

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader

Isaacson, Miller  
263 Summer Street, 7th Floor  
Boston, MA 02210  
Re: *University of the Virgin Islands Presidential Search*

Dear Members of the University of the Virgin Islands Presidential Search Committee:

I am excited to apply for the President of the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) position. There are many reasons why the opportunity to lead UVI attracts me. First, on the heels of a global pandemic, there is a dire need for an educated and well-prepared citizenry to avail themselves of the many opportunities for growth and innovation that lie before us. Since its founding in 1962, UVI has provided unmatched access, affordability, employment readiness, job training, and leadership development for this needed citizenry. Second, the growing national assault on African Americans' access to college calls for leadership committed to protecting and uplifting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), their place in the higher education landscape, and the students who use it as their vehicle of transformation. Last and most importantly, the position represents an opportunity for me to return to serve the U.S. Virgin Islands, my island home that which was poured into me as a native daughter, into my parents as alumni, into the people of the Virgin Islands, and into all those who have experienced direct and indirect benefits of the institution. For these reasons and more, it would be an honor to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the University community and the broader territory, leading the University of the Virgin Islands as it crafts the vision for how the college will enter its next decade of excellence.

In my over 20 years in the educational field, I have had the opportunity to work across the spectrum of higher education settings and have been afforded the incredible opportunity to work on behalf of and with vibrantly diverse bodies of students, faculty, and staff. I held a series of administrative and academic positions: Faculty, Deputy Department Chairperson, Accreditation Coordinator, Assistant Provost, Associate Provost, Provost, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Success, which demonstrate a progressive record of responsibility and a comprehensive understanding of the higher education field.

At the College of New Rochelle-School of New Resources in Brooklyn, I served as an adjunct faculty member teaching adult-learners in baccalaureate degree programs. I also served as an adjunct faculty at Teachers College, Columbia University teaching graduate courses and as a coordinator in the Office of Sponsored Programs. At William Paterson University of New Jersey, a residential, Predominantly White Institution which offers baccalaureate and graduate degrees, I served as the Associate Provost. I also served as the Senior Vice President and Provost at Bronx Community College, CUNY, a Hispanic Serving Institution.

In 2000, my initial appointment as a faculty member and as a college administrator in 2006 occurred at Medgar Evers College, CUNY. I served as both a faculty and later as the Assistant and Associate Provost. Like many HBCUs, as a PBI, Medgar Evers' student population is majority Black given its location in Central Brooklyn, New York, which holds the highest percentage of Caribbean peoples living outside the Caribbean, a significant percentage of the student body hail from the Caribbean or have Caribbean ancestry. I am fortunate to have spent my formative and 12 incredible years at Medgar Evers College, as it helped me to develop an even deeper appreciation for the mission of institutions such as PBIs and HBCUs in educating its students, closing historical equity gaps, creating pathways to prosperity, and imbuing them with a commitment to civic engagement.

Since 2018, I have served as President of Kingsborough Community College (KCC) of the City University of New York (CUNY). Kingsborough is the only community college in Brooklyn, New York, the largest and most populous borough of New York City. As one of the 25 colleges within CUNY, KCC offers learners the opportunity to earn Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science credentials in over 40 programs and four certificate programs. Most students (over 60%) transfer to a four-year institution within CUNY. The campus, which has its own beach, is in Manhattan Beach on the southern edge of Brooklyn overlooking the Sheepshead Bay, Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

Founded in 1963, KCC is dedicated to serving the educational needs of its diverse student population, representing over 140 different countries, and speaking over 70 languages. The diversity of the 2.5 million residents of Brooklyn is reflected in our student body with 52.7% of students from underrepresented groups. Throughout the College, there is a strong commitment to ensuring students are successful in their academic endeavors and developing well-rounded, informed individuals that contribute to the communities they interact with. As a result of this commitment, Kingsborough has one of the highest CUNY community college graduation rates (the Fall 2017 cohort had a 35.0% three-year graduation rate and a 39.5% four-year graduation rate) and has been recognized three times as one of the top ten community colleges by the Aspen Institute. The college serves over approximately 6000 degree-seeking and 7000 non degree students each semester.

I am fortunate to be a part of this village called higher education working within vibrant academic communities of faculty and staff who deliver on its promise to students, and I hope to have the opportunity to continue to do so as the next President of the University of the Virgin Islands. Please accept this cover letter and resume, which provides a snapshot of my experience, skills, interest, and desire to carry out the duties of the presidency, undertake the challenges, and

capitalize on the opportunities described in the position description, qualifications, and characteristics.

