

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, YOUTH, AND RECREATION AND
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

12/28/2018-SPECIAL ORDERED

BILL NO. 32-0328

Thirty-Second Legislature of the Virgin Islands

October 25, 2018

An Act amending title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15 relating to scholarship programs to provide financial aid for tuition to residents of the Virgin Islands for post-secondary education at the University of the Virgin Islands

PROPOSED BY: Senators Tregenza A. Roach, Dwayne M. DeGraff,
Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Myron D. Jackson, Neville A. James,
and Sammuel Sanes

1 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:*

2 **SECTION 1.** Title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15 is amended by adding section 190dd.
3 to read as follows:

4 “**§190dd.** (a) There is established in the Virgin Islands, the University of the Virgin Islands
5 Higher Education Scholarship Program administered by the University of the Virgin Islands to
6 provide tuition scholarships for students to attend the University of the Virgin Islands.

7 (b) The University of the Virgin Islands, through its scholarship program, shall provide
8 tuition aid to students pursuing their first associate’s or bachelor’s degree, or both. The University

1 of the Virgin Islands may award full or partial tuition scholarships to students pursuing an
2 associate's degree or a bachelor's degree.

3 (c) The President of the University of the Virgin Islands shall appoint a five-member
4 scholarship board from its faculty and staff to administer the scholarship program as directed by
5 regulations promulgated by the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees.

6 (d) To be eligible for a scholarship under this section a student must:

7 (1) Be a United States citizen or a permanent resident of the United States;

8 (2) Be a bona fide resident domiciled in the Virgin Islands at the time of
9 making application to the scholarship program;

10 (3) Have graduated from a Virgin Islands public, private, or parochial school, or an
11 adult Continuing Education Program, with a cumulative 2.5 grade point average;

12 (4) Maintain a 2.5 grade point average at all times while in attendance at the
13 University of the Virgin Islands;

14 (5) Be seeking the student's first associate's or bachelor's degree at a postsecondary
15 institution; and

16 (6) Meet all criteria established by the University of the Virgin Islands both for
17 admission and for continued attendance.

18 (e) The University of the Virgin Islands shall require a recipient of the scholarship to work
19 in the Territory of the Virgin Islands under the following conditions:

20 (1) The scholarship recipient who receives a four-year scholarship for a bachelor's
21 degree must work in the Territory for three years;

22 (2) The scholarship recipient who receives a two-year scholarship for an associate's
23 degree must work in the Territory for one year; and

1 (3) The obligation to work in the Territory must be completed within seven years
2 after graduation.

3 (f) Students receiving a scholarship under this section shall sign a contract committing to
4 work in the Virgin Islands in accordance with the conditions established in subsection (e) and must
5 agree that failure to comply with any provision of this section, will result in the scholarship
6 becoming a loan payable to the Government of the Virgin Islands on demand at a rate of interest
7 established by the University through regulations not to exceed the prime rate. Any monies
8 collected pursuant to this subsection must be deposited in the University of the Virgin Islands
9 Scholarship Revolving Fund.

10 (g) The University of the Virgin Islands shall develop and implement pre-enrollment
11 programs to assist students in preparing for post-secondary education and continuing educational
12 enrichment programs to assist scholarship recipients in succeeding academically and maintaining a
13 2.5 or better grade-point average.

14 (h) The University of the Virgin Islands, in collaboration with the Virgin Islands
15 Department of Labor, shall develop and implement a job placement program at the University of
16 the Virgin Islands to assist scholarship recipients in obtaining gainful employment in their fields of
17 study or related fields.

18 (i) The University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees shall promulgate regulations to
19 implement the University of the Virgin Islands Scholarship Program.

20 (j) (1) The University of the Virgin Islands Scholarship Revolving Fund is established in
21 the Treasury of the Virgin Islands. The Commissioner of Finance shall administer the Fund as a
22 separate and distinct, non-lapsing fund.

23 (2) The Fund consists of an annual appropriation of \$3,000,000 from the Internal
24 Revenue Matching Fund, all private charitable and federal grants, and any other scholarship

1 donations gifts, devises, bequests, and all other kinds of contributions of real or personal
 2 property, from persons, corporations, partnerships, trust funds, charitable or other
 3 eleemosynary organizations, domestic, national or foreign, as may be made to the said fund
 4 from time to time and any other sums covered into the fund pursuant to law, as well as any
 5 additional contributions as may be appropriated by the Legislature.

6 (3) Monies in the Fund may be used exclusively for tuition scholarships awarded
 7 under this section and for implementing the student enrichment programs under subsection
 8 (g).”

9 **SECTION 2.** The sum of \$3,000,000 is appropriated from the Internal Revenue Matching
 10 Fund in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and every fiscal year thereafter, as a contribution
 11 to the University of the Virgin Islands Scholarship Revolving Fund.

12 **SECTION 3.** This Act takes effect for the school year beginning 2018.

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 14 **BILL SUMMARY**

15 Section 1 of the bill amends title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15 by adding section
 16 190dd. creating the University of the Virgin Islands Higher Education Scholarship Program to
 17 provide tuition aid to Virgin Islands residents who are pursuing their first associate’s or bachelor’s
 18 degree. The scholarship recipients must maintain a 2.5 grade point average at the University of the
 19 Virgin Islands and must also fulfill a work commitment within seven years after graduation. A
 20 scholarship recipient who receives a four-year scholarship for a bachelor’s degree must work in the
 21 Territory for three years, and a scholarship recipient who receives a two-year scholarship for an
 22 associate’s degree must work in the Territory for one year. A scholarship recipient is required to
 23 sign a contract agreeing to fulfill the work commitment requirement and to comply with all other
 24 requirements. The contract also imposes penalties for failing to comply with the requirements. The
 25 University of the Virgin Islands Scholarship Revolving Fund is created as the funding source for
 26 the scholarship program.

27
 28 Section 2 of the bill appropriates \$3,000,000 from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund in
 29 the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and every fiscal year thereafter, as a contribution to the
 30 University of the Virgin Islands Scholarship Revolving Fund.

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 32 Section 3 makes the provisions of this bill effective for the 2018 school year.

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 34 **BR17-0337/February 14, 2017/AA**