



PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The President's Report for this reporting period has been modified to only include Part I which provides highlights of new and ongoing presidential initiatives and institutional accomplishments since the last report. This period's report also includes an update on the impact and recovery process in regards to Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

PART I: PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I am honored to share with the Board of Trustees highlights of the University's activities and achievements for the reporting period. This section contains some of the major achievements of the University. These accomplishments speak to the commitment and resilience of our students, faculty, staff and administrators.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- The following students were recognized and honored by the Association of Virgin Islands Psychologists:
 - **Bernetta Browne** was awarded the Eldra Shulterbrant Award for Outstanding Public Service.
 - **Lynette Gumbs** was awarded the Eldra Shulterbrant Award for Outstanding Public Service.
 - **Shaniqua Hodge** was awarded the Nancy Byam Award for Outstanding Research and Critical Thinking by a Graduating Psychology Major.

- **Tuwanda Perez** was awarded the The Lucia R. DiMeo Award for Outstanding Academic Performance by a Graduate Student in the Master of Arts in Psychology Program.
- **Shakima Plunkett** (MA Psy student), was awarded the The Lucia R. DiMeo Award for Outstanding Academic Performance by a Graduate Student in the Master of Arts in Psychology Program.
- **Xhyangha Galloway** was accepted and will attend the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to study juvenile delinquency and forensic psychology.
- **Alex Cintron** was accepted and will attend the University of South Florida to study mechanical engineering with the goal of working for the aerospace industry.
- **Dyan Godown**, Research Assistant for USDA grant to Cooperative Extension Services “Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the VI,” Spring 2017.
- **Julia Julien**, Research Assistant for USDA grant to Cooperative Extension Services “Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the VI, spring 2017, Psi Chi inductee, and Student Research Intern at Rutgers University, African American Brain Health Initiative, summer 2017.
- **Jerome Philbert**, UVI Emerging Caribbean Scientist research intern with Dr. Janis Valmond, Summer 2017.
- **Jama Raimer**, accepted to National Student Exchange at Yonsei University in South Korea, Fall 2017.
- **Che-Reina Warner** (Communications major and former Miss UVI) participated in the HBCU-China Network Summer Exchange Program at Chongqing University in Chongqing, China.
- **Augustus Laurencin** and **Kevon Browne** (Communication majors) received funding from the V.I. Department of Tourism to participate in the National Association of Black Journalists Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 9-13, 2017.

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Student names are **bolded (last name, first name)**. Alumni names are ***bolded, italicized***. Faculty names are *italicized*.

- Physics major **Quianah Joyce** traveled to France June 12-24 with *Dr. Bruce Gendre* to work with collaborators there in preparing their manuscript “Can we quickly flag Ultra-Long Gamma-Ray Bursts?” for publication. Ms. Joyce made presentations on her work at the University Paul Sabatier Toulouse III - Observatory Midi Pyrénées, and the University of Nice – Observatory of Côte d’Azur.

- **Cassia Smith.** “Machine Learning Approach for the Prediction of Dissolved Oxygen Concentration.” Mathematics Association of America MathFest & Pi Mu Epsilon, Chicago Illinois, (mentored by **Jossart J.; Stolz, R.**) (July 2017).
- Eight UVI students presented research results at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Goddard Space Flight Center end of summer Intern Research Symposium, Greenbelt, MD, August 11, 2017:
 - **Jahreem Thompson, Rodney Querrard, David Morris, Joanne Hill-Kittle, Keith Jahoda, Kevin Black** "The Next Generation of X-ray Polarimeter Detection Devices."
 - **Lauren Arnold, Knicole Colon,** "Characterizing Thermal Emissions from Hot Jupiters."
 - **Jonisha Aubain, Judith Racusin, Amy Lien,** "Gamma-Ray Burst X-ray Flares Light Curve Fitting."
 - **Rodney Querrard, Jahreem Thompson, Joanne Hill-Kittle, Keith Jahoda, Kevin Black, Ross McCurdy,** "X-Ray Polarimeter Detector Development: Higher Energy Polarimetry."
 - **Alex Cintron, Jeremy Perkins,** "Instrumentation for Future Gamma-Ray Missions."
 - **Juan-Carlos Martinez, Amy Martinez,** "Exploring the Pulse Structure of the Gamma-Ray Bursts from the Swift Burst Alert Telescope."
 - **Chris Murphy, Rafael Eufrazio, Ann Hornschemeier, Neven Vulic,** "A Rare Example of a Wolf-Rayet X-ray Binary: Identifying the Donor Star in a Black Hole Binary System using Chandra and HST."
 - **Shiquoi Isaac, Sara Buson,** "Analyzing Gravitationally Lensed Blazars with Fermi LAT."
- **Cassell, John S., Paul Jobsis, Edwin Cruz-Rivera, & Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria.** “Palatability of Seagrass Species in Brewers Bay, St. Thomas, USVI.” Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting, August 2017, Portland, OR. Poster presentation.
- **Duffing Romero, M.** “Does Variability in Water Temperature Influence the Movement Patterns of Atlantic Tarpon (*M. atlanticus*)?” Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean Conference, 22-26 May 2017, Mérida, Yucatán, México. (with Travel Award from the Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean (AMLC)).

ALUMNI UPDATES

- **XuXa Frait**es, (2015 graduate) Accepted and enrolled at Smith College, School of Social Work, MA.
- **Semone Rey**, (2015 graduate) Accepted and enrolled at Widener College, School of Social Work, PA.
- **Oldain Claxton**, (2017 graduate) Accepted and enrolled at University of North Carolina, Charlotte, School of Social Work.
- **Kai Fleming** accepted position with Limetree Bay Terminals, Inc.
- **Shaniqua Hodge** will attend Howard University this Fall for a Master in Education in School Psychology and Counseling Services. She was selected as a Graduate Research Assistant in the Howard University Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Program (HUSEM) Lab.
- **Michael Rosario** will start the PhD program in Cognitive Neuroscience at Boston University in Fall 2017.

