

Sixty-First Annual Commencement



ST. CROIX
Thursday, the Fifteenth of May
Two Thousand and Twenty-Five
One O'clock in the Afternoon
Albert A. Sheen Campus
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

ST. THOMAS
Friday, the Sixteenth of May
Two Thousand and Twenty-Five
One O'clock in the Afternoon
Elridge W. Blake Sports and Fitness Center
Orville E. Kean Campus
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

President's Message

Commencement at the University of the Virgin Islands is more than a ceremony, it is a vibrant celebration of resilience and achievement. Rooted in the centuries-old academic tradition that marks both an ending and a beginning, UVI's commencement reflects the unique spirit of our Caribbean culture and the strength of our community. It honors sacrifices made, support of our families, and the determination of our students who have overcome challenges to reach this moment. This day is a milestone not just for our graduates, but for the Virgin Islands and the global UVI family.



Safiya George, Ph.D.

It is with heartfelt joy that I extend Congratulations to the members of UVI's Class of 2025 on achieving this powerful and proud moment in your journey. Today marks not just the culmination of years of hard work, sacrifice, and growth, it also marks a new beginning filled with possibility.

You are leaving UVI as more than just graduates. You are leaders, innovators, and changemakers who carry with you the spirit, strength, and excellence of this institution. As you go forward into the world, remember that your time at UVI has not only prepared you for success—it has connected you to a legacy and a future that is still being written.

As you step into the next chapter of your life, remember this: success is not a destination, it is a mindset. Stay curious. Stay grounded. Do not be afraid to fail because failure is often the birthplace of your greatest growth. Surround yourself with people who challenge you, believe in you, and push you to rise.

Hold tight to your values, especially in moments when they are tested. Speak up. Show up. Keep learning. And no matter how far you go, always remember where you come from. Let your Caribbean roots, your UVI foundation, and your own unique story be the fuel that drives you. Do not just chase a career—build a life with purpose.

The University of the Virgin Islands is entering an exciting era of transformation and impact, and even though you are graduating, we want you to be a part of it. Though your days as students may be behind you, a new relationship with UVI is just beginning; you are now a lifelong ambassador. Stay in touch. Stay involved. We are building something extraordinary—and as proud alumni, you are always welcome to contribute your time, your talent, and your voice.

The world needs your brilliance, but it also needs your compassion, your integrity, and your courage. You were made for this moment—and for so much more.

Congratulations again, Class of 2025. I am so proud of you—and so excited for all that lies ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Safiya George". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large flourish at the end.

Safiya George, PhD, APRN BC, FAAN, FAANP, FNAP
President

Keynote Speaker: Hill Harper

Acclaimed Actor, Best-Selling Author and Humanitarian

Hill Harper is a humanitarian, an award-winning actor, best-selling author, and entrepreneur. Harper starred in ABC's #1 television drama, *The Good Doctor*, as well as in numerous television and film projects including *CSI:NY*, *He Got Game* and *Lackawanna Blues*.

Harper has served as the National Spokesperson for several leading social justice organizations including The Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, The Innocence Project, One Fair Wage; and Big Brothers Big Sisters. He also sits on the Board of Directors for the National Black Bank Fund and was named Honorary National Co-Chair of the Redevelopment of Black Wall Street. President Barack Obama appointed Harper to the President's Cancer Panel, where he contributed to shaping cancer policy recommendations to the White House.



Hill Harper

Additionally, Harper has authored four New York Times bestsellers: *Letters to a Young Brother*, *Letters to a Young Sister*, *Letters to an Incarcerated Brother*, *The Conversation* and his award-winning book, *The Wealth Cure*, that addresses ways to solve the racial wealth gap. *Letters to a Young Brother* was named "Best Book for Young Adults" by the American Library Association. Harper has been recognized with seven NAACP Image Awards, for his writing and acting. As an extension of his empowerment books, Harper founded the Manifest Your Destiny Foundation and established The Pierce and Hill Harper Arts Foundation.

Harper graduated magna cum laude from Brown University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and was named valedictorian of his department. Harper then graduated with a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) cum laude from Harvard Law School, as well as with a Master's Degree with honors from Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He holds ten honorary doctoral degrees including doctorates from Howard University, Providence College, and Dillard University. Harper is a proud Life Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

As an investor and business owner, Harper owns The Roasting Plant, a successful coffee franchise in downtown Detroit, is co-founder of A-Frame Brands and is co-owner of the award-winning New Orleans hotel, International House. Additionally, he sits on the Board of Directors of LOVED01, John Legend's successful skincare brand. Harper owns several commercial and residential rental properties in Detroit, Los Angeles and Newark, New Jersey.

Hill Harper's unwavering commitment to individual empowerment, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and social and economic justice has made him a highly sought-after speaker on the global stage. His passion for uplifting others and creating lasting change continues to place him at the forefront of these crucial conversations.

