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UVI Cuts Ribbon on Medical Simulation Center on St. Croix; Facility Will Help Create and Maintain More Than 500 Jobs, Stimulate Ancillary Growth

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The UVI Medical Simulation Center at the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix. By. GEORGE ARMSTRONG/V.I. CONSORTIUM

Leaders from the University of the Virgin Islands, the U.S. government, the V.I. Legislature and Governor Albert Bryan on Wednesday participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the UVI Medical Simulation Center, a 21,920 square-foot facility located on the St. Croix campus that officials say will provide comprehensive, cutting-edge training for existing physicians, nurses and other medical professionals in the territory and beyond.

The simulation center, along with the Medical Research and Training Center on the Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas, will complete UVI's medical school [once UVI can meet accreditation requirements for the latter facility](#).

Even so, the simulation center will be able to stand on its own and provide a number of services. "The only difference is we won't be able to train students there because the students will not have been admitted into the medical school, and that's the difference," UVI President Dr. David Hall told the Consortium in March. "But we will still be able to do all of the types of training that physicians need, that nurses, EMTs, the military, etc [need]. We can even train our nursing students there; we just will not be able to train the medical students there which is part of [the simulation center's] function until the medical school actually opens."

On Wednesday, leaders spoke of the simulation center's opening as a dream come through after 8 years of ups and downs, setbacks and victories.

"This is a very special day and I am honored and humbled to see the the day arrive," said Mr. Hall during remarks on Wednesday, revealing that the dream of a medical school in the territory [was born in 2014](#).

"The vision is focused on improving the quality of healthcare for the Virgin Islands and stimulating and diversifying the economy of the Virgin Islands," he said.



Senators, UVI officials, Governor Albert Bryan (center) and others pose for a photo during the ribbon-cutting event for UVI's Medical Simulation Center on St. Croix on Wed. June 29, 2022. (Credit: George Armstrong, V.I. Consortium)

The simulation center will attract global healthcare organizations, high tech and biomedical firms to the territory as a place to provide training and conduct research, said Dennis Alvord, the deputy assistant secretary at the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, which supported the simulation center with \$14.1 million. "Critically, the center will help create and retain over 500 jobs," he said.

Governor Albert Bryan, who like governors before him has supported the facility, spoke of ancillary operations that will come as a result of the simulation center, broadening the territory's medical offerings. He also highlighted a nearby project in Estate Lower Love spearheaded by the Research and Technology Park Corporation called [the Virgin Islands Tech Village](#). This facility will utilize 18 acres of land and will consist of 60 units of residential housing, 10,500 square feet of commercial space, a 120 room teaching hotel, a 300-person capacity conference center, and a solar microgrid.

"It's an incredible amount of different skills that are contained within this small geographic area, and when you look to the future, today a [medical simulation center] being centered here is just prolific in terms of the potential for St. Croix," the governor said.

"Today as we sit here with not a dream deferred but one that's alive, well and kicking, we have to maintain and pursue a course that will lead us on to this medical school," he added.

Senator Novelle Francis, a longtime supporter of the medical school, was elated as he spoke on Wednesday. "I apologize in advance for my excitement today; it is indeed a great day," he said. The senator spoke of being of freshman lawmaker and learning of the dream for the medical school, and being fully convinced that the dream should become a reality following a visit to the mainland to a similar facility. "Today this building stands as a dream realized," Mr. Francis said even as he noted the obstacles that delayed its opening.



Group of individuals, including Governor Albert Bryan participate in a tour of the UVI Medical Simulation Center on St. Croix on June 29, 2022. (Credit: George Armstrong, V.I. Consortium)

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, in a pre-recorded statement called the facility's opening a "monumental event," and said it will provide " a new market of jobs and opportunities."

Oran Roebuck, UVI Board of Trustees vice chair, expressed elation as well. "UVI is moving forward and you keep it moving forward, so I am so proud to be a part of this community and I'm so proud of where he are headed," she said.

The UVI Medical Simulation Center includes trauma and hybrid operating rooms, 18 surgical skill lab areas, four team training rooms, and an auditorium with an open atrium.

The facility also comes ready with a conference room, dining hall with catering kitchen, four team training rooms, four debriefing rooms, two surgical skill labs, one operating room, two simulation labs, one trauma moulage, four patient exam rooms, and eight offices, according to information provided by the university on the event's program leaflet.

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