



Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance 1

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:00 Do you measure us, it tells us that there's nobody traveling anymore? No, that's not the case. I think one thing that I know, I don't have all the answers, but one thing that I know is a lot of the travel that happens across our units are grant funded, and so they're coming from Fund 2 sources, so grant funded sources, and perhaps we're seeing a reduction in travel that's being charged to our general operating budget, that's one.
- 0:00:35 And I know there have been some sponsorships for travel coming from the President's office, not from the general fund budget, so I'm not sure exactly why, I'm not sure if you have ideas of why that's so low. I mean, if you ever get a response back to me sometime in the future, that'd be great. We'll do that. Sure, sir. How are the funds from the, sorry, there was some specific projects that have- One minute. Completed under \$3 million coral reef monitoring program, how are those fundings shared with DPNR and the public? How are the findings? Sorry, findings. Oh, good question.
- 0:01:14 So our researchers in the College of Science and Mathematics, I know they have close relationships with DPNR. They also prepare presentations. They do, honestly, a lot of community outreach. Sharing things in the public, whether it's an event on the beach- 30 seconds. Through, of course, through scientific publications and through relationships with DPNR. They have current projects where they work closely on a number of things with DPNR and are having conversations on a regular basis. So, okay.
- 0:01:48 And there was a, the green technology program is mentioned without a listed awarded amount. What funding was allocated? I don't know what page you're on, sir. I know. If you mind sharing. This was under the Department of Specific Accountability, NA. Time.
- 0:02:14 No, no, he's going to tell you right now. But go ahead, Mr. Chair. You're going to tell me right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. Green technology program. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. I'm coming to them right now. We'll go on to the next, Senator. I know

we'll come back and certainly entertain you. Thank you. At this time, the Chair will recognize Senator Vealey. You're recognized for your six minutes. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me get the questions quick.

0:02:46 Mr. Sonier, I'll come to you quickly and then leave you to go on to UVI. You made the statement, misinformed public comments made on the Senate floor. What was the misinformed public comments? Good afternoon, Senator Vealey. It was mentioned on the Senate floor that the RT Park does not have -- does not do compliance. And that's not true. We actually do compliance. We have a very robust compliance platform and I can get into it.

0:03:17 Okay. So stop there. Okay. And I was the one that made a comment. And the comment was made because VIA, which is now one, that is an RT Park client, laid off the entire service department, laid off senior management, sent the positions to Guyana and Jamaica while receiving generous tax break from the Virgin Islands. So my comments are directly related to we cannot have somebody receiving tax break and firing Virgin Islanders and transferring those positions of foreign destination. And if it was under the EDA, they would have had to justify the reason why they were laying off those employees. And a part of your statement said, support local hiring. One of VIA has not supported local hiring. They have laid off substantial employees, decreased the monies that we collect in the income tax, et cetera, and sent those jobs to Guyana, Jamaica. So I just wanted my questions in context.

0:04:17 Yes, you do have a compliance component, but it needs to be expanded to make sure that you're able to monitor the local hiring and that they keep those individuals hired. But that's it. I don't want to have a debate. I just wanted to put that on the record. Now I'm going to UVI. I can't respond. Maybe. And the president's time. But I really just need to move on to that. I just wanted to put that on the record. I don't want to be the chair. Sorry, I've been president twice. I could call you that. I looked at the numbers. 49 million. I'm going to wrote it down. 49 million 900 something. One second. \$49,851,535.

0:05:01 \$49,851,535. You divide that by 1,882 students and you're coming up with \$26,488 per student. How can that be justified? That is an extremely high ratio. And that's a local. That is what you're proposing from the general fund. That doesn't include federal grants, fees, anything else. If you include everything else, you're coming up with like \$30,000 per student for a very small university.

0:05:39 How can you justify those numbers? If I may, the general appropriation we're requesting is the \$39 million. A lot of these others that were factored into it to get to the 49, 851, 535 includes legislatively mandated programs. And the legislative mandates, a number of them, the masters, the nursing, the culinary arts, agriculture, that is included in the \$35 million. Right. It was a line item in the budget for UVI. UVI had X amount. And then they had all the mandates, the valedictorian, salutatorian, and all of that came up to 35. So now you're seeing a dramatic increase in terms of the overall costs.

0:06:26 And there would need to be a justification as to what is going to be captured by so much additional costs now to the tune of like \$14 million. What is going to be captured that wasn't captured before? Did there some? I can answer once you're ready. Go ahead. I'll allow you to. Okay. Thank you, sir. I need a short version because I only have five minutes. Okay. Yes. Understood. So what we did is we built our budget from scratch, right? Historically, the budget was reviewed and sort of has been the same.

0:07:03 But we had to look at our actual operating costs to run each department and unit. So we had the teams actually look at what it would cost in terms of staff, in terms of faculty, in terms of all of it. And we came up with a budget that was significantly higher than it had traditionally been overall in order to operate, you know, operate the university and serve our students to the best capacity. Now, what I'll also ask our CFO to do is give you specific numbers of how we actually got there based on the specific increases that contributed to us getting to this amount. And even the amount that we're requesting, of course, is in the total amount of the increased budget. We recognize that this reflects about 67% of it. So would you quickly -- Sure.

0:07:46 -- so we can preserve his time, share those increases. Sure. When the budget exercise was conducted by the university, the number actually turned out to be 51 million. So, you know, we did scale that back. But looking at the increases that we're looking at, we've had a significant increase in, for example, our utilities. Our utilities have gone up nearly 1.25 million compared to the past. So we're -- 1.25 million from what? From previously, which was about 3 -- 2 -- 2 million per year.

0:08:19 So we've seen an increase in that. So we're trying -- So it was 2 million per year and it went to what? 3.8, I believe. So we're -- So it went from 2 million to 3.8? Yes, over time. This -- this is a comparison over time. So -- In one fiscal year or -- No, sir. It's been several years that we've been absorbing that increase. Yeah. So we're trying to get ourselves to a place where we can actually operate at a more sustainable level. We've also included also that mandate for the 35,000, the minimum wage. So we're looking at that, trying to -- What is the cost for that?

