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# UVI's Master of Social Work Program Earns Full Accreditation from National Board

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**UVI Signage in St. Thomas** By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

The University of the Virgin Islands announced Wednesday that its Master of Social Work Program has received full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board on Accreditation, a recognized body in higher education.

UVI said the program secured the accreditation after a thorough five-year evaluation process involving stakeholder analysis, faculty recruitment, outcomes assessment, and both internal and external reviews. The effort has culminated in the program meeting or exceeding the standards established by the CSWE.

UVI President Dr. David Hall commended the hard work and dedication of faculty, administrators, and legislative members, crediting them for the successful conception, formalization, and implementation of the program. He emphasized that the achievement reflects UVI's commitment to fostering a dynamic learning environment that trains future social workers to positively influence individuals and families across diverse communities.

Dr. Kimarie Engerman, dean of UVI's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, highlighted the program's commitment to excellence, innovative curriculum, and preparation of socially conscious practitioners, capable of addressing unique community needs, particularly within the Caribbean region.

Engerman acknowledged the vision of former Senator Kurt Vialet, and expressed gratitude to UVI Hall, University Provost Dr. Camille McKayle, and numerous UVI faculty, staff, and partners for their vital contributions to the program's success.

UVI's master of social work program, offered at both the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix and the Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas, aims to mold advanced generalist social work practitioners proficient in trauma-informed practices from a Caribbean cultural perspective. The program concentrates on equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to enact meaningful change in societies affected by intergenerational trauma and adverse childhood experiences due to natural disasters in the region.

The program focuses on social institutions, such as child welfare, and caters to the unique needs of the Caribbean diaspora, offering students a specialized pathway to work with children, youth, and families in various social service settings. It promotes the development of problem-solving skills and provides practical experience through immersive fieldwork opportunities.

Although the MSW Program does not directly lead to licensing, it seeks to equip graduates with the academic foundation required for licensure in the United States and beyond, UVI said. A bachelor of social work or master of social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program is a requirement for social work licensure in most states.

The blended learning approach, combining video conferencing and face-to-face instruction, ensures accessibility and convenience for students pursuing the degree. The program has already graduated seven students, with a Class of 2022 graduate, Lashonette Schang, successfully passing the ASWB Advanced Generalist Exam for licensure in the VI territory, according to UVI.

The mission of CSWE is to promote excellence and innovation in social work education and research, provide leadership, ensure quality in teaching and learning, and enhance the capacity of its member institutions. The CSWE's Board of Accreditation is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation to grant accreditation status to baccalaureate and master's social work degree programs in the United States and its territories.