

UVI Board Increases Online Program Tuition For Students in Territory, Approves Two New Agriculture Degrees and Welcomes New Board Members

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The University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees on Saturday during regular session of its quarterly meeting approved an increase in tuition rates for its [online program](#) for students who reside in the USVI, as well as increasing faculty compensation rates.

The institution also approved new degrees while re-electing Board of Trustees member Henry Smock to serve as chairman and Oran Roebuck as vice-chairman. The board welcomed Hannibal Ware to serve a five-year term beginning June 2021 – June 2026. Ware will fill the position vacated by Board Chair Emeritus Alexander Moorhead. Also welcomed to the board was Trustee Erica Johnson Creamer.

UVI said the online program's tuition rate for undergraduate in-territory students will increase from \$154 per credit to \$225 per credit. The in-territory graduate per credit hour cost will increase from \$386 to \$450. There will be no increase for out-of-territory students, stated UVI.

Fees required for on-the-ground student learning will now apply to the online degree program. Students in the online program will be assessed a \$15 registration fee, a \$45 technology fee and a \$40 flat-rate fee for books, the institution said.

"This will help us to keep the courses running and have faculty feel appreciated and respected," said UVI Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Camille McKayle. "This will encourage more students to enroll because we will be able to offer more courses."

UVI said students sign up for eight weeks at a time for the online program. The university stressed the importance for students to be able to continue through the program without a break, especially as enrollment is being built. Hence, UVI online faculty have been asked to teach courses even when there may be one to three students. This is often not fair compensation as teachers are compensated at a per student rate, the university explained.

"We are growing the online program. Two thousand and twenty-one is really the best year yet, but it is still growing," said Dr. McKayle. "One of the things you want to do as you are growing is to keep students in the program. With the UVI Online Program, sometimes you might offer a course with just three students to continue the students in the program, so they do not have to stop the course. When you are paying a low per student cost, the effort of faculty is still the same but they're not getting that much to teach. In the on-the-ground program, we would cancel those courses and put those students in another section, but that is not an option in the online program."

The Board of Trustees also voted unanimously to approve the filing of the completed Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form 990 for the year 2020, as presented to the Finance and Budget Committee. The form 990 asks that the university provide its governing members with a complete copy of the form prior to filing the form with the IRS.

On the re-election of Smock and Roebuck, Board Trustee Dr. Yvonne Thraen stated, "You have earned the confidence of your fellow Trustees and we look forward to your dynamic leadership."

"I wish to thank the board for their vote of confidence and thank Chairman Smock for his guidance and leadership. I look forward to another year of progressive growth," said Roebuck.

At Saturday's meeting, the board unanimously approved two new degree programs in the School of Agriculture — the associate of applied science degree program in horticulture and the associate of applied science degree in agroecology.

The associate of applied science degree in horticulture is a two-year program designed to prepare students with the knowledge and skills for a successful career in the horticulture industry, UVI explained. In addition to providing a solid science foundation for propagation, production, and managing plants, the coursework will provide students with critical hands-on experience, both in the lab and the field.

The associate of applied science degree in agroecology is a two-year interdisciplinary program that will investigate the science and social impact of agroecology in the tropics. The terms agroecology and sustainable agriculture will be explained in detail and defined, and applications of the agroecological perspective to the ecosystems and agriculture unique to the tropics will be discussed, in institution said.

As is customary, UVI President Dr. David Hall highlighted the excellence and commitment of UVI employees or units that have performed exceptionally with the President's Appreciation Award. This quarter's award was presented to the Special Commencement Committee, who were responsible for the production of the 2021 Commencement Ceremony.

"I am impressed by the dedication of a strong group of individuals, who were able to pull off a successful Commencement Ceremony in such a short time," said Dr. David Hall. "The special joint Commencement Committee developed and produced an impressive online ceremony to celebrate the Class of 2021 on May 14, 2021," he said. "The Committee also previously produced in December 2020, the University's first virtual joint Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2020. Both ceremonies were meaningful and impactful for graduates, their families and honored guests."

The ceremonies and social media coverage also garnered significant viewership when combined of over 100,000 views and impressions including the graduate stories, graduate degree frames featured in the ceremonies of participating students, and the related press releases regarding commencement, according to UVI.

The following individuals who comprise the Special Commencement Committee are:

- Jana Austrie
- Francisca Barry
- Una Dyer (Co-Chair)
- Anyha Lord
- Dr. Paul Flemming
- Denise Humphrey
- Monifa Potter
- Gail Steele (Co-Chair)
- Dahlia Stridiron
- Dannica Thomas
- Tamika Thomas Williams
- Nereida Washington (Co-Chair)
- Silene Prentice, Class of 2021 Representative
- Kayla Francis, Class of 2021 Representative
- Board of Trustees

At the end of his report to the Board, Hall presented Smock with an honorary degree in philosophy. Smock has served on the board for more than 23 years, with five years as vice chair and seven years as board chair. Hall said, "I hereby confer upon Henry C. Smock the degree of doctor of philosophy." Smock graciously accepted the degree. "I am speechless," he said. "This does fill a spot in my soul."

Giving background on Ware, the new board member, UVI said he was sworn in as Inspector General on May 24, 2018, following his confirmation by the U.S. Senate. He is responsible for independent oversight of Small Business Administration's (SBA) programs and operations, which normally encompass more than \$100 billion in guaranteed loans and nearly \$100 billion in Federal contracting dollars. As a result of SBA's role in the nation's pandemic response, he is providing oversight of over a trillion dollars of lending authority aimed at stabilizing the nation's economy

and providing vital capital to the nation's small businesses.

Ware also is a statutory member of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's (CIGIE) Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC), serving alongside his Inspector General colleagues to provide a whole of Government response to the pandemic oversight effort. Within the PRAC, Inspector General Ware chairs the Subcommittee on Audits. In addition, Inspector General Ware serves as the chair of the Audit Committee for CIGIE and is a member of the CIGIE's Executive Council.

Ware is a native of the U.S. Virgin Islands and holds a bachelor of arts degree in accounting from the University of the Virgin Islands. He also is a graduate of the Senior Executive Service Career Development Program. He has received numerous awards and honors throughout his career. He was conferred a degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by the UVI in December 2020 and has received several awards from the CIGIE as recognition for his significant work in the Inspector General community. Ware currently serves on the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners' Board of Regents.

Also welcomed to the board was Johnson Creamer, who earned her undergraduate degree at Hampton University and her post graduate degree at the University of Maryland. She currently leads communications and community relations at Diageo USVI. Creamer serves on the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Corporate Advisory Council.

At Saturday's meeting, Smock thanked Trustee Thraen for 25 years of service on UVI's Board of Trustees and presented her with an appreciation award plaque. "It has been a long journey. It has been a privilege. It has been an honor," said Thraen, after accepting the award. Saturday's meeting was her final board meeting. "She may be leaving the Board of Trustees, but she is certainly a part of the UVI family," said Smock.

Additionally, Smock thanked outgoing Trustee Dr. Verleen K. McSween for her service as faculty representative and Hadiyah Lang for her service as student representative on the Board.

Smock reported that while in executive session, the board approved the following:

- Approved Executive Session Minutes of the March 6, 2021 Meeting of the Board
- Received an update regarding the Covid-19
- Approved Faculty Emeritus for two candidates
- Approved tenure for one candidate.
- Received an update on UVI NEXT
- Received an update report regarding risk assessment
- Received an update from the president regarding personnel matters
- Received an update on legal matters from legal counsel

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021.

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