

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY TESTIMONY OF
DR. KYZA A. CALLWOOD, UVI RT PARK NOMINEE

Excellence in Leadership and Innovation

A blessed good morning to Honorable Diane T. Capehart, Chairwoman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, esteemed Vice-Chair Senator Milton E. Potter, Senator Carla J. Joseph, Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Senator At-Large Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Senator Marise C. James, and Senator Franklin D. Johnson, along with the dedicated legislative staff, my incredible family, friends, mentors, and colleagues in the audience, both in the St. Thomas and St. Croix Legislative Chambers, and all those joining this session via Facebook, YouTube, or television.

I am Dr. Kyza A. Callwood—a believer in possibilities, a doer of impactful work, and an accomplisher of meaningful goals. Today, I am deeply honored to present my qualifications and share my vision as a nominee for the University of the Virgin Islands Research and Technology Park (RT Park) Board.

Background and Qualifications

Born and raised in the U.S. Virgin Islands, I have dedicated my life and career to creating pathways for progress within our community. My academic journey began at the University of the Virgin Islands, where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, magna cum laude, and a Master of Public Administration. This foundation was further strengthened when I earned my Doctorate in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change, focusing on the intersection of leadership, community development, and innovative strategies. As part of my academic journey, I completed my dissertation, titled "**Positive Youth Development in a Community Setting: A Study of One Youth Program in the United States Virgin Islands**" (Callwood, 2022), which explores the importance of fostering resilience, leadership, and innovation in our youth. The research highlighted how community-based programs can drive positive change and build the foundation for long-term personal and professional growth. This aligns with my vision for the Research and Technology Park—to create a nurturing environment where innovation, education, and community development intersect. Just as my dissertation demonstrated the power of community-driven initiatives to impact youth positively, I believe RT Park can play a transformative role in advancing local businesses, educational opportunities, and sustainable technologies. Serving on the RT Park Board would allow me to bring this vision to life, leveraging my research background to ensure that our technological initiatives support the social and economic growth of the Virgin Islands for generations to come.

Professionally, I bring more than 15 years of experience spanning operations management, strategic planning, policy development, and educational advancement. As Chief Strategy Officer at the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections, I spearheaded initiatives that optimized efficiency, increased public engagement, and strengthened organizational performance. My role as Federal Funding Liaison for Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett enabled me to identify opportunities that connected federal resources with local needs, creating impactful solutions for our community. As an Adjunct Professor at the University of the Virgin Islands, I have inspired and educated the next generation of leaders in courses ranging from Business Communication to Leadership Theory and Organizational Analysis.

I hold certifications in Strategic Organizational Leadership, Six Sigma (Green Belt in HR and Yellow Belt), Business Office Management, Project Management Essentials and as Certified Project Officer to name a few. These credentials underscore my commitment to continuous professional development and my ability to translate theory into actionable results.

Through my professional endeavors, I have managed accounts payable and receivable, audited budgets, and effectively handled marketing budgets to enhance organizational visibility and impact. These experiences have equipped me with the strategic, analytical, and leadership skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to the RT Park Board.

Vision and Strategic Priorities

After reviewing RT Park’s mission and existing initiatives, I propose a vision that aligns innovation with community development and economic sustainability. My three focus areas are designed to expand RT Park’s influence while fostering growth and resilience for the Virgin Islands:

1. **Green Technology and Sustainable Energy Partnerships**
Imagine a Virgin Islands globally recognized for renewable energy leadership. Through partnerships with eco-innovation firms and research institutions, RT Park can catalyze green technology advancements, create local jobs, and position our territory as a pioneer in environmental stewardship.
2. **Advanced Fellowship and Collaborative Research Programs**
Education is a cornerstone of sustainable development. By establishing a fellowship program, RT Park can connect UVI students with practical research opportunities in technology and environmental innovation, cultivating a skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of tomorrow.
3. **Targeted Support for Local Entrepreneurs**
Entrepreneurs are essential drivers of economic growth. A tailored incubator program will provide mentorship, networking opportunities, and resources to empower early-stage Virgin Islands businesses in tech and green industries, aligning regional economic goals with RT Park’s mission.

These initiatives will utilize research-driven innovation—a systematic process that identifies challenges, evaluates opportunities, and implements evidence-based solutions. By assembling diverse teams, leveraging data analytics, and fostering collaboration, RT Park can ensure its efforts are both impactful and sustainable. Although I have developed these ideas, it is essential to acknowledge that their implementation would require the agreement and support of my fellow board members, as our success hinges on aligning with the direction collectively set. Therefore, fostering a great working relationship with my colleagues is vital to achieving our shared goals.

Commitment to the Virgin Islands

My vision for RT Park is rooted in the values of education, community, and perseverance instilled in me while growing up in the Virgin Islands. I have witnessed firsthand the immense potential of our people and the transformative opportunities that arise when innovation is at the forefront. While I remain actively engaged in serving my community in various capacities, I am equally committed to embracing new avenues of service that drive meaningful progress.

I approach every role with unwavering dedication—attending every meeting, thoroughly reviewing materials, actively engaging in discussions, conducting research, and fostering consensus to advance decisions and inspire action. This disciplined approach ensures that progress is not only envisioned but effectively realized.

RT Park embodies the future of our territory—a catalyst for technological innovation and environmental sustainability. My commitment to excellence, collaboration, and evidence-based solutions aligns perfectly with this mission, positioning RT Park to lead the Virgin Islands into a brighter, more resilient future.

Closing

In closing, I reaffirm my dedication to fostering innovation and resilience within the Virgin Islands. As a nominee for the RT Park Board, I am committed to leveraging my expertise, leadership, and passion to support its vision and deliver meaningful results. Together, we can create an environment where technology, sustainability, and economic growth thrive, securing a brighter future for generations to come.

I extend my gratitude to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for the opportunity to provide this testimony as part of the nomination process. I look forward to collaborating with the RT Park, board members, its partners, and our community to achieve these goals if confirmed by this August body. Additionally, I am ready and available to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Kyza A. Callwood