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

PRESENTATIONS (FACULTY AND STAFF)

- *Zimmerman, T.W.* 2017. Tissue culture media influence on sweet potato. Society for In Vitro Biology Raleigh, NC June 11-15, 2017.
- *Zimmerman, T.W.* 2017. Evaluation of tissue culture salt components on in vitro growth of sweet potato. Caribbean Food Crops Society Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR July 16-22, 2017.
- *Joseph, S. and Zimmerman T.W.* 2017. Pitaya floral development in the Virgin Islands. Caribbean Food Crops Society Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR July 16-22, 2017.
- *Bideau, S. and Zimmerman T.W.* 2017. Using Scarification to enhance seed germination in sweet potato. Caribbean Food Crops Society Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR July 16-22, 2017.
- *Morgan, M. and Zimmerman T.W.* 2017. Population Distribution, Phenology and Propagation of *Buxus vahlii* and *Catesbaea Melanocarpa*: Two federally endangered native trees. Caribbean Food Crops Society Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR July 16-22, 2017.
- *Laurencin Jr., A., Crossman S.M.A., Forbes V., Montilla C., and Zimmerman T.W.* 2017. Evaluation of 21 cucumber cultivars for downy mildew resistance in the Virgin Islands. Caribbean Food Crops Society Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR July 16-22, 2017.
- *Montilla, C., Harris H., Gordon J., Smart R., and Zimmerman T.W.* 2017. Biomass studies of ten sweet potato varieties in the Virgin Islands. Caribbean Food Crops Society Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR July 16-22, 2017.
- *Godfrey, R.W.* The impact of weaning age on productivity of hair sheep ewes and lambs in an accelerated lambing system in the tropics. Annual Meeting of the St. Croix Hair Sheep International Association, Nashville, IN, Aug 18-19, 2017.
- *Godfrey, R.W.* Gastrointestinal parasite resilience of hair sheep breeds. Annual Meeting of the St. Croix Hair Sheep International Association, Nashville, IN, Aug 18-19, 2017. (PTG1A and 3J).
- *Chaves F., A.* "Increase of excavating sponges after coral bleaching events". *World Sponge Conference*, June 25 - July 1, 2017, University of Ireland, Galway.
- *Cruz-Rivera, E.* (June 2017) "Golden tides and sandy beaches: An unorthodox view of the effects of floating Sargassum in the Caribbean" Phycological Society of America Annual Meeting, Monterey, Presidential Symposium: The Ecology of Macroalgal Blooms; Invited presentation.
- *Cruz-Rivera, E.* (June 2017) "More than Latin binomials: Sex and herbivory in the amphipod *Gammarus aequicauda*" The Crustacean Society Mid-Year Meeting, Barcelona.

- *Ekici, C. & Alagoz, C.* (July 2017) 'Inquiry-Based Mathematical Modeling behind Sailing for Integrated STEM Learning.' 18th Conference of the International Community of Teachers of Mathematical Modelling and Applications (ICTMA), Cape Town South Africa. Oral - Paper presentation: <http://abstract.eventwiz.co.za/abstract/1552/>
- *Ekici, C. & Alagoz, C.* (July 2017) 'Loglinear Cognitive Diagnosis Models for Mathematical Modeling Assessment.' 18th Conference of the International Community of Teachers of Mathematical Modelling and Applications (ICTMA), Cape Town South Africa. Oral - Paper presentation: <http://abstract.eventwiz.co.za/abstract/1551/>
- *Gendre, B.* (June 2017) "Gravitation waves: a new method to study the binary evolution (and its doomed fate)", Seminar given at the Instituto di Astrofisica Spaziale Fisica Cosmica, Bologna, Italy.
- *Guannel, M. and Jones, N. N.* "Re-engaging Teachers in their Craft through Action Research." Network of STEM Education Centers 2017 National Conference, 23-24 June 2017, Hotel Monteleone, New Orleans, LA. Roundtable Discussion.
- *Jones, N. N., Michele G., Cummings L., and Abdallah S.* "Exploring the Impact of Extracurricular Experiences in General Science Courses." Network of STEM Education Centers 2017 National Conference, 23 June 2017, Hotel Monteleone, New Orleans, LA. Poster Presentation.
- *Platenberg, R. J.* "Self-recovery in the Caribbean: The Snake That Made it Back on its Own". *Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists*, July 12-15, 2017, Austin, TX. Oral Presentation.
- *Staff, J.* "Spin down of isolated neutron stars: Gravitational waves of magnetic braking?" oral presentation at Generation-GW: Diving into Gravitational Waves, St. Thomas, USVI, June 6-9, 2017.
- **Rosario, M.** "Effect of Aerobic Exercise on Spatial Navigation and Brain Structure as Modulated by Sex and Intracranial Volume". Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, 6 April 2017, Phoenix, Arizona. Poster Presentation (Winner); UVI Research Day, 7 April 2017, St. Croix, VI. Poster Presentation (Winner); International Neuropsychology Society Annual Conference, April 2017, New Orleans, Louisiana. Poster Presentation.
- **Sackey, K.** "Is Our Senate Getting Older"? UVI Emerging Caribbean Scientist Research Day. 28 July 2017, St. Thomas, VI. Poster Presentation.