***Assess, enhance, and stabilize operations.***

The University of the Virgin Islands stands as the territory's only institution of higher education, and so too does Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, which holds the distinction of being Brooklyn's only community college; as such, both UVI and KCC occupy an essential space. Upon my appointment as President, I initiated a comprehensive assessment of KCC informed by a review of existing data from the faculty and staff satisfaction survey launched within the first four months of my administration, a review of the Strategic Plan and outcomes, annual division reports, review of the most recent Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Self Study and feedback, listening tours with students, faculty, staff, alums, external partners, and my observations. As a result of this initial assessment, I understood the college's needs better. I used this information to inform the development of critical priorities, which I shared with the college community at the start of the Spring 2019 semester. Among these priorities were improving communication, increasing, and stabilizing enrollment, promulgating a culture of assessment, expanding the college's footprint, attracting resources, and enhancing workforce development. These priorities remain front and center of our work, but I am proud of our accomplishments.

***Enhance communication and transparency***

As president, I worked to improve internal and external communication. Internally, Senior staff (President, VPs/Cabinet) meet regularly to discuss challenges, successes, and progress toward meeting annual goals and objectives. Each divisional Vice President and I send a monthly report to the college community to keep them abreast of the work in our respective areas. My report typically highlights key information from the CUNY's central office, budget updates, governance review activities, and highlights of programs and college community members. I also send special messages to the college on topics of particular interest and import.

In addition, I initiated a major undertaking to improve our external communication by upgrading and improving the design, navigation, and organization of the College's website for external users to better serve as a student recruitment tool. Beyond the website, I have invested in staff in the Office of Communications that focus on original video content and increasing KCC's social media presence and digital advertising on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google, and YouTube. Print advertisements can also be found in local news media, Hulu, and public transportation. In 2019, I forged a partnership with Schneps Media, a local media company serving the NYC metropolitan area with over 1.5 million readers across two daily papers, a multitude of community papers, and other outlets by contributing a monthly column (Kingsborough Corner) that provides a platform for me to discuss KCC programs, issues in higher education and highlight faculty and staff.

<https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/CommunicationsandMarketing/articles.html>

### ***Grow enrollment, raise UVI's Profile***

I believe that enrollment does not sit solely on the shoulders of units in the Division of Enrollment Management but is everyone's responsibility and business. As such, I instituted weekly enrollment management updates, which provide a snapshot of enrollment compared to the previous year, progress toward targets in each category (freshmen, transfer, continuing, and other special programs), and recruitment activities. I also encouraged faculty participation in high school recruitment and open house activities. As someone who routinely walks around the college talking to students and visiting offices, being unable to engage with the campus community during the pandemic shutdown was difficult. Consequently, I instituted three practices that I continue to employ, even as the college is now back in person: monthly student town hall meetings via Zoom, where students have an opportunity to ask questions, bring issues to the attention of administrators who also join me on the call; weekly motivational emails to students [https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/presidentoffice/President\\_Weekly\\_Message/index.html](https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/presidentoffice/President_Weekly_Message/index.html) and the KCC Welcome Wagon where I visit students at their homes, jobs or high schools who will attend the college as first year or transfer students and gift them with college SWAG. <https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/presidentoffice/welcomewagonvideo.html>

I restructured the Division of Workforce Development, Continuing Education, and Strategic Partnerships to expand career-related services, resources, and experiential learning opportunities to non-credit and credit students and shared employer contacts within the division. The division's formation also centralized the College's external partnerships with local and regional elected officials, employers, and community-based organizations (CBOs) through the newly created Community Partnership database. This database contains data about external partners, including the primary point of contact and information about past and current programs, reducing confusion and repetition among the many stakeholders at the college. In 2022, I launched the Kingsborough Bridges to Opportunity Network (K-BON) to formalize partnerships with local CBOs to prioritize residents' health, educational, and employment needs by identifying needs, proposing solutions, and implementing new or refining existing programs.

