

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Board Of Trustees Approves MA In Social Work, Bachelor In Fine Arts And MOUs With St. Lucia, Grenada Colleges

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In the regular session of its quarterly meeting on June 22, in the Administration and Conference Center Building on the St. Thomas Campus, the UVI Board of Trustees unanimously approved a new master of arts in social work (MSW) degree program and a bachelor of fine arts degree (BFA) program, UVI has announced. Both degrees will be administered in the college of liberal arts and social sciences (CLASS) under the leadership of Dr. Kimarie Engerman, who serves as dean of CLASS.

"There is quite a need for trained social workers," said Trustee Yvonne Thraen, who presented the Academic, Research and Student Affairs' Committee recommendation to the Board. "The MSW program at UVI will follow guidelines established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which accredits social work programs nationally. In addition to providing a robust curriculum that supports the generalist social work practitioner, the MSW at UVI will be designed to provide the student with an in-depth knowledge of trauma-informed practices. This is critical to working with populations who have been exposed to intergenerational trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and as the result of experiencing natural disasters. Moreover, all of the coursework and field experiences will include an explicit focus on the social institutions and needs of people belonging to the Caribbean diaspora."

"The University of the Virgin Islands feels that we can no longer depend on importing social workers into the territory, especially for those that are the most vulnerable," said Dr. Camille McKayle, UVI provost. "We want to train from a Caribbean cultural perspective."

The bachelor of fine arts approved by the board will include concentrations in music performance, theatre and dance, UVI said. Music, theatre, and dance teach students life skills and allow students to experience the world in a different way, it further stated. As such, the BFA will allow students to study art from around the world; see how art reflects the current world through creation of social commentaries; and develop an appreciation for diversity.

"We want to emphasize Caribbean culture and contributions to music, dance and theatre and so you will be seeing Caribbean culture reflected in the program developed," said Dr. McKayle. "We are really excited about the BFA program."

The Board of Trustees also approved memorandums of understanding with T.A. Marryshow Community College (TAMCC) in Grenada, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC) in Saint Lucia and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The MOUs dated on various days in 2019 establish, for a period of 10 years, academic and functional cooperation. UVI will offer SALCC, TAMCC and OECS students 1.75 times the tuition rates established for residents of the territory to enroll in undergraduate and graduate programs.

In the President's Report, UVI President David Hall informed the board of student accomplishments through the Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute. Approximately 15 students attend the institute every year and participate in trainings. Students are able to interview with leading companies for internships and for permanent employment opportunities. Two UVI students have earned placements as interns and another was hired for a permanent job after attending the institute, UVI said.

Arl Polydore, junior computer science major, will be joining Walmart in Arkansas as a network specialist intern in June 2019. This is a paid internship where Polydore will be working with individuals in the computer science and network engineering fields.

Iris Battiste, junior accounting major, joined The Boeing Company as a payroll intern in May 2019. This is a paid internship where Battiste will be working with top executives in the field.

Jahvan Navarro, graduating senior in Bachelor of Arts in Accounting major, was offered a full-time position with Caterpillar Inc. Navarro will be joining Caterpillar Inc. as an entry-level accountant in the Finance Services Division in June 2019.

“As much as we want to keep our talent here in the territory, the University also has to create the opportunities for students to be able to take their talents nationwide at some of the leading companies in the country and this is an example that this is happening,” said Mr. Hall.

The president also informed the board that Nicole Fleming, biology graduate, earned her Ph.D. in February 2019 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Pathobiology and Translational Science. She now works for United Therapeutics Corporation doing tissue engineering related to lung function.

Mr. Hall highlighted the excellence and commitment of those UVI employees or units that have performed exceptionally with the President’s Appreciation Award, as it customary, according to UVI. This quarter’s award was presented to the Childcare Lab and Diagnostic Center.

“I recall when I first arrived, one of the first events we had with our alumni, they asked, when is this University going to create a childcare center on campus so that students would not have to bring their children to class,” Mr. Hall recalled. “I understood why that was being asked but it was hard for me to envision it at that time that we could make this a reality.”

With the support and assistance of the Department of Education and the Title III Program, the Childcare Lab and Diagnostic Center will be officially launched on Monday, June 24. The curriculum for the center is developed by UVI’s School of Education, UVI said.

“Our hope is that this childcare center will also serve the needs of employees and even people in the community,” Mr. Hall said.

“When we started out thinking about this and when the students asked me to work on this, they only wanted a place where students could be dropped off,” he said. “Overtime we began to realize that, that is important but we needed to do more, we needed to create an early childhood education center that would serve as a model for how children should be taught, supported and inspired, even at an early age.”

A similar program is anticipated to come online on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix.

Present to receive the award were:

- Dr. Linda Thomas, dean of the School of Education
- Dr. Karen Brown, professor and associate director of VIUCEDD
- Sherryl Tonge- George, director of Childcare Diagnostic Center

Other board actions included:

- Approval of a plan to implement an academic program in agriculture at UVI

- Approval of a request from the USVI Golf Federation to construct a putting green on the Herman E. Moore Golf Course on the St. Thomas Campus
- Approval of a new list of Institutional and Aspirational Peers

While in executive session, the board approved the minutes from the executive session of the Jan. 23, special meeting and the March 2, 2019 meeting; approved a commencement speaker list; approved tenure for two faculty member and received an update report on personnel and legal matters.

Board Chairman Smock thanked outgoing Trustee Dr. Dara Hamilton for her service as faculty representative on the Board.

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Saturday, October 26, 2019. A complete list of Board meetings can be found on www.uvi.edu or through this [direct link](#).