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS ACCEPTED

- *Godfrey, R.W., Preston W. D., S.R. Joseph, L. LaPlace, P.E. Hillman, K.G. Gebremedhin, C.N. Lee, and R.J. Collier.* 2017. Evaluating the impact of breed, pregnancy and hair coat on body

temperature and sweating rate of hair sheep ewes in the tropics. *J. Anim. Sci.* 95:2936-2942. doi:10.2527/jas2016.1125 (Graph from the article was used on the cover of the issue of *Journal of Animal Science*) (PTG 1A and 3J).

- De Buizer, James M. et al (*Staff, Jan*) "The SOFIA Massive (SOMA) Star Formation Survey I. Overview and First Results", *The Astrophysical Journal*, 2017, 843, 33
- Cucchiara, Antonino, Morris D.; Guidorzi, C.; Gendre, B., "GRB 170424A: LCO Observations", *Gamma Ray Burst Circular Network 21037*, print.
- Cucchiara, Antonino, Morris, D.; Guidorzi, C.; Gendre, B., "GRB 170419A: LCO Observations", *Gamma Ray Burst Circular Network 21031*, print.
- Cucchiara, A.; Morris, D.; Guidorzi, C.; Gendre, B., "GRB 170510A: LCO possible counterpart", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21087* (2017). Print.
- Gendre, B.; Orange, N.; Morris, D.; Cucchiara, A.; Drost, D.; Giblin, T.; Hakkila, J.; Klotz, A.; Neff, J.; Smith, D.; et al., "GRB 170405A: Etelman observatory optical observations", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 20998* (2017). Print.
- Gendre, B.; Piro, L.; Troja, N.; Ricci, R.; Wieringa, M.; Banister, K., "GRB170714A: XMM observation of the afterglow", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21379* (2017). Print.
- Guidorzi, C.; Kobayashi, S.; Steele, I.A.; Gomboc, A.; Mundell, C.G.; Cucchiara, A.; Morris, D.; Gendre, B.; et al., "GRB 170522A: LCO McDonald observations", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21134* (2017). Print.
- Guidorzi, C.; Kobayashi, S.; Steele, I.A.; Gomboc, A.; Mundell, C.G.; Cucchiara, A.; Morris, D.; Gendre, B.; et al., "GRB 170510A: LCO Siding Springs early observations", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21110* (2017). Print.
- Klotz, A.; Turpin, D.; Atteia, J.L.; Boer, M.; Laugier, R.; Gendre, B.; Peyrot, A.; Teng, J.P., Thierry, P., "GRB 170423A: TAROT Reunion observatory optical observations", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21076* (2017). Print.
- Klotz, A.; Turpin, D.; Atteia, J.L.; Boer, M.; Laugier, R.; Gendre, B., "GRB 170428A: TAROT La Silla observatory optical observations", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21052* (2017). Print.
- Klotz, A.; Turpin, D.; Atteia, J.L.; Boer, M.; Laugier, R.; Gendre, B., "Swift Trigger 748858: TAROT La Silla observatory optical observations", *The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21027* (2017). Print.

- Klotz, A.; Turpin, D.; Atteia, J.L.; Boer, M.; Laugier, R.; *Gendre, B.*; Peyrot, A.; Teng; J.P., Thierry, P., “*GRB 170409A: TAROT Reunion observatory optical observations*”, The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21008 (2017). Print.
- Klotz, A.; Turpin, D.; Atteia, J.L.; Boer, M.; Laugier, R.; *Gendre, B.*; Peyrot, A.; Teng; J.P., Thierry, P., “*GRB 170405A: TAROT Reunion observatory optical observations*”, The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 20989 (2017). Print.
- Martin, D., A. Nygren and *Edwin Cruz-Rivera*. *Proceraea exoryxae* sp. nov. (Annelida, Syllidae, Autolytinae), the first known polychaete miner tunnelling into the tunic of an ascidian. *Peer J* 5: e3374, (2017).
- Mitsova, Diana, Chris Bergh, *Gregory Guannel*, Allison Goldberg, Kevin Cresswell, Rayan Alhawiti. In press. “Spatial Decision Support for Nature-Based Shoreline Stabilization Options in Subtropical Estuarine Environments” *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*.
- *Platenberg, Renata J.*, and Jennifer Valiulis. “U.S. Virgin Islands Wildlife Action Plan”. Strategic plan prepared for the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources Division of Wildlife. May 2017.
- Ricci, R.; Wieringa, M.; Piro, L.; Troja, N.; Banister, K. ; *Gendre, B.*, “*GRB170714A: ATCA observation*”, The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21360 (2017). Print.
- Tanvir, Nial et al. (*Cucchiara, A.*) "The Properties of GRB 120923A at a spectroscopic redshift of $z=7.8$ ", submitted to the *Astrophysical Journal*, 2017
- Troja, N.; Piro, L., *Gendre, B.*, “*GRB 170714A: Chandra observations*”, The Gamma-ray Coordinates Network 21396 (2017). Print.
- Mills, Frank. "Centennial: A Transformative Period for the USVI." *Caribbean Perspectives* March. 2017. Print.
- Eastern Caribbean Center. 2014 Virgin Islands Community Survey. St Thomas: University of the Virgin Islands, 2017. Report.
- *Hendrickson, Kenny A., and Kula A. Francis*. "Finding professional true to self- authenticity in public university faculty experience." *Studies in Higher Education*, June 2017, pp. 1-14. Doi: 10.1080/03075079.2017.1333492.
- *Hendrickson, Kenny A., and Kula A. Francis*. "The Undesirability of Programmatic Desensitization of Frontline Correctional Thinking." *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2017, pp. 154-160.