Satellite campuses/locations like those in St. Martin and St. John provide a clear pathway to degree attainment. In 2022, KCC opened its first satellite location in East New York, an underserved area in Brooklyn where only 41.3% of residents are high school graduates; and 12.8% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. I am particularly proud of this accomplishment as our satellite location sits within a deeply affordable housing unit and serves a diverse socio-economic population. We offer credit and non-credit programs and provide the college with an opportunity to advance both our commitment to equity and our mission to offer high-quality and affordable programming that will prepare a new cadre of graduates for transfer to other schools and entry into the workforce in high need areas expanding the pipeline to degree attainment through continuing education courses.

On average, we serve 10,000 continuing education students annually through an extensive portfolio of courses and certification programs such as healthcare, business, technology, skills trade, and personal and professional enrichment for youth and adults seeking short-term certifications to improve their career goals. Additionally, we offer special programs through college for kids (5 years and older) and 50+ wellness programs for adults. Under my administration, we also launched the implementation of micro credentials which are

certifications that verify a learner's competency in a specific skill or set of skills and focus on creating non-credit to credit articulation with academic programs.

In addition to continuing education programming, there are pathways to degree attainment that we capitalize on at the college. With the largest College Now program in CUNY, we serve over 5,000 high school students each semester as they earn 3-6 college credits in liberal arts classes that are transferable to all CUNY colleges. Furthermore, our early college program, Kingsborough Early College Secondary School, is a secondary education school that provides students (starting in the 6th through the 12th grade) an opportunity to earn an Associate degree in liberal arts from KCC. Upon completion, students earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree simultaneously. Should I have the opportunity to serve as President of UVI, you can be assured that the Department of Education and the Board of Education will continue to be key partners as we strengthen this critical pathway to degree attainment. I also look forward to expanding partnerships with colleges/universities throughout the Caribbean and on the mainland, including community colleges which are ideal conduits for transfer and increasing student enrollment.

### ***Refine, articulate, and implement a strategic vision***

I am confident that I can create and sustain an environment where members of the college community work collaboratively, where shared governance is effective, and where all members can thrive. A few months after joining KCC, I poured new energy into the college's strategic planning process, which seemed to have been stalled. I ensured that the process was collaborative and included the College Council's Standing Strategic Planning Committee, the Dean of Faculty, representatives from academic departments, and several administrative offices and students. The Committee identified five areas of concern: Student Success, Operational Excellence, Community and Communication, Governance and Planning, and Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships. The College Council approved the Strategic Plan in Spring 2022, and an implementation plan was drafted to develop key strategies and objectives for achieving each area of concern identified in the Strategic Plan.

### ***Inclusive and accessible leadership***

The college's review of Shared Governance was also at a standstill when I assumed the presidency. The community opposed revising the plan, which had not been comprehensively reviewed since the late 1990s. Hence, I started the process by including data from the recently launched faculty and staff satisfaction survey I implemented upon my arrival and the external results of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey. I secured the services of a consultant to facilitate the process. Based on the results, I formed a Governance Review Task Force of 12 college community members to complete subsequent steps in the review process. I convened seven Governance Review Ad Hoc Committees, which included any college community member who wished to participate. The Ad Hoc Committees are working on final recommendations for submission in Fall 2023.

My work in higher education as a faculty member and administrator has strongly influenced my understanding and appreciation for the tenets of and practice of shared governance and consensus building among all constituencies. As president, I chair the College Council and meet

regularly with the steering committee and the campus union (Professional Staff Congress) leaders to discuss and resolve labor-related matters.

### ***Increased exceptional stakeholder service***

The examples above demonstrate my extensive record of creating and supporting professional development for faculty and staff. As such, as President of UVI, I would be similarly and profoundly committed to ensuring a comprehensive agenda of professional development opportunities for all UVI personnel and ensuring that opportunities exist for faculty to develop, refine, and expand their scholarship agenda and ensure that staff has access to professional development that enables them to support institutional effectiveness.

My experience as a junior faculty member strengthens my resolve to ensure an effective framework for faculty mentorship, that faculty are aware of promotion and tenure requirements, and that faculty evaluations are utilized to drive improvement in teaching. At Kingsborough and Bronx Community College, we used the COACHE survey findings and recommendations provided by the faculty to drive necessary improvements. We developed workshops to help faculty prepare for reappointment, promotion, and tenure; materials were revised to ensure that criteria for promotion, tenure, and reappointment were clear to faculty and consistent across all academic departments. Furthermore, intentional efforts were made to ensure female faculty and faculty of color recruitment and retention.

