NAHBCUT3A Annual Meeting a Success in the Virgin Islands

Last June, administrators from nearly 100 colleges and universities visited the Virgin Islands for the annual National Association of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Title III Administrators’ Association Technical Assistance Workshop. The week-long workshop, running from June 24-27, 2008, was held at the Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort.

As the only HBCU outside of the contiguous 48 states, the University of the Virgin Islands served as the host institution for the 2008 workshop. This afforded partner institutions the opportunity to converge on issues that affect with Title III grant recipients and possible solutions.

When asked about the success of the meeting, Dayle Barry, UVI’s Title III coordinator replied, “The technical assistance workshop allowed Title III administrators—both novices and veterans—the opportunity to share common challenges and successes, receive updated information from the US Department of Education regarding changes to the program, and learn from each other about the methods and technologies most useful in managing this grant that is so important to our institutions. Having it here on St. Thomas allowed greater participation from the UVI community, while the Title III administrators enjoyed visiting the only Historically Black University outside the continental United States.”

GIS Comes to UVI….and in the Classroom

In the fall of 2008, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Curriculum, a new Title III activity, started making considerable strides in providing GIS awareness in the territory. Although GIS is not a new concept, it is not familiar to everyone. Therefore, a number of outreach activities were conducted on both campuses to build awareness of its uses and benefits, especially to the territory.

In an effort to build more GIS awareness, on March 26, 2009 the GIS Title III project, in collaboration with the Conservation Data Center (CDC), hosted a forum on the impact of GIS in the classroom. The guest speaker for the forum was Dr. Allan Falconer, a former dean from the George Mason University’s geography department. Dr. Falconer made two presentations on how GIS enhanced the learning experience of students at George Mason University from various disciplines, including business, nursing, math and science, and history.

Employees and Students Gain Access to Internet and Information

The thin clients from the library labs on each island have been replaced by Dell desktop computers. Through grant support from the UVI Title III program, new computers were purchased, allowing the library labs to mimic others around both campuses. Software is now the same throughout all public labs. This purchase allowed the thin clients to be redistributed throughout campus staff areas, where computers were in short supply but for which heavy demand exists. Areas such as Physical Plant, Security and the Registrar’s Office now have thin clients, allowing students and staff easy access to the Internet for retrieving employee data or registering for classes.

The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
UVI Chemistry Program Continues Journey to ACS Accreditation

As the recipient of Title III funding to improve its infrastructure, the chemistry department has continued to upgrade its lab with state-of-the-art equipment and apparatus to enhance instruction.

Through the support of the Title III grant program, the Chemistry Project—“Improvements to Chemistry Program Infrastructure”—has the department well on its way to being accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS) in 2010.

The activity director, Dr. Stanley Latesky, insisted that the chemistry department is well on its way to meeting the requirements for ACS accreditation; to date the majority of the equipment has been received and installed. For the final piece of the puzzle, the department is in search of an additional faculty member; ACS requires four staff members and presently the university has three chemistry professors. Dr. Latesky is scheduled to attend the annual ACS meeting in the near future and possible candidates to fill the vacant position will be interviewed.

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Officially opened on February 18, 2009, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is a joint venture of the Office of the Provost and the Information and Technology Services components to support faculty curriculum development. On St. Thomas, the CETL is located in the Paiewonsky Library, L-103 and integrates resources and staff formerly housed in Quarters B.

At the CETL, faculty will receive technology and other resource training, use computers and peripherals to build content for courses, collaborate with colleagues for course development, and consult with ITS staff for building Blackboard and other technology skills. Part-time staff will have a place for student consultations, as needed. Faculty resource and training space in the St. Croix Campus Library will be expanded during the library renovation project to develop a CETL for faculty on that campus. For further information about the CETL contact Suzanne Darrow, sdarrow@uvi.edu, 340-693-1214; Judith Rogers, jrogers@uvi.edu, 340-693-4132; or Dean Knight, dknight@uvi.edu, 340-693-2147.

BanWeb’s One Stop Service Center for Employees

Self-Service access to Banner is provided through BanWeb, a web interface through which UVI students and staff can access their records. In an effort to improve access to personnel data, employee functionalities are continually being enhanced. Employees now have access via http://banweb.uvi.edu to view:

✦ Leave balances;
✦ Job details and history from initial hiring;
✦ W2s;
✦ Benefit information; and

Pay information from the first, up to the most recent pay period

These online functionalities have allowed the payroll office to cease printing pay stubs for employees with direct deposit. Instead, such information is available online.

As usual, students may register, pay for classes, retrieve grades and other financial information all online via BanWeb.
UVI Receives Supplemental Funds

On October 1, 2008, the University of the Virgin Islands received $500,000 in supplemental funding under the auspices of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007.

Included in the provisions of the CCRAA are an additional $85 million to be distributed to Historically Black Colleges and Universities pursuant to the formula that is used to allocate Title III, Part B funds. These funds may be used for:

- Acquiring scientific/laboratory equipment;
- Constructing or improving classrooms, labs, or library;
- Academic instruction in disciplines where Blacks are underrepresented;
- Purchasing of educational materials;
- Establishing or enhancing a teacher education program; and

Activities consistent with the institution’s comprehensive development plan that target students in the sciences-related disciplines, language instruction and health professions.