- *Sekou, Malik*. "Our Quest for Self-Determination: Virgin Islands Arise!" Virgin Islands Daily News, 10, July 2017: Special Insert. Print.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Two international conferences at UVI were organized by Astrophysics faculty and the Etelman Observatory:
 - "Generation-GW Gravitation Wave Astrophysics" International Conference held at UVI-STT, ACC, June 5-9, 2017; 52 participating scientists from all over the world, including four UVI physics faculty and two UVI undergraduates.
 - "Unveiling the Physics Behind Extreme AGN Variability" International Conference held at UVI-STT, Chase Auditorium, July 10-14, 2017; 60 participating scientists from all over the world, including three physics faculty and six UVI undergraduates.
- Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC) released the annual Caribbean Perspectives magazine with the theme, "Centennial: A Transformative Period for the USVI." Copies were distributed to UVI leadership, the Governor, Lt. Governor, senators, commissioners, directors, libraries (local and other Caribbean islands).
- ECC also published its annual update to the Census of population and housing statistics for the Virgin Islands. The 2014 VI Community Survey is an important statistical resource for government agencies (OMB, BER), NGOs (Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands), private businesses and students. (PTG 3A)
- Drs. Lawanda Cummings and Sheena Walker were selected to participate in the Jackson State/Norfolk State University ADVANCE Summer Writing Retreat, held in Virginia Beach, Virginia and funded by the National Science Foundation. Both Drs. Cummings and Walker participated fully in the writing program, submitting journal articles to peer-reviewed journals by July 31, 2017.
- As a member of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration and VIRGO Collaboration (LVC), *Dr. Bruce Gendre* received the Einstein Medal awarded annually in commemoration of outstanding scientific findings, works, or publications related to Albert Einstein. The work of the LVC led to the detection of gravitational waves, a prediction of Einstein's theory of relativity.
- St. Thomas Bat Team, led by *Dr. Renata Platenberg*, was awarded the 2017 US Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 Environmental Champion Award for Exceptional Work to Protect the Environment for community outreach work on bats.
- *Dr. Renata Platenberg* served as Herpetologists' League (scientific society) Secretary at Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Austin, TX, July 2017.

- Dr. Kimarie Engerman was a reviewer for Association of American Colleges and Universities, Project Kaleidoscope.
- Title III staff attended the National Association of HBCU Title III Administrators, Inc. Annual Technical Assistance Workshop held June 14-16 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Title III Coordinator chaired this conference and assisted in one presentation, while moderating others. The Grants Management Specialist, Mr. Jarelle Berkeley, also moderated a presentation conducted by Ms. Celia Prince and Ms. Desha Brathwaite of Information and Technology Services.
- The 53rd annual meeting of the Caribbean Food Crop Society was held in Carolina, Puerto Rico during the week of July 16-21, 2017. Representatives attended this meeting from CES and AES throughout the Caribbean. At the society's banquet, Kwame Garcia, Sr., CES State Director, was honored for his commitment to the society. The Society presented him with a plaque that reads, "Caribbean Food Crop Society Honors Professor Kwame Garcia, Vice Chairman of the Board 2007 – 2013 for your leadership and commitment to this Society in furthering the development of the agricultural sectors of the Caribbean Basin." Dr. Wilfredo Colon-Guasp, Chairman of the Board, signed the plaque. Founded in 1964, the Caribbean Food Crop Society has been dedicated to the advancement of Agriculture research and development in the Caribbean.
- The Music Department hosted several activities:
 - *Dion G. Parson*, Mr. Chase Beird, Mr. Carlton Holmes, Mr. Paul Beaudry and Mr. Kai Richardson - Jazz for Young People – Educational Music Program of Jazz at Lincoln Center in the Elementary School in New York NY.
 - *Mr. Dion G. Parson*, Mr. Ron Blake, Mr. Melvin Jones, Mr. Carlton Holmes, Mr. Wycliffe Gordon, Mr. Victor Provost and Mr. Alioune Faye – at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola with 21st Century Band, Jazz at Lincoln Center, New York NY.
 - *Mr. Dion G. Parson*, Sherwin Williams, Tariq Lionel, Joshua Farrell (Antilles), Uriel Rogers (CAHS) and Keshawn Hardy (Education Complex) of the VI Youth Ensemble, CEO of United Jazz Foundation Mrs. Nicole Parson and Chaperone Ms. Wynne Canton – New York City study trip.
 - *Mr. Dion G. Parson*, Mr. Victor Provost and Mr. Ron Blake; Music Educators and Sherwin Williams, Tariq Lionel, Joshua Farrell (Antilles), Uriel Rogers (CAHS) and Keshawn Hardy (Education Complex) of the VI Youth Ensemble, CEO of United Jazz Foundation Mrs. Nicole Parson, - 21st Century Band Jazz (Caribbean Jazz Summer Music Program) Institute at the Prestige's Snow Pond Performing Arts Center, Sydney Maine.
 - *Mr. Dion G. Parson*, **Sherwin Williams**, Tariq Lionel, Joshua Farrell (Antilles), Uriel Rogers (CAHS) and Keshawn Hardy (Education Complex) of the VI Youth Ensemble, CEO of United Jazz Foundation Mrs. Nicole Parson – Performance 'Cheri', an artistic restaurant in Harlem New York NY.