UVI HISTORY

The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) was chartered on March 16, 1962, as the College of the Virgin Islands (CVI) – 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 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 campus on St. Croix, on 130 acres also donated by the federal government. At a ceremony on March 24, 2011, the St. Croix campus was named in honor of the late Albert A. Sheen, Sr. Also in March of 2011, UVI opened the St. John Academic Center in Cruz Bay, with interactive classrooms and computer facilities. The center closed in 2017 due to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and the UVI St. John Community Resource & Development Center opened in 2025 as an extension of UVI and UVI CELL. In 2015, UVI entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of St. Martin (USM) to establish an extension campus of UVI to be located on the campus of USM and to be called “UVI at USM” to offer quality academic and career education that will provide students from St. Maarten/ St. Martin and other locations across the region and around the world the opportunity to build a solid foundation to enter the workforce in their homeland, across the wider Caribbean or abroad.

UVI offers 46 degree programs including 37 undergraduate degrees and nine graduate degrees through six schools and colleges: Agriculture, Business, Education, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Nursing, and Science and Mathematics. Six new degree programs began in Fall 2016: PhD in Creative Leadership for Innovation & Change, now housed under the School of Graduate Studies, BBA in Accounting, BBA in Management, BBA in Marketing, Master of Accounting, and Executive Master of Business Administration. In Spring 2018, UVI launched its new Online Division and offers 15 online degree programs nationwide. Four undergraduate certificates are also available: Entrepreneurship, Music Industry, Psychology, and Teaching English as a Second Language. In addition, there are four special programs: Honors Program, Secondary Teacher Preparation Program, Early Medical School Selection Program at Boston University School of Medicine, and Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps (SROTC). Classes are offered in the fall, spring, and summer. Academic advising and learning assistance including tutoring and supplemental instruction are available in UVI’s Center for Student Success.

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 and the Elridge W. Blake Sports & Fitness Center, among others. 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 U.S. Congress named UVI one of America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). It is the only HBCU outside the continental U.S., and the first to offer an undergraduate degree in marine biology.

Dr. Safiya George began her tenure as president of the University of the Virgin Islands on August 1, 2024, becoming the first alumni president to take the helm at UVI. She succeeds Dr. David Hall, who was named president on August 1, 2009. Dr. LaVerne E.

UVI HISTORY

Ragster was named president in 2002. Dr. Orville Kean was named president in 1990, succeeding Dr. Arthur A. Richards, who became president in 1980. Lawrence C. Wanlass served as the first president of the College of the Virgin Islands from 1963 until 1980.

Today, UVI enrolls approximately 2,000 full-time and part-time students on its two campuses. It continues to offer a high-quality, affordable liberal arts education in a culturally diverse environment. The University boasts more than 10,400 alumni who have gone on to excel as doctors, lawyers, judges, university and government administrators, teachers and other professionals including the present governor of the US Virgin Islands, Albert Bryan Jr. Among the many accomplished alumni are two Rhodes Scholars, the winner of a Pulitzer Prize for Journalism and the Premier of Nevis.

The National Student Exchange (NSE) program operates on both the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses. Each semester approximately 25 students from the U.S. mainland enroll through NSE. In addition, UVI continues to admit students via memoranda of understanding with the State University of New York at New Paltz, the College of Charleston, Emory University, Savannah State University (social work completion), Columbia University and Washington University in St. Louis (engineering), UNINTER (Universidad Internacional de Cuernavaca, Mexico) and the UNICA Caribbean Exchange Program. The University of the Virgin Islands is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation. Because of its dedication to educational excellence and improvement through peer evaluation and accreditation.

UVI schools also hold accreditation with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN), the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). UVI also has Community Engagement Classification status from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This prestigious national designation is an evidence-based documentation of deep community engagement and the University's commitment to improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities, and revitalizing its civic and academic missions. UVI also has Memoranda of Understanding with several other institutions, including The Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica; Buffalo State University; Fielding Graduate University; Nantong University; Yangzhou University; Anguilla Community College; H. Lavity Stouff Community College; T. A. Marrayshow Community College; Sir Arthur Lewis Community College; University of Puerto Rico System; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College; and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Existing Memoranda of Understanding continues with the University of St. Martin; Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College; Nevis Sixth Form College; and Dominica State College. Additionally, there are transfer programs in pre-engineering, pre-pharmacy and pre-medical technology for students who wish to begin their studies in these fields at the University of the Virgin Islands before transferring to a specialized institution to complete their degrees.

In 2021, the St. Thomas Campus was named the Orville E. Kean Campus, in honor of UVI's third president of the same name.

In 2022, the Administration and Conference Center was renamed the LaVerne E. Ragster Administration and Conference Center in honor of UVI's fourth president of the same name.

Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change

The University of the Virgin Islands launched its first Ph.D. program in Fall 2016, marking a significant milestone in the institution's academic evolution. Fifty doctoral candidates joined the inaugural cohort to pursue the Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change—a program designed to develop forward-thinking leaders equipped to drive positive social and economic transformation. The cohort represented a broad range of backgrounds, including lifelong Virgin Islanders, U.S. mainlanders, and international students from across the Caribbean and beyond.

The idea for the program grew out of a recognized need for innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to leadership. Creative leadership emerged as an ideal focus area—one that could unite diverse academic disciplines and respond to the Territory's and region's call for capable, visionary change-makers.

Early academic leadership at the University collaborated with institutional partners and experts in the field to shape the curriculum. Working alongside colleagues from Buffalo State University and Fielding Graduate University, UVI developed a unique and collaborative program structure—one that balances rigorous academic engagement with real-world application.

The program combines online coursework with in-person residencies held each semester. These residencies allow students to work with global thought leaders and master practitioners, providing opportunities for immersive learning, idea exchange, and collaborative exploration of complex challenges. Instead of traditional classrooms, the program utilizes flexible, dynamic workspaces that support adult learners in co-creating knowledge with faculty and peers.

Accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change prepares students through an extensive interdisciplinary curriculum focused on relevant and transformative leadership practices.

Specialization Tracks:

All admitted students select an approved specialization track as part of the program:

- **Creativity and Leadership for Change (CLC) Track**
 - Graduates receive a Ph.D. from the University of the Virgin Islands and a graduate certificate from Buffalo State University.
- **Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL) Track**
 - Graduates receive a Ph.D. from the University of the Virgin Islands and a graduate certificate from Fielding Graduate University.
- **Educational/Academic Leadership for Change (ELC) Track**
 - Graduates receive a Ph.D. from the University of the Virgin Islands.

College of the Virgin Islands Class of 1975
Celebrating 50th Anniversary

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE

College of the Virgin Islands

Mary P. Abaray • Augustin Ayala, Jr. • Roy Bates • Gwendolyn E. Benjamin • Denise T. Bennerson • Charlene E. Blake • Ezekiel A. Bloyce • Ermin Boschulte • Faye V. Boschulte • Mercedes D. Brannigan • Denesia J. Brodhurst-Fabio • Modesta H. Brown† • Roosevelt Bryant • Rupert A. Buchanan • Daniel R. Caines • Janice Y. Carrington • Jose R. Carrillo • Dale L. Carty • Rhudel A. Cid-George • Eustace P. Collens • Cardinal P. Connor • Pauline L. Corbitt • Jean E. Cruse • Jannette E. Davis • Maria I. De Danet • Julia B. Dominique • Alphonse A. Donastorg, Jr. • Mildred L. Edney • Klemme A. Edwards • Francisco M. Emmanuel • Lawson E. Estridge • J'Ada R. Finch-Sheen • Tulip P. Fleming • Leo G. Frederick • Godfrey G. Fredericks, Jr.† • Roland A. George • Yvonne Gibbons • Rose B. Gill • Lyra Harrigan • Susan M. Hart • Patricia J. Hector • Elda N. Henry† • Hugh C. Heyliger • Earle E. Hodge • Judith A. Hodge • Reginald L. Huggins • Maureen N. Hunte • Zoraida E. Jacobs • Richard W. Kellner • Berencia L. Maduro • Adelaide R. Mannix • Winston D. Matthews • Margaret J. Mendelsohn • Leslie S. Milliner • Maureen E. Moorehead • Rufus L. Morton • Maria M. Navarro • Wilma C. Nisbett • Marie A. Osborne • Anna M. Paulus† • Sigurd O. Petersen, Jr. • Mildred G. Rogiers • Sarah E. Ross • David J. Rossington • Joyce Ryan • Santiago D. Santiago • Claudette D. Schrader • Bentley Thomas • Genevieve M. Thomas • Jacqueline U. Thomas • Henrique Walcott • Valdemar L. Warner • Iris A. Wilcox† • Helen C. Williams • John L. Williams • Patricia M. Williams

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE

College of the Virgin Islands

Beverly L. Anderson • Pearl Boynes • Adelbert M. Bryan • Leon A. Casey, Sr. • Anthon L. Christian • Sheila Christian • Linda D. Clarke • William Daniel • Bernice A. Denbow • Fritzroy Francis • Linda A. Frye† • Clifford George† • Julie George • Diana L. Grell† • Rosalie S. Hodge • Victor E. Huntley • Elinor M. Jones • Gwendolyn C. King • Gregory Kruszewski • Robin M. Kruszewski • Rita B. Maynard-Blyden • Timothy W. McCann • Reginald T. O'Donoghue • Ida M. Petersen • Marva L. Pickering • Diane P. Ruan-Viville • Naomi O. Varlack† • James F. Wallgren • Renaldo O. Wheatley • Ada G. Williams • Gwendolyn F. Zephir

