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Former Gov. de Jongh Welcomed to First Meeting as UVI Board Member; University Seeks \$44 Million for Upcoming Budget, Approves Two Degree Programs

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Former governor-turned influential businessman John P. de Jongh was welcomed to his first meeting as a UVI Board of Trustees member on Sat., March 5, 2022.

The University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees on Saturday approved an authorization to request an appropriation of \$44,325,553 for fiscal year 2022-2023, up from \$41.7 million [a year earlier](#). The university said the request would cover salaries, benefits, equipment, supplies, and incidental expenses for its operations and programs.

The institution of higher learning also approved two new academic degree programs in the School of Agriculture and to restructure the tuition and offerings for the executive master of business

administration (EMBA) degree program.

Further, the university welcomed former governor-turned influential businessman John P. de Jongh to his first meeting as a board member. UVI announced that Mr. de Jongh [was elected by the board in October](#).

The board approved the associate of applied science in agricultural business and associate of applied science in general agriculture degrees after hearing a presentation from School of Agriculture Dean Dr. Usman Adamu.

“The Associate of Applied Science in Agricultural Business is one of the most in demand degrees today,” said Dr. Adamu, in his report to the board. “Many employment opportunities are available to students with training in agricultural business.”

UVI said positions are available with businesses that process and market agricultural products, and with the large number of businesses that sell products and services to farmers and ranchers, such as fertilizer companies, farm machinery companies, banks, and farm credit institutions. The national average salary for Agricultural Business is \$63,000 annually and salaries range from \$19,000 to \$125,000.

The School of Agriculture's associate of applied science in general agriculture degree program is designed to prepare students for employment in a variety of agriculture-related positions, the university said. Courses include Introduction to Agriculture, Livestock Production, Tropical Agroecology, and Farm Management and Planning. Career possibilities range from a farmer, rancher or farm manager to an agricultural technician supervisor at a greenhouse or nursery.

“Agricultural business is an interdisciplinary major that combines the study of business and agriculture,” Dr. Adamu said. “Agricultural business majors learn how food gets from the field to the table. An associate degree in agricultural business prepares students for entry-level positions in the field.”

The board also approved the restructure of the tuition and degree program for the executive master of business administration. According to UVI, this newly approved program is expected to offer students an all-inclusive rate of \$33,000 covering the cost of tuition, fees, materials, books, room, board and ground transportation.

“Executive MBA programs tend to be priced higher,” said Dr. Kendra Harris, dean of the School of Business, in her presentation to the board. “The average EMBA tuition among a select set of universities is close to \$66,000, which does not include the highest of the tuitions out there.”

The EMBA will provide educational training for mid and upper-level executives of private, public, and governmental organizations who have not yet earned a master’s degree.

“The students in this newly restructured program will be in a cohort for approximately one year with a residency requirement. They will complete 30 credit hours, with the anticipation that they will return to the labor market in a shorter amount of time with greater earning power,” said Dr. Harris.

During Saturday’s meeting, the board unanimously approved the nomination Dr. George Rosenberg to the Foundation of the University of the Virgin Islands Board. “I would like to endorse this nomination,” said Board Vice Chair Oran Roebuck. “I have worked with Dr. Rosenberg for over 20 years in various capacities. He is one who is truly vested in the interest of

the Virgin Islands and a very staunch businessman, as well as a medical professional. I know he has a passion for the University and the student body that we cultivate.”

During the President’s Report, UVI President David Hall highlighted the achievements of UVI students and faculty as well as various university initiatives. As is customary during the board meetings, Dr. Hall recognized the excellence and commitment of those UVI units and employees that have performed exceptionally with the President’s Appreciation Award.

According to UVI, Dr. Hall presented the award to the Accounting and Payroll Offices “for going above and beyond to ensure students received millions of dollars in debt relief and financial support and to ensure that impacted employees received the restoration of eight percent funds on time as well as the distribution of the four percent raise pool and retroactive pay to all employees.”

Recognizing Stacey Chados, Leoneal Furet, Jaqueline Faulkner, Radiant Daly, Imogene Hodge-Ottley, and Stephanie George, Dr. Hall said, “We hope this small recognition will let them know how valuable they are and how much we appreciate their service.”

The Board also approved several resolutions to include:

- the unanimous approval of the FY2022 Operating Budget Revision Number One with total operating revenues of \$51,448,718 and total expenditures and transfers of \$51,448,718.
- ratification of the actions taken in regular session by the executive committee of the
- Board of Trustees to accept the President’s Self-Assessment for 2020-2021 and approval of the president’s amended Presidential Goals for 2021-2022

During the meeting, Board Chairman Henry Smock welcomed former Gov. John P. DeJongh to his first Board of Trustees meeting.

While in executive session, the board completed the following:?

- Approved Executive Session Minutes of the Oct. 23, 2021, Nov. 22, 2021 and Dec. 9, 2021 Meetings of the Board
- Passed a resolution concerning the Medical School Project and received an update from Dr. Hall
- Passed a resolution modifying section three of the Free Tuition Policy
- Received an update from the president regarding personnel matters
- Received an update on legal matters from legal counsel

The board last met in regular session on Oct. 23, 2021. A complete list of board meetings is available on the Board of Trustees page on the UVI website from this [direct link](#).