- 0:09:00 That is \$250,000, including the fringe benefits. Okay. That's -- that's -- that's -- go ahead. Okay. We've -- we've also looked at, of course, deferred maintenance needs for the institution to ensure that we have a good physical plan across the institution for our students. And so we're looking at 2 million dollars for that across the -- both campuses. We're also looking at employer matching contributions for the institution, for the employees. You know, fringe benefits. We're looking at \$1 million right now. That's just -- talking about the -- the retirement, the expected retirement increase. We're not looking at, you know, potential other increases. So the 3% increase you're saying is going to come up to \$1 million? Yes.
- 0:09:48 At this point in time, that's our estimate. And -- Okay. We're looking at those numbers a -- a bit more because I'm -- I'm going to -- to run out of time. Mm-hmm. But -- but in reference now to the -- I don't like to really use the word free tuition. Sorry. But -- but the free tuition. You said that you had 548 students with an average of \$4,300 for tuition. That is -- so that would come up to the 2 point -- what do you said? 2.3 million dollars that was expended? What's the amount?
- 0:10:22 2.3 -- 2,385,736. Okay. So at that ratio of \$4,300, if you hit 698 students, you're going to exceed the 3 million. There's literally a cap. If you divide 3 million by 4,300, that's going to tell you how many students would qualify for free tuition. The free tuition, are you deducting the Pell Grant component or you're just giving that out? If a student qualify for a Pell Grant -- One minute. Are you deducting that from the total tuition so that more students, in the event that more students apply -- No, sir. Can qualify?
- 0:11:09 No, sir. In terms of how the free tuition is applied, it's applied first, and then Pell is applied afterwards and used for other expenses that are over and above tuition. So you're under the understanding that there's only a certain amount of students that the 3 million dollars would be able to sustain? Yes, sir. And what are the plans? 30 seconds. 30 seconds. What are the plans to help the others is what you're asking?
- 0:11:37 No. In the event that we exceed that 698, 700 students, everyone won't -- the 3 million won't be sufficient to cover any additional student over 700. So UVI is at its lowest enrollment right now. 10, 15 years ago, UVI enrollment was doubled. 20, 30 years on it when there was over 4,000 students. It's at the lowest level -- 3,000 was their highest. The highest, okay.
- 0:12:05 Almost double what you have. Right. We're at the lowest enrollment -- Time. -- despite the fact that it's free. It was at the higher enrollment when individuals were paying for it. If we're able to expand enrollment, then we have to come up with a different mechanism because the 3 million isn't going to be sufficient. And I just want us to begin to think about that because the 3 million is capped off at literally 700 students. And lastly, the committee on budget and appropriation must provide funding for all entities across government. All entities. So we just had the judiciary that wanted a 10 million increase. UVI that is a 14 million increase.
- 0:12:49 Hospitals, we just gave 20 million recently to try to bail them out and they're still struggling. So I'm really encouraging entities, you know, that there's a limited part. And those monies must be divided among all of the different entities. And we just have a big quagmire now because we don't know how we're going to expand this, how we're going to do this because we have crisis in education, crisis in healthcare, et cetera. They call my attorney from St. Croix, ask a good question with Barry University. And I think those are partnerships that we need to go into if we can immediately instead of trying to build a program ourselves.
- 0:13:28 If Barry has a good physician assistant program and we have the facility and we could share the facility, we do that. For the medical school, I think we need a partnership with a university that has an established medical school. That's exactly what we're working on. Okay. And let them come here. The same thing for the simulation center because then we'll be saving money. Individuals will be coming from abroad for the physician assistant for the medical school and you'll generate more money. Colleges generate money by students coming from abroad, not from the local population. So thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Thank you so much, Senator Viale. We have a point of information from Senator Lewis and a point of information from Senator James. We respond to what the majority leaders are stating in respect to the electrical bill going up by over one million dollars.
- 0:14:24 You stated it increased by a million dollars, the electrical bill that we stated on the record. And please put your name for the record. We have a new stenographer. What was that? Am I clear? By 1.25 is what Valencia shared and utilities increased. Before you respond, what is the reason for such a large increase? What's the reason for the increase? And put your name on the record. Please we have a new story now before you speak. Guadalupe, Valencia. For the utility increase, is that what the question was? Yes. Right.
- 0:14:57 So if we look at the trending over time, the utilities have increased over several years. And there has been an increase in square footage. You know, there's been more. Speak into the mic. I'm sorry. There has been an increase in square footage at the institution, too. So that will contribute an increase to utility costs also. So what are you doing to curtail that cost in

terms of green technology, et cetera, smart lights, what have you? What are you doing? What we're currently doing is finishing up an energy audit first and foremost.

- 0:15:31 We're doing an energy audit of all of our buildings to see what the energy usage wattage is. Working with the green technology center to then come up with a plan of how we can mitigate some of the rising costs that we're seeing. And before I go to Senator Lewis for his point of information. Edie Lewis. Edie, I'm sorry. Edie Conner. Can you, can you, you want. Yes. Senator. You want to respond to Senator. Yeah. Eric Sonnier. Executive Director, RT Park. I just wanted to respond to Senator Viola. Senator Viola, we are 100% in alignment with the frustration about any organization that is realigning or letting Virgin Islanders go. So I just wanted to recognize that. I think it's important for me to say that on the record as the head of an economic development organization in the Virgin Islands. I will also say that because I disagree with the decision does not mean that they are no longer compliant. I've had conversations with both the outgoing CEO of that organization and the new CEO of that organization. I would also say that they're still one of the largest employers of the territory. So I don't want to spin the narrative that they've let everyone go because they haven't. And, and, and then specifically to the Guyana comment that you mentioned, there were eight individuals that were, that were impacted by the duties being transferred to another place. Four of those individuals were reassigned within the organization. So we're not let go. The other four individuals were offered the same reassignment and decided not to take it. So I just wanted to clarify the narrative around it. I would also say that they're probably one, one of the better corporate citizens, um, within the territory as well. So. Okay.
- 0:17:14 Thank you for your response. Senator VLA. And then. Do you have an actual number as to how many employees are let go from VIA? Um, I, I don't. I could get the actual number for you and it wasn't four or eight. I am talking about individuals working for 25 years in management being terminated and the position being transferred off island. So, I mean, they could paint everything else alone, but at the end of the day, they are getting tax benefits in the Virgin Islands sometime at a hundred percent. And they have a responsibility to this community. I am all pro development. I'm pro RT Park. Pro RT Park, pro EDC.
- 0:17:54 But they have to comply with the rules and regs of this place that we call home so that we could grow our economy and not collect tax benefit and grow Guyana and grow wherever else they're transferring those monies. It, it, it just can't work. And I am going to, I do, I have submitted some legislation and it's to give you that authority because you already have the compliance portion that we literally, um, if we can strengthen it. Yes, sir.
- 0:18:20 In reference to the local hiring. We, we cannot have individuals coming to the Virgin Islands, getting tax benefits and transferring those jobs out. And I know because my friends are dominated that work 20 something years. I, I, I welcome sitting down with you, sir. And I will. And working through it. Okay. Thank you so much. And we will do that. Thank you. And colleagues, we're going to have a rapid round after the two point of information. Okay. So everyone will get a chance to ask more questions. Senator Lewis, you are recognized for your point of information. Thank you. Um, President George, I found it. Okay, sir.
- 0:18:51 It was on page eight of your testimony, but this was an appendix of your ask. So I recuse that question because it would have been how it's been delivered and you haven't put the program into use the green technology part. Right? I'm not sure I understand your question. On page seven going into eight. If you look on page eight, if you come down to the breakdown, the green technology. I was asking how, how is it working? But then I'm seeing this is your ask for something coming up. Correct?
- 0:19:32 One second. Let me see. Of your testimony. Are you looking at the table or are you looking at the actual narrative? The table. The table. We have the table there to the left. Page eight. Yeah. So the 200. 200,000. Yeah. So this is the green technology program is in existence. Yeah. Okay. Well, then I was asking how, how, what are the results have been delivered for me? Oh, very good. There is a very active center.
- 0:20:05 Um, one of the accomplishments we share was how they work with the hazard mitigation plan in partnership with local agencies. Um, they continue to write grants and get funding. Um, they were also key and instrumental in partnering with, um, RT Park and the RT Park Solar Farm, for example. Um, they're very active, do a lot. Um, they're the ones who are leading the energy audit of the entire university across both campuses. Um, so honestly, they're doing phenomenal work. Great.
- 0:20:33 And I'm, I'm hearing everyone talking about the free tuition. But how are we actually, are we actually, we have a mechanism in place to track the students who graduate from the university from free tuition? Yeah, that one is, um, more in its infancy. So we are tracking students who accept, um, and once they graduate, then, you know, I know they have a period of time by which they need to write, come back, um, and join the workforce. Um, but we, all students, whether they receive free tuition or not, we do track to see what their employment looks like, um, what their salaries look like,