† = Deceased

PROGRAM - Albert A. Sheen Campus - St. Croix

**Barbara Flemming, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Management
COMMENCEMENT MARSHAL**

***PROCESSIONAL**“Pomp and Circumstance” (Elgar)
UVI Concert Band, Dr. Erick C. Willie

***INVOCATION**Dee-Nisha Grell, Class of 2025

***NATIONAL ANTHEM**.....“Star Spangled Banner” (Key)
UVI Concert Band, Dr. Erick C. Willie

***VIRGIN ISLANDS MARCH**.....“Virgin Islands March” (Adams)
UVI Concert Band, Dr. Erick C. Willie

OFFICIAL WELCOMESafiya George, Ph.D., President

KEYNOTE ADDRESS.....Hill Harper

AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES.....President George

2025 HONOREES.....Hill Harper and Deborah Y. Francis Howell

MUSICAL SELECTION.....Voices of Inspiration Concert Choir
Josephine Thomas-Lewis

ADDRESSKyra Edwards, Class of 2025

REMARKS.....Henry C. Smock
Chair, UVI Board of Trustees

The Honorable Milton Potter
President of the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

The Honorable Stacey Plaskett
Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress

The Honorable Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.,
Acting Governor of the United States Virgin Islands

MUSICAL SELECTION.....UVI Concert Band, Dr. Erick C. Willie

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES.....Kendra Harris, Ph.D., Provost (Interim)

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change • Executive Master of Business Administration • Master of Business Administration • Master of Arts Educational Leadership • Master of Arts in Psychology • Master of Public Administration • Master of Social Work • Bachelor of Arts • Bachelor of Business Administration • Bachelor of Science • Associate of Applied Science • Associate of Science

INDUCTION INTO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.....Michael Morsberger
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

COMMISSIONING CEREMONY.....CPT. Nancy Ramos Rivera
Assistant Professor of Military Science

***ALMA MATER**.....“Alma Mater by the Sea” (LaMotta)
Voices of Inspiration Concert Choir

***BENEDICTION**.....Ja'Liyah Fanis, Class of 2025

***RECESSIONAL**“Ceremonial Procession” (Elgar)
UVI Concert Band, Dr. Erick C. Willie

*Audience is required to stand.

Every effort is made to ensure that this program is accurate; circumstances beyond our control may have resulted in unintentional errors.

ALBERT A. SHEEN CAMPUS – ST. CROIX

Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Christa-Ann Molloy
Gary Molloy

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

Associate in Applied Science

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Edna Alfred
Zavira C. Wilson

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Master of Business Administration

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Zhane Z. Proctor

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Jennisha Joseph
Amie S. St. Louis
Rhonda C. Prince

Executive Master of Business Administration

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Kenneth Alleyne
Kim Jerome
Sana Joseph Smith
Candace Warner Shoy

Bachelor of Arts

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Germaine P. Gumbs
Nacoya Johnson

Isabel M. Urgent

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Jesimiel Garcia*
Zeldon Hicks
Mandy Hudson**
Jabari Fleming
Nathan Peterson**
Amya Withey*

Bachelor of Business Administration

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Lamani Santiago
Ja'Liyah Fanis***

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Isis Brannigan
D'Lysa Charles**
Kyra Edwards***
Zephania Gentius**
Franklin Marte
Alexandra Prasedyoko*
Clyshawna Wilson
Danah-Leigh Suarez

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Master of Arts Educational Leadership

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Cleone Lynch
Marisska Richards
Cassandra King
Alaa A. Muhsin

Master of Arts Organizational Leadership

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Maria C. Aloyo
Kimberly Gereau

Master of Arts School Counseling

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Shantel Arrindell-Stewart
Sherese Blake
Javier Hitlall

Bachelor of Arts

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Natalliya M. Francis
Nyana Francois
Lenna Martinez***
Ocairy S. Rivera

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Master of Public Administration

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Juliet John-Hope
Reanna Schjang

Master of Arts Psychology

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Vernon Benons

Master of Social Work

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Safarah McSween
Michelle Russell

Bachelor of Science

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Tejah Rasheedah Browne
Jhaleek A. Christian
Akilah K. Hodge
Alanna M. Julien
Sharika I. Milligan*

****summa cum laude* ***magna cum laude* **cum laude*

Summa Cum Laude

"With the Highest Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work that is considered to be of the highest quality. Grade Point Average - 3.75 - 4.0

Magna Cum Laude

"With Great Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work considered to be of much higher quality than average. Grade Point Average - 3.50 - 3.74

Cum Laude

"With Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work that is above average. Grade Point Average - 3.25 - 3.49

Please note that this is not an official listing of graduates. The names of students listed originate from applications for graduation. For official verification of graduates please contact University Registrar Office. We apologize for any inconvenience. St. Thomas: (340) 693-1160 | St. Croix: (340) 692-4103

