



**TESTIMONY OF  
PRESIDENT DAVID HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
31<sup>ST</sup> LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**EARLE B. OTTLEY LEGISLATIVE HALL  
ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**JUNE 21, 2016**

Good morning, Chairman Graham and other members of the Committee on Finance, other members of the Thirty-First Legislature present, other testifiers, members of the press, persons in the viewing and listening audiences, ladies and gentlemen. My name is David Hall, President of the University of the Virgin Islands, and it is indeed an honor for me to appear before this distinguished body to present the University's budget request for FY2016-2017 and respond to your questions.

To assist with today's presentation are Ms. Shirley Lake-King, CFO and Vice President for Administration and Finance; and Mr. Mitchell Neaves, Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Also present in the audience are members of my Cabinet, key support personnel, Directors of various programs, and Deans of the various Schools and Colleges within the University.

I am pleased to present to you the University's Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget appropriation request. We are very appreciative of the Legislature's consistent support of the University's past requests and we look forward to your continued support.

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS RELEVANCE TO THE TERRITORY AND IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

One of the major goals of any institution of higher education is to ensure that it maintains a high level of relevance to the people and community it serves. This is especially critical for an institution like the University of the Virgin Islands, because it is the only institution of higher education in the Territory.

Therefore, we are constantly raising questions of relevance and attempting to address not only the needs of our students but also those of the local government, and the people of the Virgin Islands. As we developed our current strategic plan, this was foremost in our minds. As we interface with leaders of the Territory and persons on the street, these questions constantly arise. The University has been responding to these questions, inquiries and requests in a thoughtful and realistic manner for numerous years.

As we approach the 55th anniversary of the University in 2017, I would like to focus my remarks on the ways we are attempting to ensure that UVI remains critically relevant to the people of the Virgin Islands.

First, we are redoubling our efforts to enhance the student experience and improve retention and graduation rates of our students. We will launch a new analytical retention model in the Fall that will provide better advising, warning systems, and a comprehensive model for student success. UVI is one of more than 160 higher education institutions participating in a national initiative that combines technology, best practice research, process improvement, and predictive analytics to positively impact outcomes among students. Once the Student Success Collaborative system and software are implemented this Fall, it will be the most systematic, comprehensive analytic approach that the University has adopted to ensure that all students receive the appropriate advising and support to be academically successful and graduate.

Second, preparing students to enter into the marketplace for relevant skills is always a high priority in all of our Schools and Colleges. Thus, each of our Deans work with the faculty of their respective units to ensure that we update, change and expand our degree offerings. A wonderful recent example of this occurred in our School of Business. All of the degree programs have been changed to permit students to take courses that are more relevant in their particular major and thus acquire more skills that the marketplace demands. In addition, a new Master in Accounting and an Executive MBA were developed in our School of Business and will start this coming Fall semester. Because of this major overhaul of the Business curriculum, our Business students in the future will be even better prepared to meet the needs of the Virgin Islands business community.

Third, we have added two new degrees in the School of Education, the Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance. The Master of Arts in Educational Leadership will be a rigorous program designed to prepare aspiring principals, assistant principals, and other educational professionals for leadership positions to become strong and effective leaders capable of facing today's educational challenges. The program will provide students with professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills in its core requirements and a solid content knowledge in the area of educational leadership. The Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance is another rigorous program designed to prepare aspiring school counselors to become strong and effective, and capable of facing the challenges of a changing Territory, Caribbean and world. Our educational system in the Virgin Islands is looking for educational leaders who have a high level of training in specific fields and these new programs will achieve those Territory-wide goals.

Fourth, in other areas we have become more relevant by creating opportunities for students to acquire a minor in addition to their major. We now offer ten minors in various fields such as Caribbean Cultural Studies, Computational Science, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Science, Fine Arts and Political Science. Undergraduate certificates are also available in Entrepreneurship, Music Industry, Psychology, and Teaching English as a Second Language. Of note, our School of Education held its first certificate-awarding program this past May for those teachers who went through our Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL) Certificate Program. There were 9 graduates on St. Croix and 11 on St. Thomas, for a total of 20 teachers. Practicing teachers were funded by the Department of Education. Teachers in the Virgin Islands public school system are being challenged on a daily basis by an influx of English learners of diverse cultures and backgrounds in the classrooms in which they teach. This certificate program helps address this challenge by providing a series of courses which provide students with the body of professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare them to work effectively with learners in elementary and secondary classrooms, whose first language is not English.