where they end up going. So we do track students, but we just need to, um, more closely track the students receiving free tuition.

- 0:21:12 So then, in the future, we'll be able to gather some more data. Yes. Yes, sir. Thank you very much for your response. Thank you, Senator Lewis, for your line of questions, your point of information. Senator James, you're recognized for your point of information. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I do want to say that, um, the majority leader made an excellent point about Barry University, because I quickly checked with my daughter, and she said there were 25 students in the class that she attended, and only three were from the Virgin Islands, and the class before there was one from the Virgin Islands, which meant that more than 20, 20 people came into the territory and contributed to, well, they didn't contribute to us, but I'm hoping now they would contribute to you. Right. You know, in term, because obviously people will come to study, um, physician assistance. So that's my big plug for that program. And I want to say to Mr. Sonier that at the, the bankers committee meeting, when I asked you about the fact that there, in my opinion, there should be no overlapping with EDA and, um, RT Park, and you responded that they target different sectors.
- 0:22:34 I do want to point out that at one point, Vitalco, Innovative, Viya were EDA beneficiaries. So we don't want, when their, uh, certificate expires, a company conveniently decides to come to RT Park. I don't know if you want to comment on that. We just don't want that to happen. I, as a senator here, don't want that to happen. Um, so I don't know if you want to comment. Because you did, you did talk about the different, um, but they were able to navigate themselves from being a, a telephone company or whatever to an RT Park technology based. So can you just elaborate on that, please? Thanks.
- 0:23:17 Sure. And I'll start by just saying, I, I agree with you. There should be, um, some parameters around if you can go from one org, um, one economic development organization to the other. I would say that this decision happened way before my time and I, I was not involved in it. So I can't share any of the details of how that happened or why that happened. But I can say that I, I agree with you. Thank you. And if I may, if I may respond to Senator James. You may. Um, I do agree that with you and both Senator VLA, that partnerships are key. And so just wanted to make sure that this body was aware that we're actively pursuing a number of partnerships with other universities, whether around exploring becoming a regional medical campus here for a school of medicine so that we're not bearing all of the costs. Um, as well as looking at partnerships for, um, our students to be able to work with Howard University, for example, around a PharmD program. They finish a bachelor's here and then go directly into a PharmD program. We have no intentions of offering a PharmD program as well as talking to other universities for programs to benefit our students who want to go on to get PhDs that we don't currently offer and have no intentions of offer so that we can focus on our areas of strengths.
- 0:24:31 So we are working on partnerships with other universities. So great point. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Senator James. Senator James, you recognize for your five minutes. six minutes six minutes six minutes six minutes we're just about to say everybody else gets six thank you good afternoon uh to everyone good afternoon to the uva team uh let me first start off um that i'm concerned with um what i heard before i came back downstairs regarding the um the federal audits um i think you said you were somewhere like four months um behind years this um not this excuse me four years sir years yes yes and this truly um concerns me because it will jeopardize the university's ability to get any more federal funding that might be available so um quickly what specific steps um are you guys taking to um to get up to date with the federal audit yes great question um senator getting so we like i said we're working honestly very feverishly to get up to speed on completion of our audits um we're pretty much very close to finishing the 2021 audit i i also just shared that we just completed the 2021 single audit and are currently working on 2022 23 and 24 and we don't have an exact date of when we're able to submit 22 23 24 but we will be submitting 2021 by the net in the next three weeks um to our external auditors we've already given them financial statements etc uh and you're correct we're very concerned about the potential negative impacts on having these delayed audits and so you know as soon as i start on august 1st honestly that was an issue that faced me on day one right having conversations with the u.s department of education about our plan for how we're addressing um the delayed audits as a matter of fact i also had another meeting just this morning with the u.s department of education to be proactive and giving them updates on where we are what we're doing our plan to come back into compliance in order to complete the
- 0:26:55 audits and so we're having those conversations maintaining lines of open communication and we're on track um to get those up to speed all right great so let's just um give ourselves some timelines so that we could um get on track to come up to date let's move to the uh medical simulation center um is the medical simulation center in st croix being actively used by both students and or um uh external partners um yes and no so we do have students who use it as well as external partners um however the school of nursing for example has some simulation space in that building um that they've made plans to incorporate in the fall if the timeline for completion of that school of nursing construction project is further delayed then of course we'll make provisions for the nursing students to use that facility um as well um so for the most part a lot of them are external using those that facility so good to hear that they're external uh i mean for the most part uh

because i like that our when our local students are able to utilize it as well but um how much revenues have been uh generated uh thus far for the use of the simulation center specifically on st croix for training and or services if you allow me to pull it up i can give you that information okay and as you look for that i wanted to know if there's any um other opportunities to further leverage the uh this facility for workforce development or partnership uh with regional

0:28:56 health care institutional institutions yes that's the plan so we're working closely with talking to a number of um external entities whether they're universities that have health care programs whether it's nursing social work medicine any of those to identify their needs based on um what facilities they have or don't have and even if they do have a simulation center themselves the most recent conversations i've had with uh universities just this past week was you know our current medical simulation center on st croix has an or surgical suite for example which most simulation centers don't have so having conversations around um training whether it's surgeons surgical techs and we're also i was sharing with this body earlier having plans to develop additional programming that can generate revenues um so we're diligently working um on that in terms of revenues for the simulation our simulation center you can always get back to me and and and the revenues it's approximately five hundred and nine thousand um in revenues based on fees that are being charged or leasing of rooms but i can send you something formally if that would be more helpful one minute okay um but how much you said in the meantime uh 509 let's see what that says 509 096 in in revenues and expenses were 1.1 million so so then the university bears the cost of you know supplementing um the operating costs for that center so they're not currently completely self-supporting don't don't forget 30 seconds information forward to seeing that okay um if i wrap up um with the free

