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## Journalism Students Represent UVI at Top National Conference in Las Vegas

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Four University of the Virgin Islands journalism students recently attended one of the nation's leading conference for journalism education, career development, networking, and industry innovation for persons of color, UVI made known Tuesday.

The members of the UVI Association of Black Journalists (UVIABJ) joined thousands of journalists, media executives, journalism educators, public relations professionals, and students from the United States and other countries in attending the 2022 National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ) joint Convention & Career Fair, which was held in Las Vegas, Nevada in an in-person format for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

UVIABJ President Nadege Barber, Vice-President Michael Bell, Treasurer Carlos Eton, and Undergraduate Advisor George Francis participated with fellow students as well as industry professionals in various activities, including workshops, lectures and presentations focused on the arts and entertainment, media relations, communications, health and science, investigative journalism, storytelling, economy and business, social justice and community, and leadership.

According to the release, the convention and career fair, whose theme was “Changing the Game/Breaking Barriers”, included a welcome reception sponsored by Disney, and a Hall of Fame luncheon to recognize journalists of color who have made significant strides throughout their careers in the field of mass communication.

The UVIABJ team also attended the “Salute to Excellence Gala and Award Ceremony”, a special invitation-only event at which UVIABJ was nominated for recognition in the category of “Digital Media-Undergraduate: Online Feature Reporting” for its video presentation “BlocCom: Fact Check the Fact Checkers.” The UVI student production won first place in the Blockchain national competition hosted by Morgan State University, FinTech.

“The NABJ annual conference was a remarkable event, and our chapter was warmly welcomed,” said Barber. “It showcased the accomplishments of not only the professional chapters but also the NABJ team. I had the chance to learn about ways to support students in achieving their objectives. I’m appreciative that the sponsoring offices at UVI made it possible for us to take part in this important event,” he added.

Prominent media outlets such as CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN, FOX, and USA Today were all represented at the multi-day career fair, which culminated with a Gospel Brunch, in keeping with tradition.

“The conference offered an incredible feeling of Black excellence. We had numerous opportunities to attend many conference sessions and learn from some of the top creators, writers, hosts, and directors in the journalism field,” Bell said. “NABJ allowed me the opportunity to enhance my skills and knowledge as I continue my academic journey as a graduating senior,” he stated.

Special guests and conference speakers included Karine Jean-Pierre, White House Press Secretary; Bill Whitaker of CBS 60 Minutes; Alex Perez of ABC News; Bevan Springer, President/CEO of Marketplace Excellence; Errol Barnett of CBS News; and Yamiche Alcindor of NBC and PBS News.

“Simply put, all UVI students need to go to this convention. Although a person might be inclined to believe that the NABJ Convention solely targets journalism professionals, I was very pleased to discover that the convention actually features an extremely diverse set of information, events, and workshops tremendously beneficial to UVI students of all disciplines,” said Eton, who added: “I personally found the Leadership Academy sessions most beneficial as the information provided was universally applicable in various industries. I definitely plan on attending again.”

Francis agreed with the feedback offered by his colleagues. “There was so much to see and so many opportunities from which to learn. We were able to meet and network with some of the most experienced and seasoned journalism professionals in the industry,” he noted. “The individuals I met were very welcoming, and they were excited to know that there was, in fact, an NABJ affiliate chapter in the U.S. Virgin Islands. I am very grateful that we were able to represent the University and the Territory,” Francis said.

Next year's conference is scheduled to take place in Birmingham, Alabama from August 2-6, 2023.

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