



The University

History

The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) was chartered on March 16, 1962, as the College of the Virgin Islands—a publicly funded, coeducational, liberal arts institution—by Act No. 852 of the Fourth Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands. According to that law, UVI's cornerstone objective is to provide for "...the stimulation and utilization of the intellectual resources of the people of the Virgin Islands and the development of a center of higher learning whereby and wherefrom the benefits of culture and education may be extended throughout the Virgin Islands."

The enabling legislation was the result of at least two years of preparation and planning. In 1960, the V.I. Legislature created a temporary body called the Virgin Islands College Commission, composed of interested island residents, to survey the need for a territorial college. In April 1961, Governor Ralph M. Paiewonsky pledged to establish such a college in his inaugural address. And in July 1961, Governor Paiewonsky hosted a Governor's Conference on Higher Education, at which twenty educators observed and analyzed the Virgin Islands' educational scene, and made recommendations for the creation of the College of the Virgin Islands (CVI).

The first campus opened on St. Thomas in July 1963, on 175 acres donated by the federal government. The first board of trustees took office in August 1963. In 1964, the college founded a second campus on St. Croix, on 130 acres also donated by the federal government.

CVI began by offering only associate of arts degrees. In 1967 it added bachelor's degree programs in liberal arts and education. The first baccalaureate degrees were awarded in 1970, and in 1976 the college awarded its first master's degrees in education. Two years later, master's degree programs in business administration and public administration were instituted on both campuses.

In 1972, the College of the Virgin Islands was awarded Land-Grant status by the U.S. Congress. This allowed for the establishment of an Agricultural Experiment Station and a Cooperative Extension Service. Since then, many other programs and services have been added. These include the Reichhold Center for the Arts, the Eastern Caribbean Center, the William P. MacLean Marine Science Center, the Sports and Fitness Center and the Virgin Islands Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (VI-EPSCoR).

In 1986, the College of the Virgin Islands was renamed the University of the Virgin Islands to reflect the growth and diversification of its academic curricula, community and regional services, and research programs. That same year, the United States Congress named UVI one of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU); therefore, it holds the distinction of being the only HBCU outside of the continental United States.

In 2011, UVI expanded to the island of St. John, with the dedication of the University of the Virgin Islands St. John Academic Center in Cruz Bay.

As of August 2009, Dr. David Hall has served as the fifth president of the University. The Savannah, Georgia native holds both a doctorate in juridical science and a master's degree in law from Harvard University.

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Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster was the fourth president of the University of the Virgin Islands, 2002-2009. She succeeded Dr. Orville E. Kean who became president in 1990. Dr. Arthur A. Richards served as the second president of UVI from 1980-1990, while Dr. Lawrence C. Wanlass served as the first president from 1962–1980, when UVI was the College of the Virgin Islands.

UVI is a public liberal arts-based Masters II university, a Historically Black College and University and a Land-Grant institution. Today, UVI has a combined enrollment of approximately 2,500 full-time, part-time and graduate students on its two campuses. It continues to offer a high-quality, affordable liberal arts education and professional programs in a culturally diverse environment. The University's objective is to be recognized as the leading American institution of higher learning in the Caribbean.

Accreditation and Memberships

The University of the Virgin Islands is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street Philadelphia, PA, 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation. The University is also an active member of the American Association for Higher Education, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the American Council on Education, the Association of Caribbean Information Systems, the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes, the Association of Governing Boards, the National Association for Equal Opportunity, and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges.

The bachelor and associate degree programs in nursing education are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Higher Education in Nursing (ACEN), 3343 Peachtree Rd NE, Suite 500, Atlanta GA, 30326, (404) 975-5000; Fax (404) 975-5020. The School of Business is a member of the Assembly of the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business. The School of Education is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and is a member of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Location, Facilities and Global Access

The University of the Virgin Islands, located in the Eastern Caribbean, is 45 miles east of Puerto Rico. The University is located on two campuses, and has an academic center on St. John. The Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix, the largest of the U.S. Virgin Islands, includes academic facilities, a student life complex, the Delta M. Jackson Dorsch Complex, the V.I. Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station. The St. Thomas Campus contains academic facilities, administrative and student service buildings, residence halls, the Reichhold Center for the Arts and the William P. MacLean Marine Science Center. The University of the Virgin Islands St. John Academic Center is located on the third floor of The Marketplace shopping center in Cruz Bay, St. John. The Center provides office space for UVI's Cooperative Extension Service and VI Small Business Development Center programs. The center's videoconferencing technology allows UVI students on St. John to take select courses that are offered on the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses. In addition to these campuses, the University maintains the Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station on the island of St. John.

