

logo not found or type unknown

# UVI Unveils Dance Studio on Albert A. Sheen Campus

Art / **Published On March 24, 2022 04:24 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 24, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



The University of the Virgin Islands on Wednesday hosted a grand opening celebration for its long-awaited dance studio.

Featuring a sprung dance floor and equipped to enable streaming services for virtual or hybrid dance classes, the new dance studio is another highlight of the University's dance program, which introduced its Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance degree in 2020, UVI said. The program emphasizes a strong technical base in ballet, post-modern codified techniques as well as Afro-Diaspora, Caribbean and world dances.

Welcoming attendees to the event, UVI President David Hall shared his excitement about the new studio: "The completion of this dance facility will give our students even more opportunities to stretch their physical, intellectual and experiential boundaries to reach their full potential," he said. "The new studio is another recent example of how the University is investing in our facilities so

that current and future students will be able to enjoy modern learning spaces that are both functional and inspiring.”

Building on the excitement of the new studio, the Department of Communication and Performing Arts, which is housed within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, will present its Visiting Dance Artist Series from March 24-26, featuring visiting international artists Jelon Vieira and Dyane Harvey-Salaam, offering the public access to interpretations of African Diaspora dance, according to the release.

“We are delighted to invite UVI students and the dance community in the territory to participate in our dance series which will provide a diverse example of the level of instruction and professional output the program strives to provide,” said Dr. Kimarie Engerman, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. “Our goal is to provide students with exposure to dancers outside of the territory and allow students to expand their techniques and have an opportunity to network with professionals in the field.”

Mestre Jelon Vieira is the founder of Capoeira Luanda, The Capoeira Foundation, and founder and artistic director of DanceBrazil. He began training in his native Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. Vieira is recognized as one of the first people to bring the Brazilian Art of Capoeira to the United States.

Dyane Harvey-Salaam is a founding member of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre and has had a 45-plus year career as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer. For more than 25 years she was a principal soloist with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, touring the US, Italy, Australia, and Nigeria as a US representative in FESTAC, the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture.

“Our department seeks to hone strong dancers who see the power of dance as a tool for beauty, healing and social change. Most importantly, students can fulfill their dreams of continuing their professional dance training and higher education while at an HBCU in the beautiful paradise of St. Croix and inspiring territory of the US Virgin Islands,” said UVI Assistant Professor of Dance?Djassi?DaCosta Johnson. “We are committed to the well-rounded education necessary to engage and inspire students to become world-class dancers, choreographers, curious intellectuals, informed artists and impactful citizens of the world,” she said.

According to UVI, as part of its plans to strengthen and grow its dance program, the Department envisions offering courses to non-dance majors as an option for physical education credit as well as an opportunity to experience the beauty and health benefits of dance.