

University of the Virgin Islands
February 21, 2004

**An Evaluation of the 1999 Organizational Restructure
And
Directions for the Future**

Executive Summary

The overarching goals of the institutional restructuring implemented in 1999 were to allow for future growth of the University and to encourage fullest development of its potential for the new Millennium. Recommendations for the new structure were based on review of the 1997 Self-Study and other institutional documents relating to organization and governance and concerns shared with Board Consultant, Dr. Howard Simmons, as well as the guiding principle that the University would remain a single institution, geographically dispersed. A progress report on the implementation of the structure was provided to the Board of Trustees in October 1999.

There have been two formal assessments of the structure, one by Dr. Simmons in 2000, and another by consultant, Dr. Mary Benjamin of the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff, in 2001. Dr. Simmons' report concluded that it was too early to fully assess the effectiveness of the new structure. Dr. Benjamin was tasked with recommending an academic administrative structure that reverted to the 1998-99 funding levels and that better facilitated the development and growth of academic programs, while strengthening the leadership of the academic units in support of increased enrollment, retention and program quality. An optimum level of campus autonomy was also to be maintained. Dr. Benjamin, after conducting a number of interviews with faculty and administrators and after review of institutional documents proposed a structure grouping academic units into schools, with leadership for these on each campus but with responsibility for program growth and development across the campuses. Dr. Benjamin's recommendations were not implemented, but became the basis for further discussion of possible structures that would realize the restructuring goals.

There have been other less formal assessments of the structure: student and faculty satisfaction surveys, anecdotal evidence and faculty action. All of these indicate that while there has been quantifiable progress toward realization of each of the individual goals of the 1999 restructuring, there remain areas of concern and issues still to be addressed and resolved. One of the most critical of these is the need to finalize the restructuring of the academic units to address leadership for program development, program quality and student and client satisfaction. Additionally, the budget shortfalls for FY '04 and FY '05 in addition to the revenue generation and cost reduction targets approved by the Board of Trustees in the Gap Funding Initiative (December 2003) dictate that there can be no delay in finalizing an academic structure that would serve as a driver for the realization of the 2000-2005 strategic goal of campus restructuring.

Using Dr. Benjamin's recommendations as a basis for organization of the academic units into two schools that are not geographically bound, a broad-based Restructuring Task Force composed of faculty, administrators and students has been created to recommend a structure that would realize, within the available time-frame, the mandated cost savings and the necessary improvements in program leadership, program development and quality and customer satisfaction. This proposed restructuring will respect the values of optimum levels of campus autonomy and assist in realizing the strategic goal of creating unique campus identifies. A number of specific tasks have been identified to assist in achieving the intended goals in as painless a manner as possible and in a way that encourages buy-in and support from faculty. The proposals will be supported by actual program costs that are currently being developed to support on-going work on program alignment to vision and mission.

The primary characteristics of the new academic structure will be:

Two schools within which all academic programs are grouped. These schools will not be geographically bound, but each will be capable of delivering programs to both campuses as resources allow.

Each school headed by an academic dean with responsibility for overall program development, quality and effectiveness within his/her respective school.

Consolidation of academic programs along disciplinary lines with appropriate leadership structures for program units that will replace the current structure of twelve division chairs for six academic divisions and area coordinators.

The structure will be finalized for review no later than the June meeting of the Board of Trustees in order to allow implementation in August 2004 and meet the objectives of the Gap Funding Initiative and the Strategic Plan.

L. Ragster, President

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