

PRESS RELEASE

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HLSCC Strengthens Partnerships with UK Colleges and Universities

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Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Honourable Sharie de Castro has announced that HLSCC graduates—whose degrees are accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education will now be able to pursue the third year of a bachelor's programme at the Richmond American University in London.

Honourable de Castro in a statement at the Fifth Sitting of The Second Session of The Fifth House of Assembly reported that a Memorandum of Understanding MoU was signed with between the HLSCC and the University following her trip to the United Kingdom with President of the Hamilton Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) Dr. Richard Georges to attend the Education World Forum (EWF) in May.

The Minister for Education stated that the current United States (US) administration has disrupted educational planning for families and students seeking study in the US, which presents a greater opportunity for study in the United Kingdom (UK).

“Virgin Islanders are either British citizens or British Overseas Territories citizens and, under UK law, are classified as home students when studying in the United Kingdom,” Honourable de Castro said, adding, “This means that our students pay the same tuition as UK nationals—currently capped at £9,250 per year for undergraduate programmes—whereas international students in the UK may pay £15,000–£30,000 per year or more, depending on the course and institution.”

She said when compared with the rising cost of tuition in the United States and the current visa uncertainty, UK study offers both affordability and stability for Virgin Islands families.

Honourable de Castro said Richmond University is also accredited by Middle States Commission on Higher Education which ensures strong academic alignment and facilitates seamless credit transfer. This development she states means a faster, more affordable, and academically efficient path to completing a full degree for the Territory's students.

The Minister for Education further stated and in the past, students graduating from HLSCC with an associate degree would typically matriculate into Year 1 of a UK university programme, effectively repeating academic content they had already

mastered.

“In some cases, they were even required to complete a foundation year before beginning their bachelor’s studies, despite already holding post-secondary qualifications. This not only added time and cost but also delayed the student’s entry into the workforce,” Honourable de Castro added.

The minister’s full statement can be viewed on the Government of the Virgin Islands website at www.bvi.gov.vg.

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports continues to provide high quality educational services, as well as facilitate access to and participation in sports and recreation, in order to enrich the lives of all residents of these Virgin Islands.