### ***Assessment driven***

My first administrative position in higher education was as the Deputy Chairperson of the Medgar Evers College Education Department. In this role, I led the department's/college's accreditation process for its education programs. After a successful visit, then-President Dr. Edison O. Jackson offered me the Assistant Provost for Assessment position. Promoting a culture of assessment and data-informed decision-making has always been a hallmark of my work. While at Bronx Community College, I created the Periodic Administrative Review process, which allowed our service areas to assess and analyze their effectiveness, a process that was commended at the college's subsequent reaccreditation visit. I also served as the designer of our accreditation self-study framework. At KCC, I ensured that the college devoted greater engagement with assessment. Assessment of student learning at the programmatic level and General Education assessment have become more standardized so that data can be collated and shared more uniformly. All Administrative, Educational, and Student Support (AES) areas developed measurable outcomes and are collecting data to evaluate the unit's operational effectiveness and student outcomes related to their unit. Also, I increased my focus on sharing assessment strategies and data by adopting new platforms and creating new opportunities to share them, such as Assessment Week, where these areas share the analysis of their areas. The college uses Tableau, a data visualization platform, and developed training for the college community, so they are well-versed in using the dashboards. We also purchased the Anthology Assessment Management System to assist with conducting, managing, and analyzing assessment projects in academic and non-academic areas.

I created the KCC Assessment Leadership Council, of which I am a part, and implemented regular assessments, such as the annual faculty and staff satisfaction survey, to evaluate areas for improvement across the College. In addition to these regular surveys, more targeted ones are

conducted to collect data on other topics of interest. For example, during COVID-19, the Using Data to Support Teaching and Learning Faculty Interest Group began conducting surveys with students and faculty to better understand their experiences with online instruction. In the Fall of 2022, the President's Office conducted a survey with the department chairpersons to identify the professional development needs of their teams.

### ***Experience in crisis management***

Among my greatest skills are navigating and addressing challenges through inclusive, collaborative, constructive, honest, ongoing dialogue with stakeholders while ensuring we stay within our mission, values, and priorities.

As I think about the past five years, I would say that the most significant challenges faced were navigating the global pandemic, managing enrollment, addressing historical and recurring allegations of anti-semitism even as we strived to maintain a positive campus climate and our values of diversity, equity and inclusion and managing weather-related emergencies as an ocean-facing campus.

The pandemic was a huge crisis for us all, and my approach to navigating this time working closely with the CUNY Central Office, my senior staff, and the campus' union leadership was to convene a committee (Forward Committee) of faculty and staff (chaired by a faculty member) to develop both a plan of action and reopening plan. Ensuring this was an inclusive process characterized by transparency and consistent information sharing with all college community members was critical. It was a challenging time, given COVID's impact on our community. Many students became unemployed, resided in overcrowded homes due to the city shutdown, were food insecure, and lacked the resources to engage in online learning. In response, we expanded online support services for counseling and academic tutoring, purchased laptops for students, packed bags of food from our pantry, left them at the front gate security booth for pick up, and launched a monthly student town hall. For faculty and staff, along with the University, we increased professional development in online teaching and platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom; we converted in-person processes to online formats and made many more changes to address our new reality. It took everyone at the college to help successfully navigate the pandemic, from the custodial staff, who helped to sanitize the campus once we started our gradual return, to our technology staff, who converted traditional classrooms to HyFlex settings. Our Communications and Marketing department ensured that information about campus protocols was updated, shared, and easily accessible to users.

For several years before my arrival, Kingsborough experienced declining enrollment. My assessment of the College and its data showed that increased higher education options for students, stagnant curriculum, and modality development were the main reasons for the decline. I immediately went to work by identifying new leadership and convening a committee to develop a Strategic Enrollment Plan. Unfortunately, the implementation of our plan was thwarted by the global pandemic. Higher education suffered greatly, but the impact on community colleges was more significant given the student body we serve (first-generation, non-traditional, and 60% Pell recipients). We worked diligently to ensure adequate online options for students who needed support. As we approached the 2022-2023 academic year, the College demonstrated the highest

percentage increase among all community colleges in the CUNY system and the second-highest increase in enrollment among all campuses in the University.