0:30:59 tuition uh mr chair uh please proceed on the um how's the free tuition program uh progressing with regards to the success and the or the challenges uh that have emerged since the implementation of the free tuition any notable obstacles um faced by the university or even students um in administering or accessing this program i know i had to call you yesterday about uh something else but i just wanted to know that on the record right so um we have seen significant um successes in students being able to secure free tuition we did have to do a lot of work and outreach to be honest to address a lot of misunderstanding and myths about who qualifies uh what the eligibility criteria are that we that they don't need to complete a fafsa in order to to you know be able to access free tuition if their parents you know aren't able to readily provide that information so we went from example um offering free tuition to to about 590 students in academic year 23 24 to offering 2 428 students and that includes right students who apply um not yet um fully accepted as well as students accepted which then resulted in 548 students in academic year 24 25 accepting and being dispersed free tuition compared to previous years where you know when it first started only 184 students accepting so for academic year 24 25 we dispersed 2 million 385 thousand 736 dollars in free tuition compared to you know previous years where the low was 636 000

0:32:58 and academic year 23 24 the highest we ever got was 1.7 million hold there madam president i just wanted to know um any notable um obstacles or or um success uh however um would you be open to uh supporting an amendment that gives uh that gives uh you as the president of the university uh discretion to waive eligibility uh requirements for students facing documented uh hardships medical or even traumatic um hardship um i don't have the authority to waive the authority to waive free to vi higher education requirements uh madam president the question is are you amenable are you would you be supportive of supporting an amendment that will grant you that um authority yes i would be in support of whatever amendments come through legislation all right and are you finding lastly are you finding that first year students particularly those transitioning from high school to college are struggling to meet the uh the current 2.5 gpa threshold some of them do we have cases where students meet them you know the first year of college for any student tends to be a a tough year um and in some cases may drop below the 2.5 requirement um and then in later years or later semesters are then able to become re-eligible um but yes the first year for many students does tend to be a tough year okay i'll be submitting to your office a bill draft um for your review i'll also discuss with um some of the uh board members but i just want to say too don't please don't end up on the uh treasury blacklist

0:34:58 with regards to this um federal audit so please um you and your team work feverishly to uh bring this up to date absolutely thank you uh a cheer and thank you to the president and the university um staff in expanding education access to our students thank you thank you if i may add something um yes sir yes just just wanted to share with senator giddens that honestly our accounting team has been working after hours weekends in order to prioritize and address the audit and as i share with this body we're also meeting every single day to have an audit huddle as well as meeting twice per week with our external auditors as well as working with our audit committee of the board of trustees and our internal auditor which we filled that position earlier this year after that position was vacant for eight years so we are prioritizing getting those audits up to speed very well thank you for that um before we go to round two with a rapid round line of questioning let me ask president george who who did the personnel at the university our human resources department which is led by the vice president for finance administration okay very well i have some questions for you in our respect okay the budget

hearing um i know that um how many vacancies did you see you state you have how many vacancies do you have 64 64 64. how many of those how much of those vacancies are funded and at what percentage are funded funded and at what percentage 100 percent 50 percent they're funded 100 100 100 or any of those vacancies um federally

0:36:48 funded no okay very well and how do you advertise your vacancies how are you going about advertising in vacant positions a number of ways we advertise it on our website we use job elephant elephant we use a number of other um job sharing services that we pay for to some of those are industry specific some of those are more broad indeed we use a number of platforms and ways to advertise and what would you say is the morale of the staff on a scale from one to ten at uvi i would say the morale is probably mixed with most institutions of higher education um and perhaps even a little lower in terms of having lower pay than other institutions on the mainland we do have a dedicated um roster of amazing employees many of whom have been with the institution for 10 years 20 30 years um and of course one thing that did help to boost morale is when we give the three percent increase we saw a significant boost in morale as well as when we do our annual employee service awards we see boost in morale so we're doing what we can but um i would say morale is mixed scale from one to ten give me a number i honestly don't know maybe seven point five eight that's just my guess i haven't surveyed our employees about morale in particular but that that would be a good idea okay do you have any um contract workers how many contract workers do you have in terms of employees i'm checking out my cfo and also how much remote workers do you have in terms of employees also

0:38:34 we don't have many remote workers we have maybe three remote workers three okay why is she looking um what are those positions so we have um one in public relations who's been with the university for quite some time i'm not sure who who else we have one person who is over our uvi online program um we have one person in it those are the only three i know of i'm actually remote workers okay do you have a policy in terms of um contract workers and all remote workers you have a working policy we're going to check on that we're going to check on that on the policy talking about yes sir for remote work so do you have one are you going to work on one i'm going to check on that sir i'm checking with our hr director okay why is there no hr director here there's a budget hearing why isn't the hr director here we did not request for her to be here but i will in the future but why not the little budget hearing they are really one of the key players when it comes to budget hearings true well while you um point of information why is she looking for the information thank you so much mr cheer in reference to your debt service at 1.8 million um that entire 1.8 million dollars is for the debt service on the new nursing building or there are other areas including it's on the entire um rice

0:40:32 capital loan is my understanding okay and the loan was for the new nursing building or what nursing building um quarters b which is on this campus and a number of other projects okay um was does the loan that you got from the hbcu does it cover equipment and supplies for that also includes um three million in ffe for the nursing school building okay and the ffe they're on their way they're going to be here by september that's a good question toy i don't know where we are with chicken chicken chicken i don't i don't know what i mean so she can come up she can join us because in process is we're all one family man come on down so i think she's saying the solicitation is out message you she could come up please bring please bring the individual to the front please she can sit here and man she doesn't need to oh about um where where are we ordering ff and e for the nursing building i'm just trying to find out if it's going to be accessible for those nursing students um did this year or or if not excuse me president george president george president george can you please have her come in a while don't know me afraid to come in a while you have a budget hearing she can she can't sit here look right there she can sit right there okay please go please put your name on the record before you speak okay good afternoon toy matthews associate vp for finance the current ff and e for the new school of nursing building is under review and will be solicited within the next two weeks we're working with the architect to finalize all the plans