Fifth, until recently individuals in the Virgin Islands who were seeking terminal degrees were not able to achieve that educational goal in the Virgin Islands. Starting this Fall that will no longer be the case as we unveil our first PhD program in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change. There are various tracks that will prepare Virgin Islanders to be more effective leaders in their chosen fields. We already have over 50 applications for 36 slots. Thus, this will be a very selective program.

Sixth, our efforts to create a LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) accredited medical school is a major quest for relevance. This project will improve the quality of health care, contribute to the economic development of the Territory and develop more Virgin Islands' physicians. Under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin Sachs, we have been preparing the materials needed for reapplication and attempting to raise additional funds from private donors.

Seventh, our efforts to develop a Maritime Institute on St. Croix are in response to a question that has been consistently raised about the needs of the maritime industry and the lack of educational courses and opportunities in the Territory. This initiative, if successful, will create an academic program in the Virgin Islands, which is extremely relevant to our location, economy and future.

Eight, through the excellent work of our Institute for Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (ILOE), the University has become an enormous resource for government agencies and employees in addressing their training, educational and management needs. ILOE has provided in recent years consulting work for several agencies including the Department of Justice, Virgin Islands Police Department, Office of Management and Budget, Division of Personnel, Bureau of Corrections, Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, Government Employees Retirement System, Legal Services of the Virgin Islands and the Department of Agriculture.

In addition, our partnership with the Division of Personnel has permitted us to create a Certified Public Manager (CPM) program that has trained and certified two cohorts of mid-level managers. Forty-three alumni of the VI-CPM program graduated in 2014. Thirty-four candidates in the 2015-2016 cohort are scheduled for completion in September 2016.

Ninth, based on a request of Governor Mapp, I have been working with Department of Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum to develop a Vocational and Technology Institute to address the educational and career aspirations of high school graduates desirous of furthering their education in vocational and technological programs. We hope to have a proposal to the Governor in the near future.

These are only a few examples of recent strides on the part of the University to remain relevant and become even more relevant to the people and institutions of the Virgin Islands. However, the quest for relevance is not a destination but a process and journey. As the needs of the Virgin Islands change, the University will have to continue to adapt and adjust. Thus, one of our greatest strengths, as the above examples demonstrate, is our ability to reinvent ourselves and maximize our resources to meet the new demands.

We cannot fulfill this quest for relevance without the support of the members of this body, the Governor and private donors. The list above are steps on our pathway to greatness and I share it as evidence that we are on the journey with the people of the Virgin Islands in the quest to make this Territory an even better place to live.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

During the present fiscal year, there have been many significant accomplishments at UVI. Time will not permit me to describe all that our students, faculty and staff have achieved since I was with you last year, but I hope the following examples provide you with some understanding of how we have been good stewards of the precious resources that this body has invested in the University.

The University is experiencing increases in overall enrollment. Compared to the same period last year, our Spring 2016 enrollment numbers reflect a 1% increase in overall enrollment, 3% increase in undergraduate continuing students, 13% increase in graduate continuing students and 5% increase in credit hours. Presently, our applications for Fall undergraduate admission (new freshmen and new transfers combined) are up by 34% and our acceptances are up by 57%. To date, 241 admitted undergraduate students have indicated their intent to enroll. These are very encouraging signs and we hope this translates into additional increases in our Fall enrollment numbers.

This past May UVI awarded approximately 300 degrees at its 52nd annual commencement ceremonies, which featured Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Sir Hilary Beckles, as this year's keynote speaker. Renowned educator, author and cultural icon – Ruth Moolenaar, of St. Thomas – and outstanding author and poet, culture advocate and historian – Richard A. Schrader, Sr. of St. Croix, also received honorary doctorates.

Our students continue to compete and win international honors and competitions. They are doing remarkable things both locally and nationally. One such example is the naming of the body of water just south of the Cyril E. King International Airport. Its new name is Hawksbill Cove. In 1992, the airport underwent a massive construction process, which extended the runway from 4,200 feet to 7,000 feet, stretching into the Caribbean Sea. The result was an artificial cove that up until 2016 had no name. Scott Eanes, a graduate student in the Marine and Environmental Program at UVI, was the pioneer behind the naming. In the midst of writing his thesis on the habitat's utilization of the critically endangered Hawksbill sea turtles, he realized that the cove had no name and decided it would be best to name it after one of its primary inhabitants.

