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UVI Organization to Host Conference Highlighting Next Generation of STEM Professionals

Education / **Published On September 29, 2022 07:22 AM /**

Staff Consortium **September 29, 2022**

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The V.I. Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (VI-EPSCoR) will host its annual conference on Oct. 27-28, highlighting the next generation of STEM professionals: the youth of the Virgin Islands.

The event, titled “Our Islands, Our Youth, Our Future,” will focus on students and their mentors in the U.S. Virgin Islands that are supported by VI-EPSCoR, and specifically on their research success and path to impactful employment and opportunities.

According to the release, guest speakers include Christine Hale, the first graduate of UVI's Master of Marine and Environmental Science program, and Michaelrose Ravalier, award-winning educator and Master Teacher at the Virgin Islands Institute for STEM Education Research and

Practice.

Also presenting will be lead researchers on the Ridge to Reef project along with their students at both the undergraduate and graduate level, UVI said. Some of the research topics to be discussed include Coral Reef Resilience, Watershed Management and Land Use, and Mangrove Ecosystem Function, Recovery and Restoration.

“We are excited to be hosting our Annual Conference in person after two years of remote meetings due to the pandemic,” said VI-EPSCoR Director Dr. Kim Waddell. “Our focus this year is to highlight our new and emerging STEM professionals and those who guide and support them. VI-EPSCoR is working to increase environmental awareness and science literacy across the Territory, and we are proud to showcase our future workforce and their talents.”

UVI said the two-day event takes place at the Ritz Carlton, St. Thomas. The university community and public officials are invited to participate. Space is limited, and registration is required for each attendee.

To register, visit www.viepscor.org. The registration deadline is Oct. 21, 2022.

According to the release, VI-EPSCoR was awarded its fourth NSF-EPSCoR Track 1 Research Infrastructure Improvement Grant titled “Ridge to Reef Processes and Interdependent Drivers of Small Island Resilience” (R2R) in 2020. It is a \$20 million, 5-year award from the National Science Foundation hosted at the University of the Virgin Islands. The project looks at the debris that washes down the hillsides of the Virgin Islands after rain events and enters the marine environment – going through the rocky coastlines, beaches—and into the mangroves, offshore seagrass beds and corals.

The Ridge to Reef project also works to develop the next generation of Islanders who can ensure a resilient future for the Territory’s natural resources - a key element for sustaining the tourism-based economy in the Caribbean in the years ahead.