- *Mr. Dion G. Parson*, 14th edition of the UVI Summer Band Program under the direction of Retired Professor Austin A. Venzen and Senior Counselors and UVI graduates Ms. Monet I. Davis.
- Mr. Kevre Hendricks and Mr. Niels Gooding, *Mr. Dion G. Parson* and Mrs. Nicole Parson – New England Music Camp at Snow Pond Performing Arts Center awarded two full scholarships for six weeks, St. Thomas students. Mr. Tisean Paul (incoming UVI freshman) and Mr. JahQuan S. Richards (CAHS Student) - Snow Pond and UJF have formed a partnership and this partnership will be extended to UVI students in the future.
- *Mr. Dion G. Parson* played the off Broadway Musical – “On Kentucky Avenue” at the Triad Theater, New York NY.
- **Sherwin Williams** – Woodwind Instructor at the B-Natural Music Summer Camp for Elementary Level.
- Tariq Lionel – Piano Instructor at the Mon Bijou Community Center, a camp for Elementary Level.
- *Dion G. Parson*, as part of the Jon Faddis Quartet, played at Dizzy's Club Cola-Cola, Jazz at Lincoln Center, New York NY. August Mr. Dion G. Parson performs with Elio Villafranca, Cuban Pianist at the Jazz Festival in Poughkeepsie NY.

GRANTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS FUNDED

- The University of the Virgin Islands has been notified of its largest Title III grant awards in several years--\$1.7 million for Part B and over \$700,000 for SAFRA. The Part B award is the first in a new five-year cycle that will support: the institutionalization of Goal 2A of Pathways to Greatness; the improvement of the institution's post-award processes; the replication of UVI systems in the cloud to improve post-disaster recovery; and the expansion of the School of Education through the establishment of a Child Care Center. The SAFRA grant is a continuation grant and will support three projects in the third year of a five-year grant cycle: a classroom improvement project that collaborates with the schools to upgrade furnishings and install smart classroom equipment; continued support of the St. John Academic Center; and expansion of STEM offerings on the Albert A. Sheen campus. (PTG 1C and 6F)
- Agricultural Experiment Station's Biotechnology & Agroforestry program received a \$55,750 grant from USDA-NIFA- SCBG program administered through the VIDOA to study turmeric production potential in the USVI; was awarded \$6,000 from Robert Apfel to grow sugar cane from tissue culture and get it established in the greenhouse for field planting; and the Animal Science program was given use of 80 acres of additional land owned by Mr. Warren Mosler for Senepol cattle grazing. Mr. Mosler also donated \$10,000 to help with the cost of constructing new fences on the property. (PTG 1C and 6F)

- *Cucchiara, Antonino* (PI): Department of Defense - HBCU-UP: "UVI Astrophysics Education and Research Advancement Project", \$142,600
- *Cucchiara, Antonino* (PI): NOAO proposal "High-Redshift Gamma-Ray Bursts as Probes of Cosmic Dawn", 15.1 hours observing time on Gemini North and South telescopes.
- *Jarvis Jr., Glenfield* and *Greg Guannel*. "Creating the Foundation of a Sustainable Campus through Advanced Energy Monitoring and Equipment Upgrades." Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs. \$594,680 August 2017-July 2018.
- *Morris, David* (PI) and *Cucchiara, Antonino* (Science PI): NASA EPSCoR "UVIBurstCube: Developing a flight-ready prototype Gamma-Ray Burst detection satellite at the University of the Virgin Islands", \$749,996.

SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION RE-AFFIRMS UVI ACCREDITATION

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) voted on June 22, 2017 to reaffirm the accreditation of UVI. The Commission affirmed the Report of the Site Team that visited the University in March of this year, and used that Report as the primary basis for its decision. The decision of the MSCHE is a compelling testament to the outstanding and creative work the University has been engaged in for the 10 years since the University's last accreditation visit. Throughout the Report there are statements that serve as compelling evidence of the quality of this University, and the basis of the pride that many people have about UVI.

The Report of the Site Team did not only indicate that UVI appeared to be in compliance with all of the Middle States standards, but provided an impressive and extremely positive assessment of the University since the last accreditation visit. The Report contained fourteen commendations, seven significant accomplishments or exemplary innovations, and numerous positive statements. The Report did not cite any deficiencies or provide any warnings. The commendations were in various areas and covered just about all Seven Standards. The MSCHE also recognized UVI for being a part of the first cohort of institutions nationally to participate in its Collaborative Implementation Project that will apply the Commission's new standards for all MSCHE member institutions. The Report also commended UVI's self-study document and highlighted that, "UVI presented an extraordinary report: "Greatness by Design" that encompassed an integration of the standards within the ethos of the institution and its environment."

Various initiatives were recognized, highlighted and applauded in the Report; including the UVINext process, the Economic Impact Report that demonstrated that UVI contributes over \$85 Million to the Territory each year; the 360 Degree evaluation process for upper level managers; and the adoption of Goal 2A in the strategic plan that emphasizes that "UVI will graduate students who are academically excellent, globally sensitive, entrepreneurially focused, emotionally and spiritually balanced, and willing to serve the world." The Report also highlighted the importance of the program accreditations UVI has received since the last accreditation visit in the areas of Business, Nursing, and Education.

Under Standard II that relates to ethics and integrity, the Report states, "UVI is to be commended for its adoption of 360 performance reviews of upper level management, (and its) transparency in communication."

Under Standard III, which relates to Student Learning, UVI was commended first, "for opening up extraordinary academic research, service, and global opportunities for the students," and also for continuing "to add programs to meet changing student needs and to meet those of the Territory of the Virgin Islands. In particular, the new and first Ph.D. Program in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change, leverages the strengths of UVI, contributes to accomplishing institutional aspirations, builds bridges with other universities, and serves a community need."

Under Standard IV which relates to Student Support, UVI was commended for creating the Center for Student Success and integrating it throughout the University,” and for “engaging the Education Advisory Board (EAB) to tailor student support programs to meet needs of students and improve their success.” These were just two of numerous examples in the Report of how our faculty, staff and administrators work tirelessly to help students achieve their educational and professional dreams, even when they are difficult to obtain.