As part of President Obama's sixth and final White House Science Fair of his administration, UVI was announced as a participant in the University Innovation Fellows program, a national initiative aimed at expanding the participation and retention of incoming first-year science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students. The program is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and is part of the National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation managed by Stanford University. Under this initiative, students and faculty work together to expose all incoming freshmen to design thinking, entrepreneurship and innovation with the hope of attracting and retaining more incoming students in STEM disciplines.

This past year we opened Innovation Centers on both campuses. Innovation Centers are transforming college campuses across the nation into centers of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Our Innovation Centers are located in the libraries and serve as dedicated creative spaces for our faculty and students to drive learning through innovation and link creative fields to expand the potential for developing new concepts, products and real-world applications. The Innovation Centers also house the only 3D printers in the Territory that can take a digital 3D model and transform it into a physical object. UVI students are also using the 3D printers in the Innovation Centers to create low cost functional prostheses for those who are missing limbs. Students in the UVI Innovative Design and Entrepreneurship Association (UVIDEA) have teamed up with the national non-profit organization, E-Nable, on its “Enabling the Future” project, to use open-source prosthetic designs to create functional replacement limbs.

Through our Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), UVI opened an Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research Center. The facility will be a model research, training and technical assistance center that will focus on best practices related to early screening and detection of developmental disabilities, best practices in early intervention and best practices for treatment, language development and the development of adaptive behaviors in infants and toddlers aged 0-5. The center will be accessible to parents, developmental pediatricians, other medical personnel, teachers, educational practitioners, Head Start, Early Head Start employees and other allied health professionals. The work of the center will be informed by research based on early intervention practices such as the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) Learn The Signs Act Early Program, methodologies related to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Speech and Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy and other best practices in the field of disability research.

Dr. Bruce Gendre, one of our astrophysicist faculty members who works at UVI’s Etelman Observatory and Science Center, with support from our National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) grant funding, is part of a team of scientists who recently discovered gravitational waves. The international collaboration of scientists recently published their findings, which identifies the first direct detection of gravitational waves in history, predicted by Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity. The find not only validates one of the most fundamental theories in physics but also promises to revolutionize astronomy. This breakthrough discovery is being lauded by the national scientific community as one of the greatest discoveries in physics.

In conjunction with the United States Department of Defense, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity, UVI was selected to host the “2016 Taking the Pentagon to the People Technical Assistance Program.” UVI was pleased to be a part of the Department of Defense’s conversation to support President Obama’s executive order to advance equal opportunity in higher education and strengthen Minority Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

UVI's School of Education has been awarded accreditation status from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for its graduate programs. It had already obtained this important accreditation for its undergraduate programs. This accreditation decision indicates that the School of Education and its programs meet rigorous standards set forth by the professional education community.

The Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has been awarded accreditation status by the American SBDC Accreditation Committee. Accreditation is important for the VI-SBDC and is essential for the national SBDC program to be recognized as a provider of high quality business education and advising that results in credible economic impact. SBDC recently provided one of your members, Senator Millin Young, with the Territorial Small Business Advocate of the Year award at its recent Awards program.

UVI was recently selected to be a part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). UVI applied for NAIA membership because of the challenges we have faced as a member of the LAI (Liga Atletica Interuniversitaria) Intercollegiate Athletic League of Puerto Rico. We are excited about this new opportunity with NAIA and the prospects of enhancing our athletics program and gaining more national exposure.

As indicated, these are a few highlights of another year of individual and collective successes that we are proud to share.

## FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 BUDGET REQUEST

The 2016-2017 budget submitted by Governor Kenneth Mapp to this body provides for increased funding for the University in comparison to our present 2015-2016 appropriation. For this, we are very grateful since we realize that there are critical needs within the Territory. This increase is an important indication that if we want to expand and diversify the economy of the Virgin Islands, we must invest in education, especially higher education.

