



University of the Virgin Islands

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September 29, 2023

Miami Herald
11410 NW 20th Street, Ste. 222
Miami, FL 33172

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the recent Miami Herald article written by Julie K. Brown entitled “U.S. Virgin Islands cozied up to Jeffrey Epstein. Now they’re profiting from his sex crimes”.

As president of the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), I am deeply disturbed to read the false narrative that the University had any involvement with Mr. Epstein or afforded him opportunity to advance his agenda with the institution. There is absolutely no truth to the allegations stated in court documents filed by JP Morgan Chase about the University offering Mr. Epstein any preferential treatment or accommodating any students at Epstein’s behest.

The University did not create a special course specifically for people connected with Mr. Epstein. At UVI, we have a well-established protocol for the creation of new programs, and we do not create or expand programs solely for the benefit of, or to facilitate the causes of, any one individual. Furthermore, creating the special program alleged in the court filings would have been approved by me or the provost, and neither of us ever approved any such program. In fact, no request was made of me, our academic leaders or faculty by Cecile DeJongh or anyone else.

In reference to the allegation that the University received \$20,000 from Mr. Epstein or in the name of his known companies for the creation of a special course, this allegation is patently false. No such funds were received by the University of the Virgin Islands.

As a matter of principle, UVI does not accept any gifts that could jeopardize the reputation and values of our proud institution. In approximately 2011-2012, when Mr. Epstein inquired about applying to the UVI Research and Technology Park (UVI RT Park) for the development of a new company, the UVI RTPark Board voted not to have a relationship with him. Shortly thereafter, the UVI Board of Trustees made the same decision and declined to accept his offer of a major gift. It is extremely unfortunate and unfair that one of the governmental entities that refused to accept a potential multimillion dollar gift from Mr. Epstein, and refused to accept his company into its RTPark, is being falsely accused of having been involved in his illegal and dehumanizing activities.

The University of the Virgin Islands has high standards regarding sexual assault. The University did not knowingly or unknowingly support activities that would aid in the sexual assault of women, and the story printed recently distorts its reputation.

This University has operated by the highest principles, and I cannot allow the reputation of the University to be damaged by false allegations. The University has consistently challenged these accusations by JP Morgan and yet these assertions continue to surface without any consultation with the University. There are numerous statements alleged in the complaint, but

that does not make them true or verifiable. Given the recent settlement of the case brought against JP Morgan Chase, since these statements will never be tested in a court of law, the burden rests on journalists to ensure that what is being alleged is accurate, and that what is published adheres to the truth. At a minimum the University should be contacted so that its version of the allegations is included in the story. As you know, the Miami Herald did not reach out to the University prior to the publication of the recent article described above, and it still has not contacted us.

Respectfully,

David Hall, S.J.D
President
University of the Virgin Islands