Under Standard V, which relates to Assessment, UVI was commended for its efforts in developing through the UVINext process a comprehensive assessment for academic and administrative programs. This approach, which has been in place for the last three years at UVI is a model for other universities to emulate if they are concerned about not just doing things, but learning from what is being done, and improving daily operations. Institutional assessment is one of the hardest processes for educational institutions to fully implement, and one of the highest priorities for accrediting bodies. UVI not only traversed the “assessment hurdle” but did so with flying colors.

Under Standard VI, which relates to Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement, UVI received commendations for establishing the University Budget Committee, which ensures involvement and input from every constituency within the University, and for the “broad-based consultation and representation of the campus community in the development of the institution’s strategic plan.”

The Board of Trustees was commended under this Standard for the budget reduction principles it embraced during the various budget crises that the Territory has faced.

Standard VII, which relates to Governance, Leadership and Administration, contained three commendations, which focused on how the University has created a vibrant shared governance system. The Report states, “the University should be commended for its strong commitment to shared governance and ethical leadership.” This commendation tells a powerful story about the progress of UVI. At the last Site Visit 10 years ago, one of the areas of concerns was the shared governance process, which is important to how academic institutions should operate. The University has gone from having concerns mentioned about shared governance to being commended; and in oral statements made by the Site Visit team members, being cited as a model for other institutions. Under this Standard, the Board of Trustees was also commended as a model of a “high performing Board.” This is significant because the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), the seminal organization for university governing Boards, has used this label as the best level a Board could obtain.

In relations to the Self-Study report which many individuals in the University developed and submitted, we find the following comments. “The leadership, consistency, ethical disposition, and integrity is outstanding throughout the report and the visiting team was able to corroborate its fidelity. The quality of students learning, campus life services and scholarship merits distinction.” The Report goes on to say, “this is a model of operations and reporting useful to many institutions.”

The University hosted a press conference on June 27th to share the Commission's findings with the University community and other stakeholders. Sadly, just a few days later on July 1, 2017, Tina Koopmans, Vice President for Information Services and Institutional Assessment and the leader of the institution's re-accreditation process, unexpectedly died. A celebration of her life was held on July 14th at the ACC Building on the St Thomas Campus, with videoconference to the Albert A. Sheen Campus and St. John Academic Center.

ONLINE DEGREES APPROVAL

UVI received approval of its Substantive Change request from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) on July 5, 2017 regarding the inclusion of online degrees programs within the scope of the institution's accreditation. The University has been approved to offer two degrees in Business, and only has to notify MSCHE of any additional online degrees it develops.

UVI is also now licensed in all states through the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) to offer online degree programs. SARA is an agreement among its member states and U.S. districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards and policies for interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs.

CHILD CARE CENTERS ON CAMPUS

UVI has secured funding under the Title III program for \$1.1 million over a five-year period to commence operations of the childcare center on both campuses on a part-time basis. Funding will commence in Fall 2017 and the goal is to have the centers operational during the Spring Semester. We will continue to seek additional funding to include other federal grants in collaboration with the Department of Human Services (DHS). The centers will also serve as revenue generating entities based on its operations. Spaces for the childcare centers have already been identified on both campuses. UVI will continue to work with DHS to design a model research based Child Care Center through our School of Education that utilizes the best practices and insights in the industry and to develop training programs and certifications for existing childcare providers in the Territory.

UVI HOSTS "GREAT AMERICAN SOLAR ECLIPSE"

UVI's Etelman Observatory and Physics program students and faculty, under the leadership of Dr. David Morris, hosted an eclipse-viewing on August 21, 2017 at the Sports and Fitness Center on the St. Thomas Campus. UVI was designated as the only official National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) viewing location for the eclipse in the Caribbean. The total solar eclipse was called the "Great American Solar Eclipse." The Moon passed directly between the Earth and the Sun, blocking out about

90 percent of the Sun's surface as viewed from the Virgin Islands. While the Virgin Islands was not within the "path of totality," the Territory was close. The eclipse passed about 150 miles northeast of St. Thomas. The next total solar eclipse in the U.S. is expected to occur in 2024.

The University welcomed approximately 1,000 visitors including local students and others on vacation who came to UVI to view the eclipse. There were telescopes and other viewing instruments (including eclipse safety glasses) for visitors' viewing purposes. We also had significant coverage from the local media.

This event grew out of our rapidly expanding physics and astronomy program, which includes the new Bachelor of Science degree in Physics. This program (sponsored in large part by NASA grants) funds three new faculty at UVI as well as a contract scientist, and funded 15 students this past summer in off-island research projects at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Texas-Austin, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture as well as 10 students in on-island projects at Etelman Observatory, in UVI's new VI Vacuum Instrumentation Analysis and Nanosatellite Lab, as well as other projects.

As part of the new Physics program, the Etelman Observatory has been designated as an official NASA Educator Resource Center. This makes UVI and the Etelman Observatory the leader for NASA-related teacher training and content distribution in the Territory. Two years ago, NASA engineers and educators came to St. Thomas for a series of student outreach events and teacher trainings. NASA engineers visited St. Croix last year for a series of similar events. This past summer, UVI sent five pre-service educators from UVI's School of Education to NASA Kennedy Space Center to participate in a week-long workshop intended to prepare these students to help the University establish a NASA "Space Camp" in the USVI next year.

This all comes at an exciting time when UVI has been recently granted a new NASA award (approximately \$750,000) to begin work in January 2018 on a UVI satellite that is planned to be launched in 2021 known as UVI-BurstCube. This satellite (called a cube-sat for its small size, roughly the size of a shoebox) will be developed at UVI in the new vacuum instrumentation lab, in collaboration with our research partners at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. The science focus of the satellite is to detect gamma-ray bursts in the new era of gravitational wave observations.

