

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI NSE Student Receives Community Engagement Award at ASU

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University of the Virgin Islands Student Selena Cuffy has been selected by the National Student Exchange (NSE) program for a Community Engagement Award for her academic accomplishments, social welfare service, contribution to the campus community, and creative use of time while on exchange, UVI announced Friday. Cuffy's award is one of the three awards under the NSE's Student Achievement Awards.

The award which is officially titled Dr. Richard R. Bond Community Engagement Award, like the other NSE awards, is named after a former NSE consortium leader. As part of this award, Cuffy is awarded a \$500 stipend.

"Since I have been in this position, this is the first UVI student that I know of that received this award," said Dahlia Stridiron-Felix, NSE coordinator at University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas Campus. "Ms. Cuffy is well deserving of this award because she has embraced and taken advantage of the opportunities available through the NSE Program. She went on exchange with clear goals and I feel she has accomplished them."

The now rising senior psychology major who left the University of the Virgin Islands for Alabama State University for the Spring 2019 semester is lauded by the NSE program coordinators for her exemplary performance.

"Cuffy's strong work ethic, positive attitude, team player mentality, and proven leadership abilities make her a worthy recipient of this award," said Dr. Linwood Whitten, NSE coordinator at Alabama State University stated in an official announcement.

"This award is very meaningful to me because it means that others were able to see and understand how impactful the exchange was on my life," Cuffy said. "I am grateful for it but also grateful for everyone at Alabama State University and the University of the Virgin Islands who went above and beyond to accommodate me and make the semester so wonderful. This award represents their hard work."

Cuffy demonstrated this worthiness by maintaining a GPA above 3.5, participating in campus life activities, attending the #MeToo HBCU Tour, attending the Miss Tuskegee Pageant, and joining the Psychology Club.

"My NSE experience was an extraordinary way to expand my horizons while earning the credits I need to keep my expected graduation date," Cuffy said. Recounting her memorable experience, Cuffy said, "I have never been to the south before and so NSE provided the opportunity to get that southern hospitality while at an HBCU." "The marching band, dancers and Greek life really amazed me and made me excited to be a part of such rich culture. Being on my own, I learned more about myself and gained life-long friends. I was also able to learn concepts from a different perspective as classes were taught by teachers from different backgrounds and ethnicities."

Among other things, Cuffy conducted case studies on Antisocial Personality Disorder and delivered a presentation to fellow students about the culture and history of the Caribbean Islands, specifically the Commonwealth of Dominica.

"As a student I have become more confident in my work and feel comfortable expressing my ideas and thoughts. I have also gained insight into various concepts from new perspectives and have even gotten experience in new testing conditions," she stated. "As a scholar I have grown from change and I am therefore less anxious to face assignments and therefore present my best at all times."

"Throughout her time at Alabama State University, it became evident that Cuffy is a positive, intrinsically motivated servant leader with amazing potential," Dr. Whitten observed.

"I would encourage hesitant students to take advantage of the opportunity to study elsewhere. There is no risk of not obtaining your credits if one is concerned about delaying their educational plan," Cuffy affirmed. "Furthermore, being in a different educational setting tests your strengths and weaknesses as a student and can really help

one to be a successful student. It is also important to take chances in life to grow as an individual, and what better way than to study abroad for a semester or year.”

The NSE is a study away program that complements university initiatives for globalization, diversity and engagement. The organization provides study away opportunities to students enrolled at its 160 member colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Established in 1968, and celebrating its 51st anniversary year, the NSE has provided exchange opportunities to more than 118,000 students.

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