

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Board Of Trustees Approves New Strategic Plan Called 'Greatness Through Innovation'

Education / **Published On October 29, 2018 10:59 AM /**

Staff **October 29, 2018**



During a meeting on Saturday at the University of the Virgin Islands' St. Thomas campus, the U.V.I. Board of Trustees unanimously approved a new strategic plan named "Greatness through Innovation".

According to U.V.I., the plan has six focus areas: Innovation and Distinction; Leadership and Excellence in Academics, Research, and Public Service; Student Access, Recruitment, and Success; Measurement, Analysis, Knowledge Management and Results; Operational Efficiencies and Focus; and Valuing People, Relationships, and Culture.

U.V.I. President David Hall said developing the plan, the university received community input through town halls, as well as consultation with experts in creative planning and innovative thinking.

Highlight of the plan include:

- Steps to become a leader in the use of technology in instruction
- Contributing to vocational and technical education for the territory in those areas where UVI faculty members already have relevant expertise
- Increasing student engagement in research being carried on at UVI
- A more intentional focus on college readiness and career preparedness
- Making UVI a “University for Life” by expanding opportunities for continuing education, recertification, etc.
- In addition to pursuing free tuition for USVI residents, improving financial support for non-resident and graduate students
- Developing greater awareness and support for students’ mental health
- A greater focus on alumni engagement with the university, starting with students
- Creating a culture of inclusion and celebration of diversity, including emphasis on celebrating UVI’s identity as a Historically Black College/University
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) connecting UVI’s Virgin Islands Center for Caribbean Culture (VICCC) with the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of African American History

The plan also sets forth a new mission statement for the university: “The University of the Virgin Islands mission is to educate and empower the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Caribbean and the world through an environment that promotes creativity, innovation and excellence in teaching, student learning, research, and community engagement.”

Also during the meeting, RT Park new Executive Director, [Peter H. Chapman](#), delivered his first report at the helm of the UVI-owned operation. Mr. Chapman highlighted that between Jan. 1. and Oct. 1, 2018, six new clients have joined the RT Park and others are in process. By the end of calendar year 2018, he expects to have 61 clients in total, up from 47 as of Dec. 31, 2017, according to a UVI release. “Client attraction helps to drive revenue, which is very important to our model. In FY 2017, we achieved \$771,000 in revenue collections on behalf of UVI,” Mr. Chapman said.

Regarding reconstruction of the RT Park building on the Albert A. Sheen campus on St. Croix, he reported that the architect, Renee D’Adamo, is cautiously optimistic it will be finished by September, 2019.

“My vision is to position the RT Park as a more internationally visible economic development organization. One critical step is going to be investing the organization with resources, infrastructure, and strategic planning, to engage in best practice oriented, proactive economic development,” Mr. Chapman concluded.

During his regular address, Mr. Hall highlighted the accomplishments of U.V.I. students, alumni, faculty, and the institution at large, U.V.I. said. He informed the board of six U.V.I. students who participated in the National Science Foundation – Historically Black Colleges and Universities (NSF – HBCU) Summer Undergraduate Experience program.

The participating students were:

- Belize Saunders – Applied Mathematics major
- Samuel Gittens, Jr. – Biology major
- Jair Smith – Computer Science major
- Kenique Liburd – Computer Science major
- Kaleb Liburd – Computer Science major
- Elisha Brunant – Computer Science major

According to U.V.I., through an agreement with Ocean and Coastal Observing – Virgin Islands (O.C.O.V.I.), these U.V.I. students were able to participate in a data-collecting project using underwater drones that will aid in improved hurricane forecasting.

“One of the things we have been striving to communicate to our local students is that you can go away by staying home,” Mr. Hall said. “Part of this report demonstrates how many of our students, who are here, spend time away. We have so many students who participated in research projects during the course of the summer. These students were able to go into the labs of universities around the nation and be exposed to what is happening not just in the Virgin Islands but in other places and we are very excited about that.”

