



# dateline: UVI

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## Dr. Ragster Begins Her Tenure as UVI's President

Dr. LaVerne Ragster made her debut as president of the University of the Virgin Islands on August 1, in front of colleagues, supporters and members of the media. UVI's fourth president and first female president, Dr. Ragster spoke about her goals for UVI and unveiled plans for new informational kiosks on both campuses.

At a press conference in the Sports and Fitness Center, Dr. Ragster said she looks forward to working with faculty and staff to lead UVI boldly along its continued path of success.

"Everyone will have a part to play in achieving the objectives of the strategic plan," she said, calling the plan UVI's "roadmap."

"I think that we are starting an exciting time and I am humbled by this leadership role," Dr. Ragster said. Born and raised on St. Thomas, Dr. Ragster earned a Ph.D. in biology from the University of San Diego and then returned home, where she spent the first 10 years of her career as a member of the teaching faculty of the then College of the Virgin Islands.

The president detailed the great role UVI has played and continues to play in the economic and social development of the territory, saying that the destiny of UVI and the Virgin Islands is intertwined.

As part of Dr. Ragster's plans to forge better community engagement, UVI will soon have information kiosks located near the entrances of the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses. The kiosks, which have been designed by DeJongh Associates, will provide a basic map of each campus and show where events or activities are to be held.

"A lot of people come to our campus and they don't know where to go," Dr. Ragster said.

Using the kiosks, clients, customers and visitors will be able to easily navigate each campus. The idea for the kiosks, Dr. Ragster said, came from members of the community. The University is currently seeking permits for the kiosks and the project is expected to be completed this fall.



*President LaVerne Ragster (middle bottom) poses with her cabinet after a press conference on August 1, when she began her presidency. From left to right are St. Thomas Campus Chancellor Dr. John Leipzig, Vice President for Administration & Finance Malcolm Kirwan, Chief Information Officer Susan Anderson, and Interim Senior Vice President & Provost Dr. Gwen-Marie Moolenaar.*

Dr. Ragster is also optimistic about the Research and Technology Park, which will be developed on St. Croix. "It is a major undertaking of the University and we have to see this through," she said.

Having worked her way up the ranks at UVI, Dr. Ragster served as assistant professor of marine biology, chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, faculty trustee to the UVI Board of Trustees, acting vice president for Research and Land Grant Affairs and vice president for Research and Public Service. Her most recent post before being selected for the presidency was that of senior vice president and provost.

Dr. Ragster will serve as the acting vice president for institutional advancement until that position is filled. Dr. Gwen-Marie Moolenaar, who previously held that post, is now UVI's interim senior vice president and provost.

"Working together, we will make this great University even better," Dr. Ragster said.



*Children participate in the mango eating contest at Mango Melee, the sixth annual fruit festival, held on July 27 at the St. George Village Botanical Garden on St. Croix. It showcased tropical fruits and of course - mangoes. Other activities included a mango cook-off, a mango identification contest and a silent auction of all fruits.*

# Workshop Helps Local Farmers, Amazes Presenters

Farmers in the territory received information they otherwise may not have had access to, thanks to the Virgin Islands Natural Resources and Agriculture Workshop held August 5-9. The workshop, held for two days on St. Thomas and two days on St. Croix at the University of the Virgin Islands campuses, put local farmers in direct contact with officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The workshop, held annually on the mainland, was held for the first time in the Virgin Islands.

The workshop included sessions in farm management and planning, crop insurance, financing small farm operations, organic crop production practices and the 2002 Farm Bill. Farmers said they learned most from the sessions on marketing and forming cooperatives. Participants also learned about low interest loans and cost-sharing initiatives.

"It gave us a lot of information in terms of being more pro-



*Benita Martin-Samuel a workshop participant and member of We Grow Food Inc., introduces U.S. Department of Agriculture representatives to the sugar apple fruit.*

ductive," said Leroy Richardson, a farmer in Estate Bordeaux on St. Thomas. Participants and USDA officials toured Richardson's farm, and two other sites in Bordeaux, as part of a field trip on the second day of the workshop.

USDA officials saw firsthand the backbreaking work necessary to convert the hillsides of Bordeaux into productive farmland. They commended farmers in Bordeaux for their persistence. "I've never seen farms like these and I've been all over the world," said Ben Burkett, president of the Federation of Southern

Cooperatives. "I'm amazed at the labor one has to put in," he said.

Sponsors of the workshop were UVI-Cooperative Extension Service, USDA, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-Forest Service, the V.I. Resource Conservation and Development Council and the V.I. Department of Agriculture.

## Reichhold Center's 2002-2003 Season Lineup

The 2002-2003 season lineup for UVI's Reichhold Center for the Arts was announced at a Business After Hours event held on the center's grounds on July 25. The acts include:

- David Sanborn — Oct. 19, 2002
- Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra — Nov. 2, 2002
- Folk Nativity — Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2002
- Eddie Palmieri — Jan. 25, 2003
- P'Your Passion — Feb. 23, 2003
- Koresh Dance Company — March 29, 2003
- STARfest 9 — May 10-11 and 24-25 2003

The Reichhold Center offers subscription packages which include benefits like preferential seating, invitations to exclusive artist events and discounted tickets to all season performances. Subscription packages are available. Tickets go on sale on August 25. For more information call the Reichhold Center Box Office at **340-693-1559**.

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