



dateline: UVI

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President Ragster Installed on UVI's Charter Day

Preceding Activities Engage Community, Hundreds Attend Ceremony

Lauded by colleagues, encouraged by politicians and congratulated by all, Dr. LaVerne Erina Ragster was installed as the University of the Virgin Islands' fourth president and first female to hold the office. The event took place on March 16, UVI's Charter Day, in front of hundreds of people at the Reichhold Center for the Arts on UVI's St. Thomas campus.

Described by Governor Charles Turnbull as "a daughter of the soil who has dedicated herself to the education and the progress of the people in this territory, the region and the world," President Ragster outlined her goals for UVI.

"Our mission to develop the intellectual capital of the US Virgin Islands and the rest of the Caribbean through an integrated program in instruction, research and public service," said President Ragster in her address, "will be expressed by the realization of a powerful vision that designates the University of the Virgin Islands as a facilitator of social and economic transformation in the territory and as a model of excellence in collaboration and service."

In order to provide high quality instructional programs and student services, which is one of her goals, President Ragster plans: to obtain funding for three endowed faculty chairs - in science, business and communications, to ensure faculty development, to integrate technology and hands-on experiences in



Chairman of the UVI Board of Trustees Dr. Auguste Rimpel, Jr. presents UVI President LaVerne Ragster with the presidential medalion at her installation ceremony on March 16. (below) President Ragster delivers the inaugural address.



learning, and to maintain accreditation status with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

A soon to be approved master plan will involve structural improvements on both campuses, starting with the completion of new student dining facilities and centralization of the university administration in the Harvey Center on St. Thomas, and expansion of research and training facilities on St. Croix. In her inaugural address, President Ragster said more training courses and certificate programs will be made available to community members in order to build a more qualified workforce.

Other goals that President Ragster plans to realize over the next five years include ensuring that all UVI programs support the social and economic development of the territory, increasing sponsored program awards to \$15 million per year, increasing enrollment to 3,000 students, increasing the UVI endowment by \$2 million, increasing private gifts and donations to \$900,000 per year, increasing government appropriations by 15 percent and developing new revenue sources. Establishing the V.I. Technology and Education Center as part of Phase I of the Research and Technology Park is also on the horizon.

President Ragster, who has long advocated strong links between UVI and the private and public sectors, hopes to ex-

Events Calendar

March 28 Community Engagement Food Sale, STT
March 29 Spring Ball, STX
March 29 Reichhold Center Production, STT

April 3, 9-10 SGA Elections, STT/STX
April 3 Stepping Workshop, STT
April 4-6, 11-13 Little Theater Play, STT



President LaVerne Ragster's installation was preceded by several activities (clockwise) President LaVerne Ragster greets guests at the inaugural reception on the St. Croix campus. Administrators and staff listen to President Ragster at the faculty, staff and student reception on the St. Thomas campus. A spectator observes the artwork of UVI's Hilda Joyce at the Cultural and Art Exhibit. A clown (UVI's Steve Prosterman) prepares to flip a sword above a youngster at Afternoon on the Green.

tend those links to the U.S. mainland and the Eastern Caribbean. Locally, she wants UVI to serve as a facilitator of dialogs about issues that affect the community, such as a Virgin Islands constitution, an issue that arose from UVI's Public Forum on the Political Status of the Virgin Islands.



The public forum was one of the activities that preceded President Ragster's installation. Other activities included receptions on all three Virgin Islands, Afternoon on the Green, a Faculty Colloquium and a Cultural Extravaganza.

President Ragster's appointment as UVI's leader was well received.

"The leader of this institution is part of the grand design of shaping the future of this U.S. Virgin Islands," Senate President



David Jones said at the installation, as he pledged his personal and political support to UVI. "The value of this institution is indisputable," Sen. Jones said, noting the University's role of resolving educational, economic and social issues of the territory.

"I'm comfortable that with Dr. Ragster at the

helm we can get it done," he said.

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