Kingsborough is the only CUNY campus with a private beach. The college is located in Manhattan Beach on the southern edge of Brooklyn, overlooking Sheepshead Bay, Jamaica Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean. While hurricanes challenge the USVI, Kingsborough is susceptible to hurricanes and snowstorms because its location always presents incredible challenges. For this reason, we have an emergency response team and protocols that we follow in inclement weather. We also work closely with the CUNY Central Office and the New York City agencies in the event of these natural disasters. Given that I have experienced many hurricanes while living on St. Croix, I have a solid understanding of how these occurrences can affect residents and the way of life in the territory in both the short and often long term. This understanding and my experience managing conflicts will provide me with a solid foundation for implementing appropriate and effective emergency response plans.

### ***Commitment to Diversity***

Despite values that speak to the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion at KCC, the college has historically been subjected to allegations of anti-semitism. Although I shared my commitment to creating a community of respect, the allegations have continued over the past five years against faculty, staff, and even members of my administration and myself. The public nature of the allegations has, at times, been damaging to the college and community's reputation. Not too long after I was appointed president, I launched a Campus Climate Committee constituted by faculty, staff, and student to provide me with relevant background, advice, and guidance in responding to situations that occurred. I also initiated a search for an inaugural Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which was met with some resistance. As part of our governance review process, I also recommended implementing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee as a standing committee of the College Council to reinforce a college-wide commitment to the values and practice. In alignment with our Strategic Plan, I ensure that programs offered through our Student Union and Intracultural Center are well-resourced and supported. I continue to condemn hate, anti-semitism, discrimination, and racism in many special messages and monthly reports to the college. Most importantly, I seek ways to institutionalize mechanisms that will help the college community act in ways that are consistent with its values. I require that my executive teams engage in the necessary work and demonstrate DEI values and practices. My senior leadership team is the most diverse (gender and race) in the college's 60-year history. We are similarly committed to ensuring a more diverse faculty body. While we are making strides in increasing our Hispanic student population, we are equally committed to narrowing the outcome gaps between black men and their peers.

### ***Rapport with external stakeholders and elected officials***

As President, I regularly engage (in one-to-one meetings and external events/programs) with the larger community of alumni, businesses, elected officials, and donors who want to invest in the success of KCC and its students. I am prepared to engage with the spectrum of stakeholders in the territory, the Caribbean, and the mainland to secure resources and solidify partnerships to support the University's mission. I regularly meet with elected officials to update them about the college's new programs, provide them with the opportunity to meet our dynamic students, and lobby them for funding. I have provided testimony to the NYC Council on funding needs for

community colleges, actively met with the Brooklyn legislative Albany, and consistently attended the NYS Assembly Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Caucus weekend in Albany as well. Earlier this year, I hosted the first CUNY/ Brooklyn Legislative Meeting at Kingsborough bringing together all Presidents from our sister institutions in Brooklyn and members legislators from across the borough. I am proud that KCC has successfully secured over \$15 million in funding for capital projects and partnerships with federal, city, state, and private agencies in workforce development alone in the past four years.

### ***Fiscal acumen***

At KCC, I manage a \$165 million budget and work closely with the Vice President for Administration and Finance and the Budget Director to ensure fiscally sound management and practices, as well as with the Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Workforce Development to pursue funding and partnership opportunities for students, faculty, and the institution.

As a CUNY Community College, KCC depends on funding from NY State and City legislators and tuition. In recent years, there has been increased emphasis on fundraising for community colleges. The call has been even louder recently, given the financial strains that developed for the city because of the pandemic. Within the first year of my presidency, I secured the college's largest donation (\$1 million) for scholarships. While our donor base grows, most resources are from strategic partnerships with government agencies and partner schools. For example, capitalizing on our unique location (waterfront property) and programming (Maritime Technology), we have been awarded \$9 million in funding from the state and city to develop an Offshore Wind training facility in preparation for the anticipated need for qualified personnel for green energy jobs.

Under my leadership we have increased support for capital projects and currently have over \$50 million in projects in progress and in the design phase.

### ***Administrative style***

While much of a president's job is ensuring effective operations, it has also been my job to set the tone for a positive environment. As we returned from the pandemic and increased faculty and staff presence on campus, I instituted an intramural (faculty/staff) softball game to enhance breast cancer awareness and an intramural volleyball game for mental health awareness. And after a year hiatus, the college community was happy to participate once again in celebrations that I instituted, such as the Thanks for Giving breakfast for building, grounds, maintenance, custodial, and public safety staff, and administrative assistants; Administrative Assistance Day Brunch; Public Safety Appreciation Breakfast, and many other events that celebrate each member of the college community who is integral to our mission and student success.