Telecommunication facilities and Internet 2 connect the three campuses for videoconference classes and university meetings. Access to the Internet and World Wide Web supports distance learning course offerings as well as global information and communication for students, faculty and staff. The UVI home page, located at <http://www.uvi.edu>, provides current information and links to a wide range of university documents and information.

Information Services and Institutional Assessment - Campus Learning Resource Centers

The Information Services and Institutional Assessment (IS&IA) component is the one-stop-shop for information sources and educational technology to support instructional and research needs. Services and support, provided through the campus libraries and the ITS Helpdesk, include e-mail, Blackboard, library, computing and other learning resources.

The library on the Albert A. Sheen Campus was founded in 1964 and was moved to its present location in the Melvin Evans Center for Learning in 1975. The St. Thomas Campus Library was founded in 1962 and moved to its present location and dedicated in honor of former Governor Ralph M. Paiewonsky on March 16, 1969. The resources and collections of both libraries are oriented toward UVI's instructional and research programs and are expanded and updated on a continuous basis with input from faculty, staff and students. The libraries' current holdings include about 115,000 volumes, over 200,000 e-Books along with a small paper periodical collection, and over 20 periodical databases with full-text and indexing of more than 15,000 journals. These resources are accessible through a joint electronic catalog, powered by SirsiDynix.

Special collections of Caribbean books and periodicals and an extensive pamphlet file of conference papers and other materials on the Caribbean round out the printed resources. The library on the Albert A. Sheen Campus includes the Ralph DeChabert Collection of Virgin Islands and Caribbean documents, while the Ralph M. Paiewonsky Library includes documents from the Melchior Center for Recent Virgin Islands History. All these resources are available through the joint electronic catalog.

From the libraries' website, located at <http://library.uvi.edu>, or through the Mycampus portal, users can access several scholarly on-line databases and full-text journals, including American Chemical Society Web Editions, Cumulated Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), and several general multi-disciplinary and subject specific databases from vendors such as JSTOR, EBSCO, and Gale Group. The libraries also provide access to a growing number of digitized documents on the history and culture of the Virgin Islands through the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC). Membership in regional and national networks, such as LYRASIS (a consortium of libraries within the U.S. and the region), the HBCU Library Alliance, and OCLC (a library services collaborative), facilitates resource sharing, training, and access to electronic cataloging services with libraries worldwide.

Library services include loans of in-house materials, interlibrary loans between the UVI campuses and other external institutions, reference assistance and library instruction. Librarians work with faculty to integrate information literacy in the curriculum according to guidelines and standards developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries and promoted by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The libraries are open to the public every day (except holidays) for a total of 82 hours per week when classes are in session. Intersession hours are posted. All registered students, faculty and staff must present a valid UVI identification card in order to obtain library services, including the borrowing of library materials and other equipment. The libraries collaborate with the Access and Enrollment Services Office to ensure retrieval of delinquent materials and collection of replacement costs for lost material, when necessary. A community library card service is available through the Preferred User Program (PUP). See the Public Service Policies on the Libraries web page for additional information.

The libraries on both campuses have innovation centers that were established to encourage innovation and meaningful creativity. The rooms are designed to facilitate collaborative teaching, learning and sharing among students and faculty. The centers feature a 3-D printer, computers, projectors, worktables, and white boards.

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Component staff support educational technology resources to enhance teaching and learning. A wide variety of audiovisual materials and presentation equipment is available to faculty and students for on-campus use. Several smart classrooms with instructional equipment for in-class Internet access, computing and presentations are maintained. Videoconference facilities are used to connect with students and faculty on the opposite campus, for both instruction and meetings. The Blackboard Learning Management System is used by faculty to deliver course materials and to interact with students.

