

DARA M. COOPER

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIST | UNIVERSITY/COMMUNITY EDUCATOR | AGRIBUSINESS COUNSELOR

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Higher-education, small-business, non-profit and grassroots professional with more than 25 years of experience in higher education, Cooperative Extension, small-business advising, workforce development, program management and community organizing. Leads grant-funded programs, provides technical assistance, develops curricula and training, and manages partnerships, budgets, reporting, and rubric-aligned documentation supporting institutional or organizational effectiveness.

CORE COMPETENCIES

AgriBusiness & Non-Profit Consulting | SBDC Technical Assistance | Communications Strategy | Digital Marketing and Advertising | Curriculum and Training Design | Program Assessment and Reporting | Grant and Budget Management | Stakeholder Engagement | Digital and Hybrid Learning | Marketing/Advertising | Ethics & Mediation | Professional Reports

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Program Manager | USVI Conservation Corps, CHANT — NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge through DPNR **2026-**

- Lead a place-based workforce program connecting young adults to conservation and climate-resilience careers; manage curriculum, schedules, staff, partners, participant support, compliance, and grant reporting.

Outreach Coordinator - St. Thomas/St. John | Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition

2025-2026

- Provided producer engagement and technical assistance; coordinated events and served as a liaison among government, university, community, and agricultural partners.

HIGHER EDUCATION, EXTENSION AND SMALL BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Agribusiness Counselor | VI SBDC / UVI Agriculture Business Center

2025-2026

- Counseled farmers and agribusiness clients on business concepts, customer relations, operations, organizational readiness, licensing, grant applications, budgets, and strategic marketing.
- Coordinated training, referrals, follow-up, and Neoserra-ready counseling documentation; convert complex requirements into actionable work plans, measurable objectives, and next steps.

Communication Specialist - Regional/National | University of Georgia / Southern SARE (USDA NIFA Program)

2022-2025

- Directed outreach across more than 14 Southern states and territories, cultivated USDA-aligned media and partner relationships, and produced publications, interviews, newsletters, podcasts, digital campaigns, & engagement analyses.

Station & Programming Manager / PR & New Media Director | UVI / WUVI

2014-2021

- **Supervised** staff/students. **Managed** radio studios, computer/media labs, budgets, grants, and program reporting. Developed technical training for in-person or virtual/hybrid delivery. Conducted program-related research and analysis.

Communication Specialist - PR, Technology & Online Learning | UVI School of Agriculture

2009-2021

- **Developed** territory-wide outreach, instructional and PR materials; **Trained** faculty/staff and community in technology & distance-learning strategies; supported engagement, presentations, publications, and university communications.

UVI Faculty & Student Advisor (from 2009) - Communications/Liberal Arts | University of the Virgin Islands

2016-2021

- Full-time and part-time faculty. **Taught** Interpersonal Communication, Public Speaking, Radio Production, Broadcast Communication, and Website Publishing; **Instructed** Basic or Intermediate Computer and Mobile Device Workshops in Microsoft Office 365, Online Banking, Online Bill Payments and Digital Payment Apps (Zelle, PayPal/Venmo, CashApp, ATH Movil, Internet Safety/Use, Social Media Use; Video Editing with Canva, WhatsApp and WhatsApp Community Use & Best Practices and various other workshops; **Advised** student government, "Black"/African Heritage Committee, multimedia, poetry, photography/videography, podcasting, Reverse the Mandate and other student organizations/clubs.

EDUCATION, SELECTED CREDENTIALS AND HONORS

M.A., New Media Journalism - Full Sail University, 2016 | **B.A., Communication** - University of the Virgin Islands, 2007

UVI Faculty of the Year, 2019-2020 | UVI Customer Service Award, 2016-2017 | VI Board of Education Communication Educator License
Professional Development: Educational Consultant | Grant Writing/Management & Bookkeeping | Ethics & Mediation | Remote Supervision

NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP, BOARD SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Founding Director – KWANZAA365 & Sankofa Saturdays, Inc. | RAFI Board of Directors - Marketing & Agriculture Communications | Association for Communication Excellence - Marketing Co-Director; Social Media Learning Community Chair; Marketing Learning Community Vice Chair | Society of Professional Journalists | National Association of Black Journalists | Association for Communication Excellence | Institute for Advertising Ethics | Public Relations Society of America | American Advertising Federation | National Agri-Marketing Association | Agricultural Relations Council | Institute of Management Consultants | Society for Human Resource Management | Southern Region Program Leaders Network | Home School Legal Defense Association | Future Business Leaders of America, Professional Division | Graphic Artists Guild | Project Safe Neighborhoods, VI | League of Women Voters USVI | Toastmasters Club