The president also notified the board of the seven students who successfully defended their master’s thesis. “We are striving to ensure that our master’s programs are increasing their level of rigor, making sure that students not just pass their courses but they do some kind of research work that demonstrates they are moving forward,” he said. “When we look at the 2012-2017 strategic plan that we have just completed, one of the goals that we went way beyond is faculty achievement.”

According to U.V.I., Mr. Hall informed the board of a notable achievement whereby the university saw a record increase in the number of faculty publications and presentations. Thirteen faculty members successfully had their work published, accepted for publication in refereed journals, or accepted for review. Forty-seven faculty members participated in research presentations.

Among the significant institutional achievements, Mr. Hall noted that U.V.I. was the first university to be selected as the lead institution for a \$9 million grant to research National STEM leadership through the National Science Foundation.

The president also highlighted the excellence and commitment of those U.V.I. employees or units that have performed exceptionally with the President’s Appreciation Award, U.V.I. said.

Mr. Hall praised the members of the strategic planning task force for “their hard work in executing the new Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 – Greatness Through Innovation.”

Present to receive the award were:

- Dr. Camille McKayle – provost and vice president of Academic Affairs
- Sharlene Harris – vice president of Information Technology, Library Services and Institutional Assessment
- Aubrey Washington – interim dean of School of Business

- Raul Carrillo - capital campaign manager, Institutional Advancement

"While there are many other persons who may have contributed to this plan, it took the members of this task force to ensure that all ideas were properly executed," the U.V.I. president said.

A second presidential award was also given to the Institutional Advancement component, employees of which were commended for their hard work in securing a substantial amount of funds in donations. "They almost doubled the amount of monies raised in 2017, bringing in \$4.9 million," Mr. Hall said.

Present to receive the award were:

- Mitchell Neaves - vice president of Institutional Advancement
- Richard Cleaver - director of corporate, foundation and government relations
- Linda Smith – director of alumni affairs and annual giving
- Raul Carrillo - capital campaign manager
- Liza Margolis - special events coordinator
- Peggy Fahie – database manager
- Astrid Carmona Tuitt - administrative specialist
- Ian Turnbull – marketing manager, Reichhold Center for the Arts
- Che-Raina Warner – public relations specialist

In other action, the board approved a memorandum of understanding between the Virgin Islands Housing and Finance Authority (V.I.H.F.A.) for the construction and joint management of a multi-purpose center on the Albert A. Sheen Campus.

It also approved the university's Fiscal Year 2019 fundraising goal of \$3 million and an alumni participation goal of 20 percent. Further, the board approved the establishment of a Wellness Leave Pilot Program for a period of one year. After the one-year period, the administration will evaluate the program to determine if it is addressing campus health and wellness goals. Under the pilot program, employees will be allowed a two-hour leave weekly to engage in existing wellness activities, or to create their own individualized plans.

U.V.I. Provost Camille McKayle reviewed key performance indicators, highlighting a number of achievements, including the following:

- The first enrollment figures for UVI online courses, which show an upward trend
- An increase in the number of out-of-territory students, now at 12 percent
- An increase in the number of faculty publications far exceeding the goal in the strategic plan
- Accreditation of the professional programs that are eligible for accreditation (over and above institutional accreditation as a whole)

Vice President for Institutional Advancement Mitchell Neaves reported that the University achieved a 284 percent increase in fundraising over last fiscal year, largely due to an outpouring of support, on the mainland and also from organizations in the territory, in the wake of the two Category 5 hurricanes, U.V.I. said. The bulk of these funds came through corporate and foundation giving. He also noted that the "Campaign for U.V.I.", which is slated to end in September 2019, has raised \$24.4 million of its \$25 million goal.

The board then exited regular session to discuss other matters during an executive session meeting. There, according to U.V.I., the board approved candidates for the honorary degree, approved a list of potential commencement speakers, approved the president's goals and objectives for 2018-2019, and approved, with one abstention, a request from the administration on a financial matter.

© Viconsortium 2026