ALBERT A. SHEEN CAMPUS – ST. CROIX

Gabriella N. Passee
Deonte Sherwood
Justice J. Veira

Julissa Vazquez*
Aaliyah Tisson-Watson
Tatyana Wheeler*

Bachelor of Arts

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Odaysha Abraham**
Kidejah Archibald**
Jahmoi Benjamin
Tannea Chelcher
K'Nayah D. Douglas
Felisha Felix
Savion Herrera**
Jadah, Jarvis*
Taiyce Jacobs*
Shiraine B. Johannes
Megan L. Maguire
Lennise Marchant**
Kiah Muller
Indeyah I. Todman*
De'Shanna DeJesus Richardson
Jermika Roumou***
Shania Shervington

Associate of Applied Science

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Richardio M. Wells

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Bachelor of Science

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Renyce Armstrong**
Raneen Bazzar
Marrita Denis
Dee-Nisha J. Grell*
Kanicia Hendricks*
Winnie Jn Baptiste
Shernice Morris**
Ge'Shanna DeJesus Richardson
Lyrissa Samuel
Safiya Stewart

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Bachelor of Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Alaysia George **

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Chmeerah N. Felix***
Aaliyah George***
Akilah K. Hodge
Dazonte Marthurin
Kareem Sealey
Makayla G. Todman***
Allana Jackson*
Zorah C. Williams**

Associate of Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Darren Paul

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Aaliyah George***
Zareik O'Farrell-Williams
Elisha Rogers

Associate in Applied Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Jaheem Baptiste
Jeremiah Douglas
Mario William

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Kalid Bruce
Lincoln Duncan
Lockhart Khalil

****summa cum laude* ***magna cum laude* **cum laude*

Summa Cum Laude

"With the Highest Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work that is considered to be of the highest quality. Grade Point Average - 3.75 - 4.0

Magna Cum Laude

"With Great Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work considered to be of much higher quality than average. Grade Point Average - 3.50 - 3.74

Cum Laude

"With Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work that is above average. Grade Point Average - 3.25 - 3.49

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PROGRAM - Orville E. Kean Campus - St. Thomas

**Nelson Pizarro, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation
COMMENCEMENT MARSHAL**

*PROCESSIONAL	“Pomp and Circumstance” (Elgar) UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle
*INVOCATION	Mi’Kaylah Thomas, Class of 2025
*NATIONAL ANTHEM	“Star Spangled Banner” (Key) UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle
*VIRGIN ISLANDS MARCH	“Virgin Islands March”(Adams) UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle
OFFICIAL WELCOME	Safiya George, Ph.D., President
KEYNOTE ADDRESS	Hill Harper
AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES	President George
2025 HONOREES	Hill Harper and Sally F. Petty
MUSICAL SELECTION	“Thank You” (Kehlani) Arranged by 2025 Graduate Kayla S. Fontaine, featured on saxophone UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle
ADDRESS	Joleen Buchanan, Class of 2025
MUSICAL SELECTION	“This is Me” (Pasek and Paul) Arranged by Mac Huff Soloist: M’Kayla Eustache / Conducted by Aimee Monchery UVI Concert Choir, Neomi Toussaint-Williams
REMARKS	Henry C. Smock Chair, UVI Board of Trustees The Honorable Milton Potter President of the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands The Honorable Stacey E. Plaskett Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress The Honorable Tregenza A. Roach, Esq., Acting Governor of the United States Virgin Islands
MUSICAL SELECTION	“High Mas” (Rudder) Arranged by Luben L. Daniel featuring Miguel Bougouneau, Steel Pan, Class of 2025 UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle
PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES	Kendra Harris, Ph.D., Provost (Interim)
CONFERRING OF DEGREES	
Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change • Executive Master of Business Administration • Master of Business Administration • Master of Arts Accounting • Master of Arts Educational Leadership • Master of Arts Leadership • Master of Arts in Psychology • Master of Public Administration • Master of Social Work • Master of Marine and Environmental Sciences • Bachelor of Arts • Bachelor of Business Administration • Bachelor of Science • Associate of Applied Science • Associate of Science • Associate of Arts	
INDUCTION INTO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION	Michael Morsberger Vice President for Institutional Advancement
COMMISSIONING CEREMONY	CPT. Nancy Ramos Rivera Assistant Professor of Military Science
*ALMA MATER	“Alma Mater by the Sea” (LaMotta) Arranged by Francis Callwood UVI Choir and UVI Harmonic Voices, Neomi Toussaint-Williams
*BENEDICTION	Breanna Elie, Class of 2025
*RECESSIONAL	“Ambush” (Pederson) UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle

*Audience is required to stand.

