



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

(340) 774-3552 • communications@viwapa.vi / www.viwapa.vi

February 16, 2023

WAPA Hosts UVI Students for Randolph Harley Power Plant and Seven Seas Tour

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Recently, on January 26, 2023, 8 pre-engineering and marine University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) students toured the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority’s (“WAPA” or “Authority”) Randolph Harley Power Plant (RHPP) and the Seven Seas Desalination facility on St. Thomas.

As part of the day’s events, students and UVI faculty and staff received a presentation on the Authority’s Transmission and Distribution system, which provided an overview of how and why electricity is routed to specific feeders. Next, students visited the power plant’s central control room, where plant operators explained the importance of maintaining a balanced load and provided visuals for how power is distributed. Students were surprised to learn that at times some plant operators work up to 12 hours at a time! The last segment of the plant tour involved a visit to the Wartsila generators and Unit 27. These critical generators are responsible for a large majority of the plant’s generation capacity and are key to powering customers on the islands of St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island.

“As we look at how different infrastructure systems in the territory function and communicate with one another, it was very helpful to see firsthand the reality and complexities associated with running the plant, so that once students become engineers, they have a more comprehensive understanding of how everything is interconnected,” noted Greg Guannel, PHd, Director of the Caribbean Green Technology Center at UVI.

The tour was part of a series of UVI courses offered as part of the pre-engineering program that provide students with a sense of what an engineering trajectory entails. UVI’s “Island Systems Resilience” class allows students to learn about how different infrastructure systems in the Virgin Islands operate and contribute to everyday life. “The tour was super informative and allowed me to see the important redundancies the Authority incorporates to ensure grid reliability,” noted Malvern Williams, a UVI student majoring in Applied Matter.

The plant tour led by RHPP Plant Superintendent John Woodson and Mechanical Engineer I Shiquoi Isaac, represented an opportunity for the Authority to continue its commitment to engaging the territory’s younger generation. The Authority and UVI’s long-standing history also includes the Alva C. McFarlane Scholarship program where students can be awarded up to \$60,000 in financial support. The scholarship is available to graduating high school seniors and freshman and sophomore UVI students who are enrolled in engineering. Students in the territory are encouraged to apply through March 2, 2023, at careers@viwapa.vi.

###

About WAPA: The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.