This unified partnership between UVI and NASA on science and education activities in the USVI has been the cornerstone of the growth in the physics and astronomy programs, leading to the eclipse viewing event. We look forward to growing this partnership in the future. Our Physics faculty are currently investigating other opportunities to partner with NASA and other areas on campus to develop patented NASA technologies that may be uniquely appropriate for the region.

DONOR GIFT CHARTS INNOVATIVE FUTURE IN DATA SCIENCE

UVI received a pledge of \$200,000 from Kiril Sokoloff, the founder of 13D, to create a Distinguished Visiting Professorship in Data Science. The field of data science, which includes data analytics, social sciences, life sciences, etc., is key to the future of business development in this technology driven world in which we live. It is an area where more companies are requesting expertise and many of our students have little exposure to this sophisticated field. This field is also a companion program to our entrepreneurship curriculum. Students who start businesses in the future must have a sound mastery of analytical methodologies and be able to make sense out of big data.

A list of outstanding individuals in the field have already been identified who could help create and serve as the foundation for a Data Science program at UVI. Once we are able to secure a professor, we envision inviting them to provide two public lectures and serving as a full-time visitor during the subsequent semester. It is anticipated that the “Big Data” professor would teach two courses in their specialty area, and work with our faculty to develop a Certificate program in Data Science. Our long-range goal is to develop a degree program in this field, but we want to start with a program that might attract more students as we develop expertise in this field.

UVI ETELMAN OBSERVATORY MAKES SCIENTIFIC HISTORY

For the first time, scientists have directly detected gravitational waves — ripples in space and time — in addition to light from the spectacular collision of two neutron stars. This marks the first time in history that a cosmic event has been viewed in both gravitational waves and light. The discovery was made using the U.S.-based Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), the Europe-based Virgo detector, and some 70 ground and space-based observatories, including UVI's Etelman Observatory. Additional research papers on the aftermath of the event have also produced a new understanding of how heavy elements such as gold and platinum are created by supernova and stellar collisions and then spread through the Universe.

The discovery, announced October 16, 2017 at a news conference and in scientific reports written by some 3,500 researchers, solves a long-standing mystery about the origin of these heavy elements — which are found in everything from wedding rings to cellphones to nuclear weapons. It's also a dramatic demonstration of how astrophysics is being transformed by humanity's newfound ability to detect gravitational waves. The new observations confirm that at least some short gamma-ray bursts are generated by the merging of neutron stars — something that was only theorized before.

UVI's Etelman Observatory participated in this observing campaign, using its Virgin Islands Robotic Telescope (or VIRT). The observatory team, led by the Observatory Resident Astronomer Dr. Bruce Gendre, performed a set of observations and detected the counterpart of the gravitational wave emitter, together with numerous other teams. Making the observations was complicated by the rainy weather conditions typical of the hurricane season in the Virgin Islands and were forced to cease due to

the approach of Hurricane Irma. While trying to cope with two major hurricanes and their aftermaths, the absence of communications with all the other teams, damage to the Observatory from the hurricanes, the VIRT team managed to send their results to Australian colleagues who combined the VIRT data with their own to study the evolution of the phenomenon. The observations taken at the Etelman Observatory filled gaps in the timeline of the optical evolution of the explosion and will help produce a more complete understanding of the merging process, and the formation of compact objects and heavy element production in the Universe. The observations taken at the Etelman Observatory will be published in the Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia, together with optical images taken in Australia and radio follow-up.

CAMPUS UPDATE: HURRICANE IRMA AND MARIA RECOVERY

UVI RISE

The Virgin Islands was struck by Hurricane Irma, a category 5 storm, on Wednesday, September 6, 2017, and then by Hurricane Maria, a category 5 storm, on Tuesday September 19, 2017. The University of the Virgin Islands suffered severe damage as a result of these unprecedented winds and rain. Leading up to the storms, we asked all local resident students to stay at home so we could accommodate all off-island students in the most secure and safest manner. One hundred and fifty of our students took shelter on the St. Thomas Campus' East Residence Hall for Hurricane Irma and approximately ninety for Hurricane Maria. On the St. Croix Campus, approximately sixty students were sheltered for both hurricanes. While students encountered a number of challenges, as did many Virgin Islanders, all of them were safe throughout both storms.

Unfortunately, our campuses did not do as well. The St. Thomas Campus was hit very hard by Hurricane Irma. All buildings incurred some level of water damage, fallen ceilings, debris and exterior damage. Numerous lights, security cameras, rooftop solar panels, and light poles on campus are down, and numerous trees have been destroyed. The St. Croix Campus was more adversely affected by Hurricane Maria, resulting in damages to numerous buildings, and countless trees and light poles were destroyed.

The estimated total loss to buildings and infrastructure is approximately \$51 Million. The following buildings will need to be rebuilt or significantly renovated:

- Center for Marine and Environmental Studies
- School of Business Building
- Quarters B Administrative Building
- West Hall Residence (104 students)

- Reichhold Center for the Performing Arts
- Institute for Geocomputational Analysis and Statistics (GeoCAS) and Caribbean Green Technology Center Building
- Faculty West Building
- President's Guest House
- Research and Technology Park Building
- Residence Halls (top levels)
- Agriculture Experiment Station and the Aquaponics Facilities

ITS Infrastructure

Pehna House, the area where WUVI and the Security Office are housed, was the only building that remained with power throughout Hurricane Irma. WUVI was among the few radio stations that transmitted throughout the storm. Employees can now access their email, blackboard, webpages, and banner. Numerous computers, servers and other technology infrastructure were destroyed. Hurricane Maria had a negative impact on the University's internet and other communication systems on both campuses.

