

¡Bienvenidos!

Bienvenue!

Welcome!

Greetings Social Work Students, Administrators, Faculty, Staff, and Visitors:

It is my absolute joy to greet you and to extend a warm welcome to the University of the Virgin Islands and in particular, the Social Work Department. You matter greatly to us, so whether you are new to UVI, returning to complete your degree, continuing on this incredible collegiate journey with our students, or just browsing our website—welcome aboard. You are in the right place, and we are so happy you are here!

I am indeed proud of the amazing work our department continues to do and this semester promises endless opportunities for growth and repair. As a new program dedicated to excellence, diversity, equity and inclusion, our mission is central to our students' success because we have the awesome responsibility to produce competent graduates for professional social work practice at all levels of intervention – clinical, community, organization, and policy. So, although the future bodes bright with possibilities, it will require all our hands, hearts, and minds on deck to make it a resounding success.

With such an important precept, our aim is to honor and promote the resiliency of individuals, families, groups, communities, institutions and systems in the Virgin Islands, the Caribbean, and its diaspora, and it is a mantle of distinction that I pledge to carry on with utmost fidelity, compassion, and loyalty. Our BASW and MSW degree tracks are specifically designed with you in mind, and are offered for your convenience on both the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix and the Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas. Our courses also offer equal flexibility in scheduling, timing, and affordability to accommodate both the traditional and non-traditional learners so there is ample ease of access to earning your social work degree at the level that you desire. Let us help you unleash your potential.

As a lifelong social worker and advocate, I truly cannot think of a more propitious time to be in this profession—to be an agent and catalyst for change—than at this moment in our collective history. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics aptly describes social work as a helping profession with the core mission to enhance human well-being, to stand up for justice and equality, and to be the voice of marginalized people everywhere. The growing disparities in wealth and health, global pandemics, police brutality, an alarming increase in domestic violence, systemic racism, and widespread discrimination are but a few of the day-to-day societal challenges that social workers are called upon to address.

It is uplifting to know that over six decades after they first appeared in the NASW Code of Ethics, the core tenets of the profession still hold true today and are a great testament to the fact that social workers do change lives and we do have an enormous influence on what impacts the world. Through the supportive services we provide, people can and do live better lives. So, as you embark on this leg of your academic

journey, know that our faculty, staff, and administrative teams are committed to assist, support, and guide you throughout the learning process, and I look forward to partnering with you, the university, and the community to achieve your goals.

As you immerse yourself into this new semester or academic year, I encourage all of you to set **SMART** goals for yourselves—goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-centered. Take advantage of the many on-campus resources and student activities that have been provided for you and manage your time well so you can maximize and enjoy your learning experience. Equally important is the need to balance personal time with your academic pursuits. Taking care of your mental and physical health is not only a professional responsibility, but also an important key to help you remain rejuvenated, productive, and optimistic. We are well able, so let's do this!

A special thanks and welcome back to the social work faculty, administrative teams, practicum supervisors, and all our allied partners both on campus and in the community. Through your diligence and commitment to our students' success, you have been instrumental in advancing our mission and core values. We have accomplished many of the goals we had set for our programs, but we have much more to give, much more to attain, and even more to celebrate. So, please continue to be the scaffold and bastion for each other as we continue to grow and move forward to the next level of victory with pride and confidence.

One of our many goals during this and every year is to surpass each preceding milestone, but we can only do this through our mutual efforts and commitment to making our department as ethically functional and welcoming as possible. Among other things, this means leading by example, respecting our students and each other, treating our clients with compassion, engaging in continuous professional development, and acting with integrity and purpose in all that we say and do. Thank you, faculty teams, for imparting your knowledge and experience, and thank you, students, for entrusting us with this important aspect of your educational journey. Together, we make the dream work!

I am very excited about meeting all of you in person and even more optimistic about what we can accomplish together. If you are a visitor to our site, thank you for taking the time to peruse our programs and please continue to visit and learn more about our progress. The UVI Admissions Office has been a tremendous asset in connecting prospective students and visitors to our programs, and I encourage you to also utilize them as a guide and reliable source of information. Again, on behalf of our dedicated teams, welcome to the social work family, study smartly, be well, and I look forward to seeing you in class.

¡Buena suerte!

Bonne chance!

Good luck to all of you!

Yvonne I. Woods, PhD, MSW, CSW

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