0:42:36 so you're working with the architect to finalize the plans for the supplies and equipment that architect is over all of the construction of the building including ff and e and making recommendations okay and and last question your nursing department i know you lost a number of individuals you lost the lancico i know you got somebody new but do you have sufficient instructors on both islands so our come up our dean of nursing says no we do have vacancies um in nursing and are in need of additional faculty i think that's been a challenge that the university has experienced for some time but i'll let dean lewis introduce herself and respond good afternoon lisa lewis dean of the school of nursing at uvi to answer your question senator we do not have enough faculty for our students we're vacant about three or four positions which island uh two for saint thomas one maybe two for saint croix one is pending i have a faculty member on leave is that going to hamper the completion completion for those students who are enrolled is going to hamper them from completing the degree in any way because we supplement with part-time faculty okay and you already have that set yes debt service for the medical school what is that being spent for got a uvi medical school reserve fund what is it a maintenance fund it's in a reserve fund in order for us to apply for to become a uvi school of medicine we have to show reserve funds um because what we've been told by lcme is most medical schools at the time that they apply have 100 million 150 million in a reserve fund um and so we've been trying to build and show that we have you know some sustainability um and so we've

been tasked with building up a reserve fund for the medical

0:44:44 school okay and that is necessary if we pursue independent accreditation but if you have a partnership with an established medical school you'll fall under their middle states accreditation you will but in we're currently we're under nda right now with a medical school i'm exploring a potential partnership and that is something that the consultant looks at what is your reserve in your medical school fund and what's your you know your financial sustainability so it would be a huge risk for any institution even though they already have lcme accreditation to go into a partnership with the university that has no reserve or a very small reserve to be quite what's the balance in the fund now uh 3.9 million medical reserve yeah speak into the mic 3.9 million for medical reserve fund and for all other subcategories do you have the remaining balance which subcategories um senior citizen tuition yeah valensal scholarships center for excellence green technology do you have the balance of all of those uh various funds yes we can give you those we'll pull it up okay on the chair time you you can thank you so much mr chair please pull it pull it up and in the meanwhile do you have an answer for me in terms of um contract workers and remote workers i we gave you the remote workers we just owe you the contract workers yes we're working on the contract we're working on the contract workers right now and i spoke to the policy also but listen in in the future please assure that all of your employees you have all the employees here let them come and speak because they are who support you and they are the ones that do that on an everyday basis and your hr is critical to running your organization they know a lot so they need to be here it's very important i i don't understand why they are not honestly um it's it's critical okay and i would like to know in terms of if you have a policy you can you can um get that back to me if you have a policy and also when it comes to the employees i know do you have a probationally a probation period for employees yes we do and what's that time most of the contracts say one year one year

0:46:58 oh probation that's generous do you have that for contract workers also we'd have i'd have to get back to you and what it says for contract workers okay very well senator we're going to do a wrap it round before we wrap up senator de graaf you recognize for your two minutes wrap it around uh thank you the chair i i'm still hooked on employees how many employees do you have uvi positions okay how many positions do you have let me do the whole breakdown total positions 528 positions 528 currently filled 464 464 now 464 is what's filled now in the in 25 the 25 recommendations were 464 or 453 with actually 289 on um the general fund and well let me go with the post cited report you can turn to the post cited report page five personal services 464 positions uh 283 filled positions st croix 192 st john 191 correct or that's what you have that's the 464 and then you add the federal positions at the 181 make up the 464 right okay so for the filled positions and the general fund is 283 in the 25 budget you had 289 i know you mentioned that you had to let some one minute how many

0:48:44 persons did you let go are you talking about from canceled grants i i don't know i'm talking about personnel i i'm hooked on the personnel first that that that's my thing but i'm just saying now we have 528 positions 464 personnel actually 283 on the general fund 181 and federal funding of the 283 you went down from 25 that was 289 so you went down six from a previous post out of report last year 25 budget which you weren't here for i've just let you know you went down six and you mentioned that you had to let some persons go how many persons did you let go those were two consultants that we just two consultants okay they weren't on your budget federal budget federal budget okay okay i have the federal in so you have the and of the 283 positions how many vacancies that's where the 64 vacancies come from no how many vacancies under the 283 not the federal vacancies only on the general fund vacancies how many vacancies do you have 64 on the general fund okay and and i'm just getting somewhere like i say again with miss the chair so 64 on the general fund okay and of that 64 of those 64. okay so that's 14 and general fund okay i got it right okay and then in closing the the page before page four in looking at a comparison to the 2025 budget post audit report when i look at uh the scholarships um stipend

0:50:57 weighs at 500 000 that that what you submitted or or that was submitted for you because that's actually down two million fifty thousand dollars from what it was in the 25 budget you're looking at you're looking at page four of the post-audit page four of the 2026 post-audit report i just go down to where you have the scholarships slash stipend at five hundred thousand dollars uh projection for 2026 is that your projection for the scholarship slash stipend part of our challenge here is that most of our um general appropriation is used uh for the the salary piece um so no because i'm saying in in the post audit report what that you don't have for 2025 that actual amount was two million five hundred and fifty thousand that was in the 25 budget projected so you're down two million fifty thousand because you're only projecting five hundred and five hundred thousand is is that accurate for for you i'm sorry sir i don't see the two million no right that's what i'm saying the two million is what was in the 25 budget the budget that you came in and met oh so i don't know if you have that information so it was in the 25 budget so now going forward into the 26 budget you're without that 2 million 50 000. so is it the is that your appropriation or what you are asking for or is that what omb sent for you is what i'm trying to get at this is based on the uh governor's

