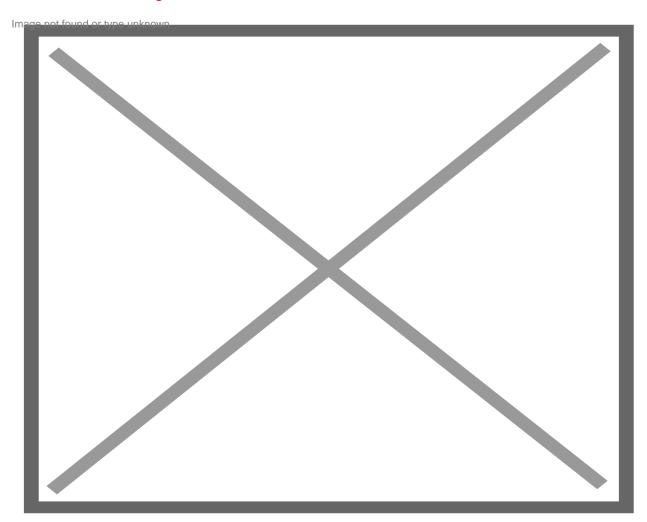# UVI Announces Plan to Forgive Student Debt, Provide More Financial Support

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Staff Consortium August 19, 2021

A UVI student celebrates graduation in 2015. **By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM**

The University of the Virgin Islands on Thursday unveiled what it's calling a Comprehensive Student Financial Support Initiative at a virtual student forum presenting plans to forgive student debt and introduce several major financial supports for its students.

UVI said the effort was developed to assist students in pursuing their education during the Covid-19 pandemic. The initiative will be funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Covid Relief fund along with UVI itself.

"From hurricanes to a global health crisis, the UVI community has weathered many storms together. The ongoing pandemic has had numerous consequences on all of us and has made it much more financially difficult for students to continue their studies," said Dr. David Hall, UVI president. "We are very pleased to offer considerable relief to our students, regardless of their vaccination status, to ensure they can continue to pursue their education and thrive at UVI. I believe this is the most ambitious and generous program the university has been able to offer at one time to its students."

According to the release, part of the initiative, which Dr. Hall outlined in five pillars, UVI will eliminate all outstanding student obligations to the university that have been incurred since the Spring semester of 2020 through the end of the Summer session 2021. "Outstanding balances will be wiped out, removing your financial burden so you can focus on studies and get a fresh start," Dr. Hall told students.

Additionally, in appreciation to those students whose tuition was fully paid either out of pocket or by other means (except by a scholarship), UVI will issue financial credits. "It is easy to focus on those in need and to overlook those who have met their obligation," said Dr. Hall. "We feel it is important to reward those students as well."

For students who desire to reside in the residence halls on either campus, UVI will award a Residence Hall Scholarship that will provide free accommodations for one year. The scholarship is available to full time undergraduate students presently vaccinated or who opt to get vaccinated. "Research has shown that students who live on campus have a better educational experience and persist at a higher rate," said Dr. Hall. "We hope this scholarship will also serve as an incentive for more students to get vaccinated." To apply, students should contact their campus Housing Director as soon as possible or apply on the UVI website.

In addition, UVI will grant a $500 Technology Award to all enrolled students and the opportunity to apply for additional financial support if students are facing compelling financial challenges. "This will be the third time these awards and supports have been administered in the last two years," noted Dr. Hall. The technology award is intended to help students pay for devices, software, equipment and services they need to be successful especially in an online environment.

Finally, UVI will utilize funding to enhance student life and activities related to health and wellness on both campuses, according to the release. "We want to be very proactive to your needs," said Dr. Hall. The Student Affairs Department is working on several plans to offer new activities including events that focus on mental health that will be announced soon.

In closing Dr. Hall emphasized to students, "We may have some differences, but I hope this demonstrates that you have leaders at this institution that care. Our goal is nothing else but to support you. We are in this together and will get through this together."

Students can expect the financial supports to become available during the Fall Semester. A more precise schedule will be provided shortly along with guidelines for students on how to access the various assistance programs.

Fall semester classes at UVI began this week and the deadline to add or drop a class is Friday, Aug. 20.

For more information, contact pr@uvi.edu.