developing an academic plan to allow its students to continue their education in spite of the damage caused by the storm. Above, a damaged building at the institution's St. Thomas campus.

"The University is fully committed to completing this semester, and using this tragedy as a catalyst to become more innovative and transformative than we were before Irma arrived on our shores," said UVI President David Hall. "Through the enormous dedication, hard work and creativity of staff, faculty and students, the University is prepared to move forward with its academic programs."

While the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix resumed classes on Tuesday, Sept. 12 (classes were canceled on Friday due to heavy rainfall on St. Croix), the university will resume classes on the St. Thomas Campus in a more gradual manner, according to the release. All students on the St. Thomas campus should have all classes available, in one form or another, within two weeks.

“The faculty and administration will use this challenging situation to explore and implement various teaching and learning approaches so that all students receive what they need and what the University promised when they enrolled,” Mr. Hall said. “This will include more online courses, condensed formats, and more digitally available learning materials.”

A revised course schedule will be developed and circulated in the near future and students will be notified when courses are ready to resume, he said.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, the guiding principle for the university is that all students will be held harmless. Practically this means that the university will complete the fall semester. All courses originally offered will be made available, even though some may occur at a different time and in a different format. Students can also opt to enroll on the Sheen Campus on St. Croix, according to the release.

The university said it's extremely sensitive to the enormous challenges commuter students who live on St. Thomas now face. Some students may be without shelter, transportation, and basic necessities. In addition, the curfew may preclude them from coming to campus at certain times. Therefore, the academic offerings for this semester will take this reality into account. The faculty, staff and administrators will work with each student to ensure that she/he receives the support, accommodations and flexibility that are appropriate, UVI said.

The institution of higher learning is asking all St. Thomas students to check in and inform the university of their intention for this semester, and ask questions, by calling (340) 692-4021, or emailing at academics@uvi.edu. If students choose to withdraw they will be permitted to do so. If they are considering withdrawing, or have questions, they must first contact Wendy Fedler, Center for Student Success, at (340) 692-4274. The University will graciously accept students back in the Spring if their circumstances prevent them from continuing. Some St. Thomas students have enrolled on the Sheen Campus in order to complete their academic program for this semester.

All students are encouraged to visit the UVI website www.uvi.edu or the official UVI Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UVI.edu/>, and listen to [WUVI AM 1090 and FM 97.3](#) and other radio stations for periodic announcements.

“UVI will rise from this devastating catastrophe, and we will serve and lead the people of the Virgin Islands to a better and greater place in the future,” Mr. Hall assured. “I confidently proclaim this vision because during Hurricane Irma I was forced to go ‘the mountaintop’ and I have seen the soul of this institution, and that is our enduring ‘promised land.’”