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ORVILLE E. KEAN CAMPUS – ST. THOMAS

Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Hariyah A. dan-Fodio

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Jessica A. Cassick
 Juan L. Christian
 Samantha M. Coopriider
 Latricia Davis
 Tanya Knudsen
 Marakie Tesfaye
 Cherie A. Wheatley

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Executive Master of Business Administration

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Edidiong Beulah Utibe

Master of Accounting

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Breno de Souza Oliveira
 Josette K. John

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Shaniqua S.
 Esdaille-Simmonds

Master of Business Administration

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Tarah S. Neibaur

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Taylor M. Nunley
 Brea Patterson
 Britteny C. Petersen
 Kerish Robles

Bachelor of Arts

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Hakim A. Alexander*
 Barnabas C. Lawrence**
 Riis W. Motta
 Shadia N. Peterson
 Ethan Popo
 Cherley Smith*
 Ameir J. Sprauve

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Marbelis Bonifacio Perez*
 Jadene L. Cameron***
 Quianna E. Christian
 Karima M. McIntyre
 Shannakaye S. Scott
 Mohammad A. Yanes

Bachelor of Business Administration

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Trevonique A. Adams
 Zidane Naje Byron***
 Samantha N. Hendrickson
 Ahkayla C. Petersen**
 Mekeda N. Williams

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Emmett Lee Brewer
 Joleen J. Buchanan
 Quianna E. Christian
 C'Anna N. Cornelius
 Bevin S. George*
 D'Metri M. John
 Alana K. Lacey*
 Ethan Lin
 Tamika J. Nickeo
 Je'Mia R. Ortiz
 Adeje A. Petersen
 Erika R. Portes Mota**
 Empress-Addaliah C. Potter
 Donatien C. Reid**
 Dimar J. Richardson
 Jacelle R. Toulon*
 Robin J. Williams

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Master of Arts Organizational Leadership

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Ayopha J. Stalliard
 Ashley Taylor

Master of Arts School Counseling

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Marquise Delano Browne
 Leteshia L. Fahie-Breedy
 Edric L. Francis
 Imoni M. Ottley
 Kathisha L. Phillip
 Mekiya A. Thomas
 Deyzha A. Todman
 Roniqua L. Webster

Bachelor of Arts

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Toya N. Willock Diaz
 Kyra A. Odium**
 Shantall P. Zorrilla*

Associate of Arts

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Denvea Wilkins

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Master of Public Administration

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Jason T. Haynes
 Takera J. Rieara

****summa cum laude* ***magna cum laude* **cum laude*

Summa Cum Laude

"With the Highest Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work that is considered to be of the highest quality. Grade Point Average - 3.75 - 4.0

Magna Cum Laude

"With Great Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work considered to be of much higher quality than average. Grade Point Average - 3.50 - 3.74

Cum Laude

"With Praise" - an honor added to a diploma or degree for work that is above average. Grade Point Average - 3.25 - 3.49

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ORVILLE E. KEAN CAMPUS – ST. THOMAS

Master of Arts Psychology

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Lynette R. Gumbs

Master of Social Work

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Ariana S. Athanase
Chenier C. Clendinen-Vicars

Bachelor of Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Macy C. Mills

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Reem H. Mohamad**
Jada Monsanto*
Tejah R. Browne
Danesha A. Derima
Maryanne R. Felix*
Helen B. Gibretu
Makea J. Woodley-Grant

Bachelor of Arts

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Breanna N. Elie*
Deavion D. Hanley
Jeanne H. Viray**
Anya K. Vizziello**

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Jean-Rivalson Apollon***
Ka'them M. Bazar***
Kyana N. Charles
Amarah B. Creque**
Majestik F.
Estrada-Petersen
Juliet M. Fahie*
Shiraine B. Johannes
La'Monee Morris**
Ermias T. Nega
Shirmoy O'Garro
Samantha S. Rey**
Naythan K. Shaw-Clarke
Berniqua B. Smith**
Kayla S. Fontaine*
Aja A. La Fleur-Scott
Gimel H. Pinto

Shugga D. Rosenbloom
Tricia D. Sealey
Sterlina M. Warner

Associate of Applied Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Vashanyah J. Glasford
Alleone LaPlace
Layla R. Richman

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Maryanne R. Felix
Nygell E. Petersen

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Bachelor of Science

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Kaylan S. Banjoko**
Falaune Chery**
Charles Cypre
Judith Joseph
Meah A. Moss
Nicolla M. Newland**
Jadeaja D. Ostalaza*
Gilisha S. Pascal*
Marise S. Raphael-Powell**
Cedella M.
Robin-Mohammed
De'Sharah J. Simon Walters

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Master of Marine and Environmental Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Shamoy K. Bideau
Avery L. Coble
Olivia N. Diana
Zachary Gregory
Stefanie A. Maxin
Madison K. Miele
Gregory O'Neill
Adeline Shelby
Davis Strobel

