



dateline: UVI

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Summer Bridge Provides 'Feel' of College Life

It's Monday morning and the 42 students of UVI's Summer Bridge Program on the St. Thomas campus are playing "Who Wants to be a College Success," a game based on the popular television show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." Even before the game gets started, the students have plenty questions. It is the same way a little later with guest presenter Jasper Lettsome of the VI Department of Health's STD/HIV Program. The students are enthusiastic, curious, opinionated and candid. In this class, "Intro to College Success," they absorb information, process it and challenge it.

Jacquan Patterson, instructor of "Intro to College Success" was tasked with teaching the students about the intricacies of college life that they may not learn from their other courses – reading, writing, speech and mathematics. He invited guest presenters in various fields in the community and at UVI to address the students.

"Every day of our lives we have choices," Lettsome said. "Every time we make a decision we have to think on what the consequences may be." He launched into a series of anecdotes taken from his personal and professional life. "All this ties into disease," Lettsome explained. "Disease is a cat and mouse game. We think that we can look at people and know who have diseases. We can't," he told the students. He encouraged them to be victors and not victims in life. "We can develop ourselves to the full-



Jasper Lettsome, far right, an administrator at the VI Department of Health, gives a guest lecture to students in the Summer Bridge Program on the St. Thomas campus.

est and make a difference in our surroundings."

Summer Bridge is a new UVI program for graduating high school students who have been accepted to the University as freshmen for the Fall semester. The program is designed to help students jump-start their college education at UVI by improving their understanding and skills in math and English. They are also taught about campus resources and how to form networks of learning communities before Fall semester classes begin in August.

Students from public, private and parochial schools throughout the territory were selected to participate. They live on campus and follow a round-the-clock schedule of classes in the day, study hall and organized activities in the evening and field trips on the weekend.

"I used to hate math before, but he made it fun," Summer Bridge participant Shamari Skelton said of Mathematics Instructor Avon Benjamin. Skelton said the program has given him a "feel" of college life – study halls, developing good study habits, available campus clubs and organizations, writing tips and researching techniques. "It prepares you for the journey to come," said Skelton, who will major in UVI's new Hotel and Tourism Management program.

Jewelise Fahie said that Dr. Patricia Harkins-Pierre's classes have improved her writing. The nursing major said that she wishes the Summer Bridge Program was longer than four weeks. Skelton agreed. "I do recommend other students to come and I hope the program continues next year," he said.

Shari Wiltshire, program coordinator on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix, has witnessed camaraderie among the 37 students on St. Croix. "The instructors, who I want to personally commend, have said that they see the potential in this group. They see the progress the students have made and, overall, that this pilot group of students is on the right track," Wiltshire said.

Events Calendar

July 29	Summer Research Symposium	STT
Aug. 6	Energy Efficiency Workshop	STT/STX
Aug. 11	Energy Efficiency Workshop	STT/STX
Aug. 16	New Student Registration	STJ
Aug. 17	New Student Registration	STT/STX
Aug. 22	Fall Semester Classes Begin	STT/STX/STJ
Aug. 29	Special Alumni Phonathon	STT

UVI Program Spurs Interest in Medicine, Grad Enters Med School

Delia Miller's early exposure to the sciences is paying off. It was UVI's Summer Science Academies that first got her thinking about a career in the sciences. Then it was the Medical Explorers program at the Schneider Medical Center on St. Thomas that made her know she wanted to be a medical doctor. UVI's collaboration with the Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) sealed the deal for Miller. This August she will join BUSM as a first-year medical student.



Delia Miller

"I look forward to working hard, but still have fun in the process," Miller said about her expectations of medical school. Because Miller spent the past year, and the two summers before that at Boston University, she is already acclimated to the university and the city. She is anxious to begin classes.

"Initially it was really fun," Miller said of her first summer at BU. "The next summer it got more rigorous," Miller said. "I realized it was more than just liking the city. It required a lot more dedication." Her senior year, which she spent at BU, was a real "challenge," she said. "It prepared me for medical school. It showed me what I need to do to be successful."

Miller first considered a career in medicine while participating in the UVI Summer Science Academies when she was a high school student. At one of the workshops, a former UVI student who was attending medical school spoke to the students. Miller doesn't remember the woman's name or where she was attending medical school. But it changed Miller's life. "I thought, if she is from UVI and she went to med school, then why can't I go," Miller recalled.

At UVI Miller applied to the highly selective BUSM

Early Medical School Selection Program in her sophomore year. Once selected, students participate in a six-week summer program at Boston University following their sophomore and junior years at UVI. They spend their UVI senior year at BUSM – earning college credits toward their UVI degree and medical degree. After graduating from UVI, the students enter BUSM as medical students.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity," said Miller, who has yet to select her specialization. "For right now, I'm just exploring the sciences," she said. "I want to be exposed to more things before I make a decision on what type of doctor I want to be."

"The program really helps transition students from undergraduates at UVI to medical school students at BU," said Dr. Sandra Romano, a UVI professor, Biological Sciences Department chair and liaison for the program.

"It provides a very supportive environment for the students – all the students in the program, at whatever level they are at." Boston University provides a support network to help with the transition. The program also closely monitors students' progress, providing whatever assistance they need, Dr. Romano added. "The program is a wonderful opportunity to get into medical school."

UVI is one of 14 universities to participate in the highly selective BUSM Early Medical School Selection Program.

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