- 0:52:54 cap budget yeah okay so so then it is just to show that the whole page page four look at everything from other services and charges and you'll see where money is uh excluded money some are included and then you have to look at that and send that through the chair to make sure we get all that information so basically again we need personal fringe other services and charges based on what you want right okay thank you for the time mr chair thank you so much senator de graaf senator james you recognize for your two minutes wrap it around thank you thank you mr chair my first question is a quick one for rt park what's a senior people operation manager she she handles our people operations so um our hr sits under the university so there's a lot of that that that we don't have to do but her focus is on training and development but then there's also some operational pieces in there as well okay it didn't mean senior people like me no it meant senior people the the senior operation senior as title has nothing to do with senior people yeah senior people operation manager okay good all right um i was going to contact that person with respect to the senior campus um president george i want to find out i noticed that um the vacancy listing and this is about student well-being and and and health really you have a vacancy director of health services student health center and then the director of resident life is also vacant and then i wanted to find out about the one minute cafe i'm going to put everything quickly together the cafeteria and the student services area
- 0:54:49 if they're going to be fully operational all these areas that i touched on serve students and help them be successful in college so can you address those for me please yeah you're you're absolutely right so we do have a vacancy and the director of health services um currently we have two people from the orville ken campus helping to fill some of that nurse pointer on the st croix campus and our athletics trainer are both credentialed to assist we do have a much i'll let vp worsey give you an update on where we are in the hiring for that director position you also asked about the cafeteria so we are very close to getting the cafeteria back up and running um with hiring employees for the cafeteria because the vendor model um proved a little bit challenging although we are having conversations with um another person interested in contracting to help provide those services so i don't know if either toy or vp worsey want to chime in with the student services area and the director of health services and then toy you can talk about the cafeteria yes very quickly pamela mulenaw worsey vp of student success and innovation um we do have a an active search going for the director of health services on st croix matter of fact dean lisa lewis is chairing that search we so far have i think two really good candidates so interviews are pending we actually have an interim residence life director who has been serving since february she's doing a fantastic job as a matter of fact she has secured a 250 000 home depot grant already and she's been there since february and she has agreed to stay on for an additional year so we are serving the students on saint cori campus thank you please please recognize the mic okay
- 0:56:46 thank you and regarding the cafeteria um not sure if it's well known but it was closed down during the spring of 2025 for various reasons we could not um keep a contractor in place to service the students so we are moving to a different model we have repaired done all the repairs that were needed and required by department of health and um we're reinstated with a permit and so this will be our first time operating as an independent university ran cafeteria so that is underway and like president george said we are speaking with um outside vendor to help us um be ready for the august 11th opening date yeah thank you mr chair thank you so much senator james president george you want to respond yes sir um i i have a copy of our telecommuting policy and if you'd like me to email it to you i can do that just just through the chair as a follow-up yes through the chair okay appreciate that um let me um before i go to senator fredericks let me ask miss mollena uh what's your title again vice president of student success and innovation oh very well what would you say the um student success rate at uvi well it depends on what kind of success we're talking about in terms of graduation in terms of job placement overall yes we do have our bless you our current graduation rate is not um as high as we would like it i think for the last for the 2017 cohort it was 28 percent um which again we have some work to do in that area and so we have put together that's myself and the associate provost of enrollment management have put together a graduation and retention plan which we are currently activating and putting in place things like student success coaches from the day the students step on campus until the day they leave they will have a peer educator as well as a center for student success coach to help them along the way with everything from tutoring to actual you know personal counseling and things like that so we have a plan in place have it been on a on an incline or have they been steady or a decline um it's it's been
- 0:59:08 pretty steady um i'd have to i'd have to get the exact numbers i just knew the one for this year in in off the top of my head but um but we we've we've hovered around that that number you're very well thank you for your response senator fredericks you're recognized for your two minutes thank you very much mr chair good afternoon again listening viewing audience testifier and my colleagues um president george yes sir real quick i in your vacancy listing i saw no vacancies for food service workers and we were just talking about opening up the cafeteria so you got 64 listing vacancies nothing in here about food service food service those positions are in the you want to answer those positions were created they're in the queue please recognize the mic of senator francis's senator francis mike please hello okay thank you i believe i don't have the numbers in front but i believe those will be 10 new positions that we're adding to the list of employees they

weren't so 74 okay see this you really need to come prepared guys because we need to know we didn't know about this all right so just a little cue the next time uh you speak to the your hr person be sure to to tell them there's some key reasons why people want to work here not just one minute they tend to just elaborate on our low salaries supposedly but we don't pay a lot of the taxes they pay in the states we don't pay we don't have to deal with snow we don't have to deal with sales tax we don't have to deal with high property taxes high insurance um for cars traffic tolls trash collection um and the beaches and the reason why i say these things is because that's the only element people think um motivation 30

1:01:02 seconds employees and and and you know morale is the only reasons we use when we describe um why i don't work or why i'm unhappy at work but you cannot replace what we offer here when it comes to those elements you could go away and get paid more and then you have to deal with all the other mess and expenses so just let the hr person know that when we're out here recruiting these 74 vacancies you know let them know that last but not least institutional reorganization for what we have ahead we have time challenges challenges ahead mr chair could wrap up you know that i know that so you just recently did a reorganization based on strategic goals and objectives what key things did you change to anticipate the restrictions and funding that's coming up um good question so the main reorganizations that we've done is we've created two units in particular so we created the office of research and economic development with the new vp um and key positions there to help us attract more revenue generation including for diversifying the kind of grants that we apply for we also as you heard created um student success and innovation and integrate the units that i won't go into but that were outlined in the testimony to better support students um so those were two important reorganizations for us and there are some that you know we've done very small ones in order to help us better address our our delayed audits in order to have you know enough support to do the day-to-day work in accounting as well as to address the the delayed audits i did see you had one internal auditor but and we added one internal auditor because that position was vacant for eight years i started off as an auditor a very important position thank you very much mr chair thank you so much senator fredericks for that promotion on behalf of the university senator joseph you recognize for your two minutes

1:03:09 thank you so much uh mr chairman i i had a very burning question to ask you and it's just a follow-up to the chairman's question you mentioned uh regarding your graduation rate percentage well what is your retention once the young people are enrolled in a program in at uvi what is your retention rate nigel edwards uh almost recent retention rates which is first time full-time students that we come back in the in the second year 76 76 that's not too bad that's not too bad um is that an increase from previous years do you have those numbers from previous years if you give me a few moments okay i'll follow up on the next question i wanted to ask you uh president george do you have any consideration to expand the the dormitories on the albert sheen campus i do have some yes young people okay good because i do know that there are individuals who have asked me from st thomas uh regarding that and we want to assure that we are not just isolating our islands that our young people who live in the st thomas and st john district have opportunities to go to st croix as well i i took classes in the st croix campus 30 seconds and so i had friends who took courses from st croix over here so i just wanted to make sure that that is part of what is being looked at as a vision and to put in

1:05:00 place i believe you have the number for the retention rate uh yes ma'am so it's an increase of from 66 percent from two years ago 66 from two years ago okay so it's about a 10 percent increase yes ma'am okay good uh thank you so much mr chair for the uh time thank you so much senator joseph senator lewis you recognize for your work two minutes thank you mr chairman good afternoon president george yes sir indicated well your cfo cfo right indicated that we have 30 38 positions thus far under 35 000. since this body made the announcement that we move legislation to bring employees from 27 to 35 have you all did a cost out of how much it's going to cost to move those employees up what's the total 250 000 okay and moving this this year you're fy26 what portion of it of your budget has been dedicated to your sports i don't know what the percentage is but oh you remember she our vp of student success and innovation that's now under her area she has it in her budget but she doesn't have it in front of her yes i i'd have to get back that would be something i would really like to hear because i mean we're pushing sports every day you know one minute i go to a spot and you know we're watching sports one day i want to see uva up there i want to see you know i just want to know how we're promoting it you know if we put in our money there where where our mouth is at to promote the sports and activities and um president george yes sir i know we talk about efficiency and so forth