The breakdown of the University's FY2016-17 budget request, as submitted by Governor Mapp to this body, is as follows:

General Operating Appropriation	\$23,902,208
Debt Service Appropriation	3,992,205
Senior Citizens Tuition	87,773
SBDC Appropriation	300,000
Valedictorian and Salutatorian Scholarships	400,966
Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning	100,000
Green Technology	200,000
Hotel Management Program	100,000
John Brewers Beach Bathroom Maintenance	15,000
University Bound Program	355,901
Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps	100,000
Employees Salary Increases	1,500,000
VI Academic & Cultural Awards Endowment	430,470
Social Work Program Accreditation	100,000
John Brewers Bay Maintenance and Security	100,000
Senior Citizens Tuition Requirements Increase	162,227
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>\$31,846,750</b>



The sum of \$23,902,208 is being requested for general operations for FY2016-2017. This includes salary and benefits for the regular and temporary employees, as well as operating expenditures, in accordance with the provision of Title 17, Chapters 33 and 35 of the Virgin Islands Code. **APPENDIX I** provides details of the University's Fiscal Year 2015-2016 operating budget inclusive of revenues and expenditures as of May 31, 2016.

The amount of \$3,992,205 for debt service, in addition to servicing our debt obligations for completed projects, will allow the University to service the debt we are incurring for the state-of-the-art residence hall on the St. Thomas Campus, which was opened August 2012. Another project being financed through the debt service appropriation is the fit-out of classrooms, laboratories and faculty offices in the Research and Technology Park building constructed on the Albert A. Sheen, St. Croix Campus that was completed October 2013.

It is important to note that in addition to the \$3,992,205 for debt service, the University is also seeking your continuing support of the \$1,000,000 for debt service for the medical school facilities that was included in the Governor's budget for the Internal Revenue Matching Fund.

Our request also includes funding for legislatively mandated programs. The programs are Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Local Match, Senior Citizens Tuition Waivers, Valedictorian & Salutatorian Scholarship, Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning, Green Technology, Hotel Management, maintenance of the John Brewers Beach Bathrooms, University Bound Program, and SROTC. Note that we are requesting increases in funding in the amount of \$100,000 and \$162,227 for the John Brewers Beach Maintenance and Security and Senior Citizens Tuition, respectively. Since the construction of the bathhouse at John Brewers Beach, we have noticed an increase in residents and visitors patronizing the beach and voicing their concerns regarding its maintenance and security. We have attempted to respond as best we can with our limited resources; however, that is not sufficient as the complaints are increasing and thus we need additional resources to ensure the beach doesn't pose an environmental hazard and the patrons are in a safe and secure environment. Over the years, we continue to see more senior citizens taking courses and pursuing degrees at UVI. Their numbers have exceeded the funds set aside for this purpose, and we are therefore seeking an increase in this legislatively mandated program which provides tuition waivers for senior citizens.

As employees in the central government are being afforded salary increases, the University is seeking funding to support salary adjustments for its employees. Prior to fiscal year 2011, when the Board of Trustees approved a \$1,000 across the board increase there has been no increases in employee salaries since 2005. None of the relevance I mentioned in Part I of my testimony, or the achievements I mentioned in Part II could occur without the dedicated and outstanding work of our Staff, Faculty and Administrators. Though we have attempted to provide raises, bonuses and promotions for our employees using our existing funds, their salaries have fallen far behind and endured an 8% salary reduction. We are very grateful that Governor Mapp has embraced our request for salary raises in the 2016-17 budget and we seek your support of these badly needed funds. In addition to the raises, the Administration is considering a series of other measures that will better support our employees who are so critical to our success. Some of the measures being considered were provided by Senator Roach during his address at our Employee Service Award programs in April 2016.

I must bring to your attention at this time an oversight that has been acknowledged by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that they have assured us will be corrected in the wrap-up of the FY2017 Executive Budget. Our request included \$1,200,000 for salary increases and \$400,000 for the continuation of the recently established Bachelor of Science in Nursing program on the Albert A. Sheen St. Croix campus. However, the amount of \$1,500,000 for salary increases was instead submitted in the Executive Budget and nothing for the Nursing program. OMB has advised that this will be corrected by reducing the amount for salary increases to \$1,200,000 thereby making \$300,000 available for the Nursing program. We appreciate their accommodation; however, the funds for the Nursing program would be short by \$100,000 and we are requesting modifications to the line items in our appropriation to correct this oversight. The Bachelors of Science Nursing Program on the island of St. Croix was established by this body, pursuant to Act. No. 7791. We have commenced the process of marketing the program and accepting students into the program and we are currently recruiting the faculty for the expanded program. It would be a major blow to the students as well as the community if the funding for this program is not restored on a recurring basis.