Seven activities are being funded at UVI through this two-year program. They include:

- **Communications Lab Improvement**—the purchase of equipment, allowing communications majors to use state-of-the-art equipment typically found at the professional ranks.
- **Programmatic Infrastructure Development for Psychology**—the purchase and use of bioinformatics software for use in the psychology major.
- **Biology Infrastructure and Instructional Improvement**—physical improvements to the biology labs and the purchase of lab equipment and supplies.
- **Library Space Program: St. Croix Campus**—physical improvements to the St. Croix campus library to create quiet areas and to expand the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- **Library Space Program: St. Thomas Campus**—physical improvements to the St. Thomas campus library, to expand computer use and to modify the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- **Physical Science Laboratory Upgrades**—physical improvements to the physics and Science 100 labs, along with the purchase of supplies for those labs.
- **Undergraduate Mentoring and Research Center**—physical improvements to the chemistry labs and creation of a mentoring center for chemistry majors.

These projects will support improved learning environments for UVI students in classrooms, laboratories and study spaces.

24 Hour Student Computer Lab Opens in the Library!

With TIII funding assistance, the room that previously housed the Melchior Center has been transformed into a 24-hour student computer lab. Located on the southwest corner of the Paiewonsky Library on the St. Thomas campus, the lab features 10 new Dell Optiplex GX755 computers with 17” LCD monitors. In addition, furniture will be available for students to utilize their personal laptop computers over the wireless network. Laptops may also be borrowed from the library for use in this area. These laptops will be available for checkout during regular library hours.

The 24/7 lab officially opened on Monday, March 16, 2009 in celebration of Charter Day. During closed hours, students will still have access to the computer lab through a side entrance door. According to Rachelle Shells, the manager for Learning Resources and Student Technology, students will have access through the side door on the south east side of the library using their library cards, which will have a proximity strip on the back. When asked how this lab is any different from the other computer labs on campus, Ms. Shells also asserted that unlike the other labs, not only is this new one open 24-hours, seven days a week, but it will have more resources such as a color printer, fax machine and wireless access.
St. Croix Library Renovations—Coming Soon

The Information and Technology Services (ITS) component is pleased to announce that the proposal recommended by the faculty Library Committee in 2006 to increase St. Croix library space by enclosing balconies on the 7th and 9th levels has been approved for funding by Title III through a 2-year supplemental grant under the auspices of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. The project is scheduled to be completed in FY 2010.

Aaron Cohen and Associates, library design consultants, visited the campus in January 2009 to assess the facilities and to meet with ITS and Facilities personnel. The development of architectural plans to show suggested interior design changes are forthcoming and will be shared with the campus.

Feedback from the design consultant, such as the recommendation to relocate the library’s computer lab (Room 902) to NWW 133, is already being implemented to improve the flow of traffic and use of space in the library. This project will also lead to the expansion of the current faculty resource center to create a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) for faculty on the St. Croix campus.

Internet2

Internet2 is a leading-edge networking infrastructure that supports high-performance applications utilized by more than 200 universities nationwide. It is the foremost U.S. advanced networking consortium. Led by the research and education community since 1996, Internet2 promotes the missions of its members by providing both leading-edge network capabilities and unique partnership opportunities that together facilitate the development, deployment and use of revolutionary Internet technologies. By bringing research and academia together with technology leaders from industry, government and the international community, Internet2 promotes collaboration and innovation that has a fundamental impact on the future of the Internet.

The implementation of Internet2 at UVI will increase the University’s connectivity by 15 times its current rate. Access to this network is made possible through a contribution from Global Crossing, the sponsorship of Florida International University’s AMPATH project, the support of Title III and the UVI Research and Technology Park Corporation (RTPark), which is providing material technical assistance, access to colocation facilities, and other shared resources.

UVI’s connection to the Global Crossing “pipe” will allow faster access to a number of electronic resources and teaching and learning technologies. Access to the network will improve UVI’s video conferencing capability, as well as access to educational, medical and other research data compiled in more than 86 countries. This will come online for the St. Croix Campus on March 14th.

PeopleAdmin

On February 19th, 2009, ITS and Human Resources rolled out PeopleAdmin, an online system through which employment applications to the University will be submitted and tracked. Current positions are also tracked here, allowing employee evaluations to be completed online. The system will increase overall efficiency, accuracy and accountability in position management and applicant tracking at UVI.

The position management feature will automate and streamline the employment application process and reduce response time in the approval process and workflow of personnel requisitions. The applicant tracking feature will enable the online review of applicant profiles by HR, the hiring managers, and members of search committees. It will also provide all applicants with automated feedback regarding the status of their application.

PeopleAdmin is available at https://careers.uvi.edu.

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UVI’s Title III Program is currently administering the “Title III, Part B Strengthening Historically Black College and Universities” and the “College Cost Reduction and Access Act” grants. Both grants have adopted the university’s theme “Enhancing Institutional Infrastructural Capacity for Support of Student Success.” Funding for both grants is provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

For more information please contact Dayle Barry at 340-693-1054 or visit us at http://www.uvi.edu/sites/uvi/Pages/Sponsored_Programs-Title_III.aspx?sf=CS