1:07:00 and the good gentleman from the rt park talked about putting in some um charging stations right so the university heading in the direction 30 seconds electric vehicles possibly because i see you have one leaf uh you don't have a plate number you see tbd i don't know what i mean to be dumbing um it was donated you plan to go down that road being like we're gonna get some free power soon next door we we don't currently have any plans for electric vehicles um we don't we're honestly working on our deferred maintenance issues that's what and getting up to speed in our audit issues as well as serving our students um once we finish our energy audit working with um the green technology center you know we'll see what else we can be exploring but that's currently not a plan and then you have about 79 vehicles total time in your fleet how many how many of those you do you know or maybe know are purchased with uh federal monies or being

supported off of any of your federal grants i'm not sure how many i know we had um one for our disaster recovery specialists that i was told was purchased with federal funds i'm not sure about the others to be honest i think we have on on the list of vehicles it it tells us the source of funding most of them say local some say federal so we have to count them if you allow us we can count them but it's it's listed there no no not necessarily i also wanted to know if um if we know how many was um it's still being supported of the federal grant and told me if we charging the usage of the gasoline and maintenance to that grant as well yeah um i know what they charge for the marine science grants and research with the boats but i'm not sure about the vehicles so

1:08:48 i'd have to get that back to you and then lastly mr chairman if i may just say this to the entire university team thank you for all you do but the one plug i want to put in is let's continue making sure that we make sure that all our facilities and buildings are ada compliant yes and senior friendly yes all right that's also on the list for our deferred maintenance plan ada compliance yes okay getting the buttons working all of that lifts yes you are correct and the proper signage and every day you are correct thank you very much thank you so much senator lewis senator veille you recognize for your two minutes thank you so much mr cheer uh quickly did the 28 percent that was based on the four-year cohort when it are you asking about graduation rate yeah the six year oh it was six years yeah 28 percent i'm pretty sure okay let me confirm that the other have been 28 before and then increased a bit five and then six um while she's looking for that turn to page seven of the four salary report you have the answer yeah the most recent six-year graduation rate is 32 percent okay yeah but that was the six year okay um page seven of the post-order report quickly uh men's construction aes sheep farm aquaculture facility one million 106 thousand those are one time contract or does something annual i didn't hear the last part of your question is it an annual contract or it was just one time it's one time that facility has been renovated it's finished it's opened and the same thing for the telemed simulation center those are one time i didn't i didn't hear what you said which one the telemed simulation center integrated technology solutions yeah one time okay mr sonnier the rt village done not coming back or we still pursuing it no we're still pursuing it we still have the 25 acres thanks to this body here um 16 of those 25 acres have to be dedicated to improving the lives of the farmers on the island of st croix um the plan that we had prior we were hoping to get cdb cdb gdr funds that did not work out so now we just have to come up with a new plan for the funding and in the the plan

1:11:07 will look slightly different than it did before okay one minute you have buy-in from the administration say that again do you have buy-in from the administration in reference to moving the rt village forward i've presented options but i do not have um buy-in yet okay um and it's an excellent plan i support the i support the rt village big time i really hope that we could get behind of it a lot of work was done a lot of monies are spent and we need the government need to get behind of that initiative um yes sir now i'm president we need to get behind of that initiative a lot of monies are spent 30 seconds but that particular initiative a reference to the school of education i looked at the graduation i think on st croix we had two individuals that received an elementary education degree and maybe four or five on st thomas uh three were you able to to get those numbers as to this apprenticeship program that was spoken about no not yet your apprenticeship program we're still waiting for dean brown okay i just want to also put on the record that when department of education were before us one of my colleagues act to ask a question in reference of paraprofessionals pursuing the bachelor's degree to go in the classroom and um it was said that a number of paras did not want to transfer despite having the the degree and i found that kind of hard to to believe but i know that partnership programs with the university for paraprofessionals that are in the classroom have worked before and we really need to pursue that is is this something special that we could do in terms of being able to attract most students to the school of education i think we we did the nursing scholarships etc and the nursing enrollment has increased i think in nursing class probably have what 12 13 now for this year for st croix

1:13:00 you're talking on the side excuse me um are you talking about for the two classes the two cohorts yes no it's more than 13 we have probably about 20 20 double that between the two classes in st croix and st amas um roughly the same i don't have the exact numbers but it's more than 13. is there anything we could do to increase the number of teachers that this body i mean we appropriate over a million dollars separate for scholarships on a regular basis through the miscellaneous section of the budget do we need to earmark some specific monies for for teacher education can you at least begin to think about right um how we can be able to attract more individuals to go into the field of teaching and i'll also recommend that um uvi need to be in the schools they need to need to be in the schools in the fall not in the spring from this fall you need to be in the school letting the individuals know what majors are on campus there's free tuition we need to increase those numbers and there's there's no reason why we can't get those numbers over two thousand when we have free tuition agree thank you so much it's a cheer and to answer your question if i may thank you so much senator vla for a line of questioning yes madam president yes senator vla so there were 20 students in the teacher apprenticeship program to answer your question um there was also a question earlier about contract workers there are 38 contract workers and senator vla i do agree with you that one of the things that we can do to help increase interest in the teacher education or in a degree in education every year of course we host hundreds of students that come through for college tours at uvi and i

personally go and speak to as many of them as i can um and i ask each one every time what their interest is and honestly in the maybe 400 students that i've talked to maybe one has said a teacher of all those students only one and so i

1:15:02 honestly think that we need to create a program where students in middle school as early as middle school get to you know be a teacher assistant or get some kind of extra whatever it is that we come up with to interest them and to shadow teachers so they see what it entails and by the time they get in high school then they can work as whether it's a tutor in the area that they're strengthened so that they can develop a love for teaching what we are seeing though is dean brown has done a great job working with many in this territory as well as in the bvi as well as in st martin for those who have degrees in other fields who then want to transition to teaching so then getting certificates so that they can then enter so we are seeing more students there so we have been doing a lot of outreach and and i think you're exactly right we do need to be in the schools more i have charged the aces team to be honest to be in the schools more talking to students parents principals going to pta meetings any uh as much as possible so that people can ask their questions rather than thinking that we offer open houses and that people will come to us but to be more in the community we did also just so you know host all of the principals and counselors on of all schools private and public on the saint thomas island so answer their questions talk about what we're offering clarify myths about free tuition because even many of the principals had myths about free tuition and we plan to do the same thing on st croix we've been working with the principals and just haven't been able to align dates so that you know i can also have that conversation along with the aces team with all the principals and whatever counselors they want to send so we can have those conversations as well so they can tell us what's working what's not working and they also told us a lot about the shortages of math and science teachers and how can we be a partner to help them address those needs in the k-12 system specifically in high school especially