Open computer labs and wireless access points throughout the campuses provide internet access and computing facilities. Microsoft computer applications are available on each campus through computer labs, smart classrooms, and library laptops. UVI faculty, staff and students have access to Microsoft applications in accordance with the University's licensing agreement.

For information and support of IS&IA learning resources, contact the Helpdesk at 693-1466.

Special Programs

The University offers several special programs through the academic colleges and schools, the Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning (CELL) Center, the Agricultural Experiment Station, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the Water Resources Research Institute. These include certificate programs such as the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Program, special self-improvement courses, and courses in a wide variety of subjects to improve the quality of life for residents. The Albert A. Sheen Campus offers a Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps program within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. This 18-credit program is available to students pursuing a bachelor's degree. Admission to the program will be upon approval of an application to the Military Science and Leadership (MSL) instructor. Any student may enroll in the MSL courses upon approval of the instructor.

The University of the Virgin Islands is a member of the National Student Exchange program which offers undergraduate students an opportunity to study for up to one year at one of 171 colleges and universities in the United States and its territories. Students spend either their sophomore or junior year in the exchange program and return to the University of the Virgin Islands to graduate. Students from other NSE membership schools also spend a year or semester studying at UVI. Additional information is available from the Counseling and Placement Office. UVI is a member of the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA) and participates in the Caribbean Intercollegiate Student Exchange program. This program allows UVI students to spend a semester or an academic year at a participating university and allows students from participating Caribbean colleges and universities to spend a semester or academic year at UVI.

A cooperative agreement between the University of the Virgin Islands and Boston University School of Medicine exists whereby University of the Virgin Islands students, after meeting certain qualifications, may be accepted provisionally into the medical school at the end of their sophomore year. These students spend two summers and their senior year at Boston University and graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of the Virgin Islands. The College of Science and Mathematics has developed an articulation program in engineering with Columbia University in New York and Washington University in St. Louis. These articulation agreements allow students to begin their studies at UVI and then complete requirements for graduation at one of the schools. Students who satisfy all requirements receive one degree from UVI and a second degree in engineering from one of the two schools. There are less formalized transfer programs in pre-engineering, pre-pharmacy and pre-medical technology for students who wish to study in these fields at the University of the Virgin Islands before transferring to a specialized institution to complete their studies.

Interested students should seek additional information from the dean of the College of Science and Mathematics.

UVI has entered into several special agreements and collaborative ventures within the last few years. There will be joint collaborations on faculty and student exchanges, faculty research, and program development. Research will be conducted at the Etelman Observatory, located on St. Thomas at an elevation of approximately 1,500 ft. The observatory houses a state-of-the-art 16-inch American Optical refracting telescope. The telescope has been fitted with a CCD camera, a computer-controlled filter wheel, and optical encoders which allow the telescope to be positioned with exceptional accuracy. The facility will be used both for instructional purposes and research, which is sponsored in part by the South Carolina NASA Space Grant Consortium.

A cooperative student and faculty exchange agreement between Emory University and the University of the Virgin Islands is currently in effect. The exchange agreement provides for the regular exchange of students and faculty between the two institutions to enhance the education and the mutual understanding of both students and faculty.

The Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), previously known as the Virgin Islands University Affiliated Program (VIUAP), was established in October 1994 to enhance the quality of life for citizens with developmental disabilities and their families. VIUCEDD carries out its mission by promoting independence, productivity, and full integration into the community through interdisciplinary training, exemplary service, technical assistance and information dissemination.

Other collaborative agreements, articulation agreements, or memoranda of understanding have been established between UVI and colleges and university across the Caribbean, the U.S., Europe, and Asia. In addition, agreements exist between UVI and local health care facilities, government agencies, and federal entities.

Special Degree Program Offerings

From time to time, the University develops special degree programs to provide workforce training and to enhance the professional development of service providers. One such program is the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Associate of Arts degree program. Designed to ensure that childcare providers and early childhood professionals are trained to provide quality programs in which infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in the primary grades, with differing abilities are nurtured. The Associates of Arts program is designed for students to progress directly into the Bachelor of Arts program to become certified teachers in grades K-3.

Another such program is the Associate of Applied Science in Process Technology aimed at developing a workforce for the local industries in the Caribbean region and worldwide.