Prior to FY2010, the VI Academic and Cultural Awards Endowment (VIACAE) received an annual appropriation of \$250,000 from which an average of \$149,877 in annual awards was made during the period 2006-2010. In FY2011, the decision was made to suspend the requesting of funds for the program, as the fund balance was sufficient to sustain the program for a few years without appropriations. However, during the period 2011-2016, the number of annual awards increased and the fund balance reduced rapidly to the point that it is now depleted and the program's continuation is dependent on the resumption of funds. The annual projected needs for this program given the increased number of awards is \$430,470.

To assist the Department of Human Services with the increased need for licensed social workers, the University is requesting funding to strengthen and gain accreditation for this program. Currently, the University has only one full-time faculty employed in this program and the opportunity to seek accreditation will only be considered with a minimum of two full-time faculty members. Therefore, we are seeking funds to support the hiring of one additional faculty and operations in gaining accreditation for this program. For the fiscal year 2016-2017, the sum of \$100,000 is being requested to support the Social Work Program.

We are very honored that the 30<sup>th</sup> Legislature allocated funding for us to establish a Distinguished Professorship in International Relations and Diplomacy that enshrines the legacy and work of the Honorable Ambassador Terence A. Todman. We have recruited faculty to fill this position; however, the funding has not been continued. We are hereby asking this body to place the \$100,000 in our recurring appropriation to ensure that this legacy program is continued. Failure to do so would be a great disservice to a truly honorable Virgin Islander.

I have repeatedly brought to the attention of this body, the critical need for a multi-purpose facility on the Albert A. Sheen, St. Croix Campus that would not only attract sporting events and activities to St. Croix but could also host conferences and other similar large events, and thus contribute to the economic development of the island. I am pleased that Governor Mapp and Senate President James publicly promised support for this project at our recent commencement ceremony on St. Croix, and even more please that the project has been included in the Capital Projects budget that the Governor submitted to this body. I am hereby requesting your support of this worthy project. It will have a very positive impact on the St. Croix campus and provide students and the community with the appropriate facilities for their educational, sporting and entertainment needs.

We ask that you approve funding for all of the requests that the Governor and the University have now placed before you, because in so doing you will permit the University of the Virgin Islands to carry out its mission, continue its quest for relevance, and empower you to create a higher education legacy that will live on long after you leave this august body.

In Conclusion,

I thank you for the support you have already provided to the University of the Virgin Islands and for providing me with the opportunity to share my thoughts, concerns and the accomplishments of this special University. I look forward to working closely with you to further create a great University of which each of you would be justly proud. I look forward to your questions and discussions.

Thank You.

University of the Virgin Islands

**UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS  
FISCAL YEAR 2016 OPERATING BUDGET --REVISION NO.1  
FOR PERIOD ENDING MAY 31, 2016**

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>FY2016 Approved Budget Rev#1</b>	<b>FY2016 YTD Actuals 05.31.16</b>
Tuition & Fees	\$12,486,224	\$11,177,940
Appropriations	\$23,902,208	\$17,496,129
Government Grants & Contracts	\$970,000	\$794,485
Private Grants & Contracts	\$1,290,447	\$135,468
Investments	\$0	\$3,262
Sales & Services Education	\$4,000	\$7,371
Sales & Services Auxiliary	\$6,469,579	\$4,320,596
Other Revenues	\$304,252	\$109,562
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$45,426,710</b>	<b>\$34,044,812</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>FY2016 Approved Budget Rev#1</b>	<b>FY2016 YTD Actuals 05.31.16</b>
Instruction	\$11,917,619	\$9,472,255
Research	\$590,819	\$540,696
Public Service	\$768,931	\$416,758
Academic Support	\$3,206,475	\$1,941,198
Student Services	\$3,270,986	\$2,263,065
Institutional Support	\$10,719,420	\$6,646,910
Operations/Maintenance of Plant	\$7,584,891	\$3,922,672
Student Aid	\$434,650	\$265,067
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$5,795,296	\$4,481,831
Transfers	\$1,095,335	\$683,676
<b>Total Expenditures &amp; Transfers</b>	<b>\$45,384,422</b>	<b>\$30,634,128</b>
<b>Net Operating Position</b>	<b>\$42,288</b>	<b>\$3,410,684</b>