1:17:03 i don't know how individuals didn't know about free tuition the governor says it all the time every event he goes through the senate says it all the time how could you not know about free tuition seven years and and you're telling me principals still didn't know well they knew about it but one principal for example um said that there was a belief within her institution that it was um a scam then other person don't need to be in that position anymore okay because anybody that in education in the virgin islands and believed that free tuition was a scam after a bill was passed it became an act the governor signed it all the time the senators signed it we're using it in our campaigns and you believe it's a scam you shouldn't be leading students and i'll end with that i think part of the misconception was people didn't understand the the requirements fully the requirements for to work when you're finished but also the requirements that you know based on um the gpa and not needing to do a fafsa and and that it doesn't cover books and fees i think that's the part that the person was saying was a scam because students were saying well i still have to end up paying something the misconception of free tuition the tuition is free but they still have to pay books and fees which which i think they were dissatisfied with but you can't you can't get everything right yeah very well um before i go to senator gettings which is the last um center let me let me um follow up on your response to me in 38 contract workers um what discipline are those in all those um professors support staff what does that cover it varies it honestly varies and how long how long in the term of the those contracts and they all vary as well okay very well well through the chair you can stand and listen okay i'll appreciate that senator getting you recognize for your two minutes thank you uh i know listening to that last uh discussion there brought me brought me back to my mom my mom again you know she used to say sometime you need to read spell and pronounce so that people could understand what you're talking about because i mean this free tuition uh like the senator just stated has been promoted by the executive branch and this legislative branch for how long now in any way uh three

1:19:36 points uh i haven't seen any vacancy announcements uh coming from uvi and i'm hearing a magnitude of some 64 uh vacancies within the university so i'm asking you to submit through the chair the listing of those those positions the 64 positions uh broken down by district and two are there any movements or talks with regards to uh the build of a multi-purpose facility here on the island of saint croix at the university i know that there's a need i know that there have been discussions in the past i know we've submitted i don't know at least eight versions of applications to um a number of cdbg programs whether through disaster recovery and we're told that's not the right mechanism and then we did it through hazard mitigation and in the end those were not funded so the need still exists um so we do require funding for that we've been trying to do our own diligence in talking to developers about having a public-private partnership and what that would be what possibilities would exist to doing that for a multi-purpose center a student union if you will so that students have a space to congregate to have large auditoriums to do multiple events similarly we also need more housing as we're we're growing on both campuses i know um senator joseph asked about that um on both campuses so um okay let's let's continue to work on that uh feverishly please and lastly i didn't ask about um student enrollment but uh you know listening to the discussion again every school guidance counselor should have all of uva's promotional materials accessible to them to be discussing with their students what are your thoughts about having uh kiosks and or pamphlets at every high school in the

- 1:21:47 territory i think that is a great suggestion i know our our team from access and enrollment services they go out leave pamphlets um i think the kiosk idea is a good one um so 30 seconds edwards here will explore that um i'm also happy to report though that when i did meet with all the principals and counselors here on this island that two of them in particular were sharing that they required every student to at least apply to uvi even if they you know ultimately ended up going somewhere else i thought that was a great exercise so that students can learn about what our offerings are what the opportunities are in terms including the scholarship opportunities available and i think if more schools could do that that would also help but we'll as a university will do our part to do more outreach great to hear that because i was about to say that uh the theme needs to be make uvi time first uh thank you uh mr chair and uh hopefully they submit the information uh i've requested thank you thank you so much senator giddings again uh nigel edwards uh one of the initiatives that we're going to pilot in the fall is direct admissions meaning that we're going to query the transcripts for all students within the territory and automatically offer them admission to the university of the virgin islands and then that will hopefully prompt them to then apply so it's just an additional step that we're doing to sort of smooth the process out and encourage students to come to uvi very well point of information senator lewis dr george yes i received um about two letters thus far i received about two letters of people asking for some assistance i don't know i don't know who to forward it to but i know i'll send it to you with people wanting to be vendors and boor's beach
- 1:23:43 you want to put something on the record i don't know what to tell them so you tell me what to tell them yeah any anyone who has interest in being any vendor with uvi typically goes to the cfo's office if they're asking to lease space that also goes to the cfo's office with miss dior danette and so you can send them to myself or to miss valencia we do have some restrictions with the kinds of vendors that are allowed to be on brewer's beach based on regulations and so we would just have to look at what it is that they're proposing because we have you know folks doing some groups taking groups to do things but we also want to make sure we're protecting the beach and protecting the turtles and so on that are there but yeah send them to myself and miss valencia thank you thank you senator lewis um colleagues we have exhausted our time in terms of um the university of virgin island rt park but before i go let me i won't be doing the chair any justice if i didn't ask this question on his behalf what keeps you what keeps you up at night president george oh my goodness how much time you got not much honestly a number of things i'm very proud of what the university has accomplished how we're serving our students but what does keep me up at night are um funding for the university in terms of you know cuts to federal funding that we're receiving what's happening in washington with the reconciliation bill the big beautiful bill all those things right would definitely affect us um the risk that they would put at our students even the risk for our international students and visa status as well as our audits our audits are top of mind every morning i wake up we have a 9 a.m huddle so it's like every day i think about our audits and i'm grateful for our team to really pushing and then honestly our delayed allotments you know caused me to knit a little bit in terms of you know making sure we can honestly meet payroll and meet our obligations so those are the things that keep me up at night thank you so much i appreciate
- 1:25:45 your responses i'm going to give you one minute to wrap up before i give you one minute to wrap up i'm going to give give um senator the graph his point of information and i'm going to give you one minute to wrap up uh thank you mr chair uh president george and director seneer i gave you a passing grade thank you sir because the first time you came in alliance then and you did well so come next year i expect greater things will do of you okay i i don't think you you both are highly highly qualified professionals so i just want to put on the record i support your entities 100 percent and my colleagues but again we've been easy on you so thank you for all you do and thank you for the time mr chair thank you senator the graph and please do not forget your human resources that is very important we won't come without the hr director yes sir so please wrap up your one minute please yes honestly i just want to thank this body for giving us your time attention you're very deliberative and thoughtful questions um your continued support of the university of the virgin islands and your prioritization for student success it shows in the questions that you ask in the previous support that you've given and you know we asked you to consider very seriously the challenges that we face as an institution we're only asking for what we're asking because we really need to ask i wish we weren't having to ask for an increase but we desperately need it and it is my goal over the next couple of years that we continue to generate revenues on our own and so and an additional philanthropic investments so that in future years we're asking for less and less and that is my goal and i just thank you sincerely for the work that you do on a daily basis to support our students in our community so thank you okay thank
- 1:27:37 you and on behalf of the chair i want to thank his staff central staff media public affairs security and my colleagues for being here all day with us sonographer thank you so much the committee and budget appropriations and finance is hereby adjourned

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke · only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

- 6x

Senator Marise C. James
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James
- 5x

Senator Avery Lewis
heard in this transcript as: Lewis
- 4x

Senator Kurt Vialet
heard in this transcript as: Vealey, Viale
- 3x

Senator Kurt VLA
heard in this transcript as: VLA
- 3x

Senator Kurt Viola
heard in this transcript as: Viola