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Amanda Badai
Laura M. Bloem
Abigail Lee Gretta
Corinne Johnson
Andrew J. McGregor
James B. Powell
Zoe A. Price
Jordan L. Silva

Bachelor of Science

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Cedricia L. Jeffers
Alia A. Laws
Chervaunte B. Lewis
Xavier A. Hinkson
Kaidrian D. Ottley**
Amaia Nicole A. Saret*
Shevonna T. Somersalle
Elisa A. Webbe*

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Calida A. Ambrose
Kalid E. Bruce
Mia S. Bruno***
Jayden K. Dore*
Asimian M. Edmead
Jaresia D. Elliott-Hendrickson
Carissa J. George*
Rickila K. Hanley**
Shernese M. John-Pierre**
Derek M. Koon
Drake S. Nemeth*
Ryan E. Querrard
La'Quan Reid***
Deon R. St. Jules
Angelina F. Thomas***
Mi'Kaylah J. Thomas**
Lawrence A. White
Gidal J. Williams*
Zorah C. Williams**
Jordan M. Wilson***

Associate of Science

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Jayden K. Dore
Asimian M. Edmead
Gidal J. Williams

****summa cum laude* ***magna cum laude* **cum laude*

Summa Cum Laude

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Deborah Y. Francis Howell

Doctor of Humane Letters

Deborah Y. Francis Howell is a retired Brigadier General of the United States Army and Virgin Islands National Guard. She was born on St. Thomas and is a 1978 graduate of the Charlotte Amalie High School. General Howell entered military service and later completed her advanced degrees. She is an alumna of the University of the Virgin Islands, receiving her Associate of Arts Degree in Business Management in 1988 and Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration in 1992. She later earned her Master of Science - Management from Central Michigan University, Pentagon Campus in 1995.

Retired General Howell has completed 36 years of military service. General Howell was appointed to serve as the Adjutant General (TAG) for the Virgin Islands National Guard in 2015. She is the first female to be appointed as a general officer in the Virgin Islands and first woman to hold the Virgin Islands Adjutant General position. General Howell served as the 14th Adjutant General of the Virgin Islands National Guard.

Retired General Howell is credited with ably commanding a successful Vigilant Guard exercise, the first wherein all three Army components actively participated. She was indeed battle tested through her performance as Adjutant General, leading the Virgin Islands National Guard, particularly through the response and recovery efforts associated with Hurricanes Irma and Maria which devastated the Territory in 2017. General Howell's military education includes attendance at the United States Army War College Fellowship, University of Texas, Austin, as well as Harvard University Homeland Security Institute for General and Flag Officers. General Howell received her commission through the Virgin Islands Military Academy 1st Officer Candidate School in 1982. She is a trained Logistician who mastered her craft achieving academic excellence by placing in the top ten (10) percentile of her various military courses. She has received numerous medals and awards in her career.

She has also served as Chief of Staff for an elected official in the 30th and 31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands. Her diversified and extensive background in managing personnel and programs allowed her to share her skills at various levels of the Virgin Islands Government.

Deborah's life embodies service, whether Military, Rotary or Church, she can be found on any day serving in activities to benefit others. Service is in her DNA. She is a member of Military Associations and American Legion Post 133. Deborah has volunteered as a Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Advisor - Good Hope School. Deborah served as District Governor of Rotary District 7020 (Northern Caribbean) which includes Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Haiti, US Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, St. Maarten, St. Martin, and St. Barthelemy, for 2022-2023. She was administratively responsible for ninety clubs of over 2550 Rotarians. Her tenure culminated with hosting over three hundred Rotarians and guests on St. Croix boosting the economy and sharing the island's pride. Past District Governor Howell loves working to improve lives in her community and abroad. She was President of Rotary Club St. Croix West, twice. Deborah is a major donor to the Rotary Foundation.

Deborah pledged and is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. St. Croix Alumnae Chapter. A Sorority built on Christian principles and whose motto is "Sisterhood, Scholarship and Service;" Deborah is in her element performing Delta's business.

Deborah is a member of Bethel Methodist Church, St. Croix Circuit. She willingly assists her Church, serving as Circuit Steward and Youth Leader at the Congregational level.

Retired General Howell is married to retired Chief Warrant Officer 5, Dennis Howell. They are proud parents and grandparents.



Deborah Y. Francis Howell

Sally F. Petty

Doctor of Humane Letters

Sally F. Petty is a dedicated educator with over three decades of experience shaping young minds and guiding future leaders. A passionate advocate for lifelong learning and student achievement, she has led with heart, vision, and a deep belief in the power of education to change lives. Beginning as a classroom teacher, she has served in various leadership roles, gradually rising through the ranks to become a trusted, transformative leader and principal at the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School.



Sally F. Petty

Principal Petty earned her Bachelor of Science degree in history from Norfolk State University and holds two master's degrees: one in the field of Education with a concentration in Administration from the University of the Virgin Islands and the other in Strategic Studies from Air War College. She is also a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government Executive Education in Leadership in Homeland Security.

