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# Communication Students at UVI Travel to Las Vegas for Major Journalism Convention

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**Michael Bell (left), Nadege Barber (upper right), and George Francis. By. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.**

The University of the Virgin Islands Association of Black Journalists (UVIABJ) voted to send four executive board student members to the prestigious National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Convention taking place in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 3-7, UVI has announced.

Nadege Barber (president), Michael Bell (vice president), George Francis (undergraduate advisor), and Carlos Eton (interim treasurer) will represent UVI at the convention that hosts more than 4,000 top journalists, media professionals and students for week-long activities that include educational workshops, networking opportunities and a career fair, the university said.

The UVI representatives were selected based on their service and demonstrated commitment to the UVIABJ chapter, and each representative was also nominated to receive awards in various categories, according to the release.

“It's exciting to have the opportunity to represent UVIABJ alongside the other members,” said Barber, a senior at UVI. “Being able to attend the conference in person this year makes me happy and grateful. I am happy to share that we are also NABJ 2022 student nominees! Shoutout to the team for their tireless efforts invested.”

George Francis, a 2022 UVI graduate who now serves as an undergraduate advisor, stated, “Being a part of UVIABJ gives students opportunities to foster and develop their creative skills and talents. This organization challenges and allows its members to gain first-hand experience in print and broadcast journalism, media production, event planning, and photography. Being eligible to participate in the annual NABJ convention is another great benefit.”

According to the release, despite its short history, the UVIABJ has an impressive record of accomplishment that includes receiving a record ten awards at the 2022 Southern Regional Press Institute (SRPI) and winning first place in the Fall 2021 BlockChain competition sponsored by Fintech at Morgan State University. UVIABJ was also chosen ‘2022 Student Chapter of the Year’ by the UVI Office of Student Affairs, Student Engagement Committee.

“UVIABJ is truly an amazing chapter and continuously receives administrative support from the University,” added UVIABJ Vice President Michael Bell, a junior at UVI.

Sponsorship for the UVIABJ 2022 conference participation is provided by the UVI Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Institutional Advancement, and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS).

“I am extremely impressed with the overwhelming commitment and involvement of our sponsors,” said Eton, a senior at UVI. “This extraordinary level of support clearly demonstrates a desire to help UVI students reach their potential.”

The UVIABJ was founded by UVI Communication Department students in 2020 and is the first and only NABJ affiliate chapter in the Caribbean. The main objective of the UVIABJ is to provide UVI students with opportunities for journalism and media development, including print journalism, photography, and video.

The UVI Voice 2.0 online student newspaper (<https://uvivoice.org/>), Caribbean Cinematic and Arts Film Festival (<https://caribfilm.net>), and the Fall Journalism Summit are just a few of the projects sponsored by UVIABJ, according to the release. Open membership and participation opportunities of the student-run organization are available to all current and former UVI students.