I established the Sense of Belong Faculty and Staff Grant Award for projects geared toward increasing student engagement and sense of belonging. My colleagues would describe me as a responsive leader who is creative, collaborative, mission-focused, assessment-driven, and student-centered. There is perhaps nothing that gives me more joy than getting to know students, talking to them in the cafeteria, cheering for them at their athletic games, participating in student life activities, attending student events, corresponding with students via email, visiting them at

their homes to welcome them to the college and then welcoming them at the front gate on the first day of classes, successfully addressing the challenges many of them face with homelessness, food insecurity and childcare and best of all celebrating with them and their families on commencement day.

My leadership style generally emphasizes accountability and encourages collaboration and esprit de corps. I operate with high levels of integrity and maintain high standards for my team and myself. As President, I work diligently to ensure transparency and maintain communication. I believe in empowering, supporting, and appreciating everyone who works to achieve the college's mission.

At Kingsborough, my work as a President is not confined to the walls of my office because I understand the importance of being visible, accessible to, and engaged with the community I serve. This has meant braving winter weather to participate in the Coney Island Polar Bear Plunge into the Atlantic Ocean to raise money for educational programs, driving in two hours traffic out to Long Island to cheer on our baseball team, or braving the crowds around the holiday season to celebrate Hannukah with the lighting of the Menorah in Times Square. If selected as President of the University of the Virgin Islands, the entire territory will also be my campus. Wherever I am, it means that UVI is there. Whether it will be getting a fill of coconut tarts at the Food Fair, participating in a Carnival troupe, visiting high schools, or attending a program at Government House, my visibility and engagement means that UVI is visible and engaged with the community.

### *A special calling*

I was called to higher education because of my desire to serve, and I feel a similar calling to the University of the Virgin Islands and all that it stands for and aims to achieve. This letter, along with my curriculum vitae, provides you with a snapshot of who I am as a professional. I have never been one to trumpet loud my accomplishments. Instead, I prefer that my reputation as someone who works collaboratively and tirelessly for and on behalf of students speaks for itself. For over 20 years, it has spoken for students in the New York/New Jersey area. Now the position of President of the UVI presents an opportunity for me to speak for Virgin Islanders and all those who choose the institution as their academic home.

Despite living in NYC for over 20 years, I am a Virgin Islander who has maintained strong ties to the territory. I have always known UVI to be a vibrant community that serves a diverse and engaged student body and the broader territory. I have been excited to see new initiatives that meet the territory's needs, expand the institution's mission, and take root and blossom. Still, more can and should be done to ensure that more residents avail themselves of the many opportunities UVI affords them. If selected as President, I will build upon and toward the University's strengths. I look forward advancing the efforts that are the hallmark of HBCUs: honoring UVI's deep traditions, supporting student success and organizations like the Black Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities, celebrating the robust alumni network and advancing philanthropy within its fold, putting school pride on full display, promoting an unwavering commitment to social justice, and preparing our graduates to break through glass ceilings and take their seat at the many tables that await them.

I stand ready to lead this work as someone who understands higher education, has a deep commitment to the Virgin Islands, and has benefitted from the education the institution afforded my parents.

I grew up a stone's throw from the College of the Virgin Islands (CVI) as I first knew it. Later UVI, but long before I ventured there on many occasions to participate in Upward Bound, take a summer class, and use the library facilities during the completion of my dissertation, I have a clear memory of my mother in her green graduation cap and gown at her commencement. Because of my parents' opportunity to earn their college degrees at CVI, I can write this letter to you today seeking your consideration to be the next President of the University of the Virgin Islands. They demonstrated by example the power of college education, and I endeavor to do the same for the people of the Virgin Islands and beyond.

I am confident that my rich experiences in higher education, belief in the power of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in transforming the lives of its students, and cultural acumen, coupled with my strong organizational, academic, and administrative management and passion for helping others succeed will be an asset to the University of the Virgin Islands and the larger territory.

In his 2003 poem for the Gubernatorial Inauguration, my father wrote of the *Madras that Binds All Ahwe*. It also binds me to the Virgin Islands, its people, and the opportunity to make an indelible difference for future generations as the next President of the University of the Virgin Islands.

I hope my application will be considered favorably.

Respectfully submitted,  
Claudia V. Schrader