Throughout her career, Principal Petty has been committed to fostering a positive and inclusive school culture, ensuring that all students have the resources and support needed to thrive academically and personally. She believes in the power of collaboration between students, teachers, parents, and the community to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Principal Petty looks forward to continuing to lead the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School with vision, dedication, and a strong commitment to student achievement. She walks in power and resilience, and “accomplishing-the-mission-at-hand” is her trademark.

Beyond the school's walls, Principal Petty is known internationally for her elite military ranking and countless contributions to the Virgin Islands and this nation. Her military career began in the Virgin Islands Army National Guard as an enlisted soldier in December 1989 as a Multi-channel Systems operator in the Signal Corps. In June 1992, at the rank of Specialist, she was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant through the Officer Candidate School.

A trailblazer in every sense, Principal Petty made history as the first woman to be federally appointed to the position of Assistant Adjutant General of the Virgin Islands National Guard, and only the second woman to achieve the distinguished rank of Brigadier General in the National Guard's history. Brigadier General Petty's distinguished military career is also reflected in her numerous decorations, including the Legion of Merit (Second Award), Bronze Star Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Meritorious Service Medal, among other notable honors.

From the frontlines of the classroom to the command ranks of the military, Principal Petty has led with vision, conviction, and a deep sense of duty. Her life's work stands as a beacon of what it means to serve with distinction—and to lead with heart, honor, and an unrelenting pursuit of excellence.

From the frontlines of the classroom to the command ranks of the military, Principal Petty has led with vision, conviction, and a deep sense of duty. Her life's work stands as a beacon of what it means to serve with distinction—and to lead with heart, honor, and an unrelenting pursuit of excellence.

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Class Adjectives - Resilient, Eminent, Evolutionary

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Treasurer

Class Adjectives - Limitless, Innovative, Tenacious

The Mace

The mace of the University of the Virgin Islands is the symbol both of presidential responsibilities and authority. Carved on the island of St. Croix from the wood of a local mahogany tree, one of God's most enduring symbols of life, the mace says that the responsibilities of the president are without end. It also says that the president cannot discharge those responsibilities without authority. The mace is a 3-foot-long mahogany cylinder 1.5 inches in diameter topped by a four-inch mahogany ball into which a sterling silver reproduction of the University logo is set. The sterling silver logo was crafted on the island of St. Thomas.

Academic Regalia

The wearing of caps, gowns and hoods at graduation exercises is one of the oldest and most democratic of collegiate customs. It originated in the Middle Ages when the first universities were founded as clerical institutions. Besides distinguishing the wearers from laymen, the costume served a very practical purpose in the unheated churches and cloisters of the time. It often added grace to the individuals and impressiveness to the ceremonies in which they took part. Its chief virtue, however, was that it eliminated undemocratic differences in dress which might otherwise have marred an essentially democratic occasion.

Under the intercollegiate system adopted in 1893, the Oxford cap or "mortarboard" is worn for all degrees, but the doctor is entitled to a gold tassel and optional velvet cap. The sleeve of the master's gown is distinguished from the bachelor's by a half-moon cut at the end. The doctor's gown has faced-down fronts, and round bell sleeves with bars of velvet. The master's degree hood is longer than the bachelor's and the doctor's is longer than the master's. All hoods are lined with silk showing the official colors of the institution that conferred the degree.

The doctoral, bachelor's and master's degree candidates at the University of the Virgin Islands wear hoods lined with Caribbean blue and white, the school colors. The hoods are also trimmed with the various colors outlined below to signify the degrees earned and areas of study. According to the Academic Costume Code, at most U.S. institutions the color of velvet trim indicates the following academic disciplines: agriculture/maize; economics/copper; education/light blue; engineering/orange; fine arts/brown; home economics/maroon; law/purple; library science/lemon; music/pink; nursing/apricot; philosophy/dark blue; physical education/sage green; public administration/peacock blue; public health/salmon pink; science/golden yellow; social science/cream; social work/citron; speech/silver gray.

Alma Mater By the Sea

Words & Music by Wilbur "Bill" LaMotta

Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
Beside the blue Caribbean calm
Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
'neath sunny skies and whisp'ring palm

Proud we are to tread thy ways
Loud and true we voice our praise
Open door thy every portal
'mid sand and sea and golden days

Long the ties that will endure
Strong in heart and memory
Faithfully we'll always honor
Our Alma Mater by the sea

Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
For guiding stars so brightly shown
Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
How wide the bound'ries we have flown

Sing we now of bright tomorrows
Yesterday we never knew
Walking down thy halls of wisdom
The towerin' heights are all in view

Here to us on islands famed
Dear to us thy name will be
University of the Virgin Islands
Our Alma Mater by the sea.