Academic Plan

Through the enormous dedication, hard work and creativity of staff, faculty and students, the University is prepared to move forward with its academic programs and resumed classes on October 9, 2017. The Fall semester will now end on December 22, 2017. The University is fully committed to completing this semester, and using this tragedy as a catalyst to become more innovative and transformative than we were before. In the aftermath of this tragedy, the guiding principle for the University is that all students will be held harmless. This means that the University will complete the Fall semester.

All courses originally offered have been made available, even though some may occur at a different time, and in a different format. In order to operate within the curfew, some courses have been converted to an online format. The University is also offering a few courses on the weekends. As the curfew is relaxed and lighting on campus improves, we will revisit the hybrid and weekend classes.

The University is extremely sensitive to the enormous challenges commuter students now face. Students are without shelter, transportation, and basic necessities. Therefore, in developing the revised academic schedule for this semester this reality was taken into account. The faculty, staff and administrators have been asked to work with each student to ensure that she/he receives the support, accommodations and flexibility that are appropriate. Through October 13, 2017 students who choose to withdraw were permitted to do so and received refunds.

Support for Students and Employees

Through our Student Affairs, Access and Enrollment Services and Center for Student Success representatives are available to work with students on academic and other matters. Our counselors have also been made available to students as well as various support services and activities are being facilitated on both campuses. Our Student Affairs Departments developed an engagement plan to foster resiliency among our students in the aftermath of hurricanes. Various activities include sports, counseling services, health services, movie/game nights, student volunteer opportunities, Zumba, yoga/meditation, rap sessions, spiritual reflections and worship services, special academic and tutoring offerings and a "Kuiet Fete."

In addition, the University has created the following UVI Rise Relief Fund to support students, faculty and staff who have suffered serious losses as a result of the hurricanes. Individuals can make donations through the following site: <https://app.mobilecause.com/vf/2017IRMA>. Below are some of the specific needs the UVI Rise Relief Fund will support:

- funds to support students who have lost their jobs and can no longer pay for tuition or living expenses
- funds to feed, clothe and support students and staff who have lost their homes, cars and other necessities
- funds to provide temporary shelter for family members of students, faculty and staff who lost their homes
- laptop computers for all commuter students who have limited access to off campus technology resources
- ice machines and laundry facilities for staff, faculty and students to use on campus

UVI COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

UVI is an integral part of the community and has assisted in the wake of the aftermath of the storms with the recovery efforts of the Territory. Some of the ways that we have supported our UVI community and the broader Virgin Islands are noted below:

- The Sports & Fitness Center on the St. Thomas Campus has been repurposed as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Command Center which will provide leadership and support in the Territory's restoration efforts. The Reichhold Center for the Arts parking lot will be used to house 400 parking spaces for FEMA and other partners.
- Partnered with retired NBA player and local hero Tim Duncan for the St. Thomas Campus to serve as one of the sites for distribution of food and supplies as part of his relief aid and efforts.
- The Soccer Field on the St. Thomas Campus is occupied by the U.S. Military providing on the ground military and other recovery and restorative support for the Territory.

- The University is currently in discussions with the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) exploring the availability of extra parking spaces at Reichhold for the additional trucks and equipment that will be on island assisting to restore electricity in our communities and to impacted citizens.
- UVI is working with the V.I. Department of Human Services to serve as one of the authorized sites in St. Thomas for the weeklong Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) which gives food assistance to approved individuals, not currently on the SNAP program, who have experienced food loss or damage as a result of the hurricanes.
- In conjunction with the V.I. Department of Agriculture, our Cooperative Extension Service has been disseminating information to local farmers on relief benefits available through Florida Organic Growers and other farm organizations.
- Some of our students and employees have served as first-responders, National Guard, National Guard Reserve and volunteers throughout the community, playing critical roles in the restorative efforts of our campuses and the Territory.
- While the institution continues to explore other ways that it can be of support to employees, within the UVI Community, the following services have been made available to employees:
 - Through our medical plan, CIGNA HealthCare offers free 24/7 telephone access to mental health professionals and counseling services to employees and members of their household. Our Human Resources Department has also made additional resources in this regard available.
 - Through the Blue Roof (TARP) Project, impacted employees were able to register for assistance on the St. Thomas Campus.
 - FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) representatives will be available to register employees on St. Croix on October 16-17 and on St. Thomas on October 26-27.
 - Our Human Resources web portal has been updated to include a listing of available housing and apartment rentals for displaced employees.
 - On the St. Croix campus, disaster assistance food, cases of water and tarps were made available for employees.
 - On the St. Thomas Campus, Red Cross buckets and supplies were provided to our Security and Physical Plant employees who have played such a critical role in reinvigorating our campus.

- Through our on-campus Cafeterias, UVI provided employees with hot meals for two weeks on each campus free of charge.
- Through our Center for the Study of Spirituality and Professionalism (CSAP), interfaith gatherings open to employees and students are being hosted to address stress, coping and well-being techniques and moving forward.

PRESIDENT'S APPRECIATION AWARD

The true measure of an institution is not how it handles success, but how it handles tragedies, setbacks and unexpected challenges. The mind, heart and soul of UVI were tested through the events of hurricanes Irma and Maria, and the response demonstrated that we are blessed to have a collection of resilient, thoughtful, caring and innovative individuals who not only weathered the storms, but transformed themselves and the institution in the process. To fully resume classes on both campuses within one month after facing two category five hurricanes is an historic and astounding accomplishment. As President, I am profoundly grateful to the faculty, staff, administrators and students who contributed to making this achievement possible. UVI has risen and we will become even stronger in the future because of this catastrophic test of nature. Therefore, it gives me great honor and pride to present the President's Appreciation Award to all members of the University community who helped us resume classes in such an historic and creative manner.