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UVI Exchange Student Recognized by National Student Exchange With Achievement Award

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Heather Bruck. By. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

The University of the Virgin islands announced Thursday that Heather Bruck, who participated in the National Student Exchange (NSE) program when she attended the University of the Virgin Islands during the Spring 2022 semester, has been awarded the Bette Worley Student Achievement Award.

The award recognizes students who demonstrate the best use of their study away as part of their participation in the exchange, and includes a stipend of \$500.

Bruck, a third-year biology major at the University of South Carolina-Columbia, chose UVI's Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas to pursue her research interests and delve more deeply

into her marine science minor.

According to the release, while at UVI, Bruck had the opportunity to assist a graduate student with research focused on seagrass distribution and the impacts of invertebrate populations. She recorded species of seagrass, conducted transect surveys to count invertebrates, and collected invertebrate samples around the island of St. Thomas.

Dahlia Stridiron-Felix, who serves as the NSE Coordinator at UVI's campus on St. Thomas, stated, "For collegiate exchange students, especially those pursuing marine studies, UVI is an ideal choice. Students can learn from accomplished faculty, gain valuable hands-on experience, broaden their research activities, and enjoy an unrivaled setting full of natural resources and beauty."

In addition to participating in field work, Bruck was approved as an American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) Scientific Diver in Training, which permitted her to scientifically dive and work under water, UVI said. She is planning to pursue a doctoral degree in Marine Ecology at the University of South Carolina after graduation.

The National Student Exchange provides study away opportunities for students enrolled at its 170 member colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Established in 1968, NSE has provided exchange opportunities to more than 118,000 students. NSE is a study away program that complements university initiatives for globalization, diversity and engagement.