

The College of The Bahamas

PRESIDENT

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Notes for remarks at the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between The University of Rhode Island and the College of The Bahamas

Good morning Ambassador Rood, Deputy Chief of Mission Hardt, President Carothers, Vice-Provost Pasquarella, Major General Bray, members of The National Guard of Rhode Island, colleagues and friends,

It is indeed a great moment for us today, a time to mark one more step on our journey to university status. A time also to celebrate a new partner – The University of Rhode Island.

I'd like to give you a little history on our guests – taken from their website:

The University was chartered as the state's agricultural school in 1888. The school became the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in 1892, and the first class of 17 members was graduated two years later.

The Morrill Act of 1862 provided for the sale of public lands. Income from these sales was to be used to create at least one college in each state with the principal purpose of teaching agriculture and mechanic arts. From this grant of land comes the term "land grant," which applied to the national system of state colleges. In a later adaptation of the concept, federal funds given to colleges for marine research and extension are called "sea grants."

Let me take a moment to suggest that our recent request to government to create The National Endowment for The University of The Bahamas from contributions of the major anchor projects that are anticipated to bring substantial foreign investment seem quite similar to these land grants. Indeed we need the kind of investment in us that the United States made in 1862 in support of higher education. Back to Rhode Island:

In 1909 the name of the college was changed to Rhode Island State College, and the program of study was revised and expanded.

In 1951 the college became the University of Rhode Island by an act of the General Assembly. The Board of Governors for Higher Education appointed by the governor became the governing body of the University in 1981.

Our history is of necessity briefer. The College was created over thirty years ago to provide higher education to Bahamians in The Bahamas. At first, it was a two-year institution, it has now been a four-year college for over fifteen years and now we are poised to take the next step to create The University of The Bahamas. To do this requires not only internal changes and legal ones; it requires that we join the international fellowship of Universities.

The partnership agreement we are signing to day is an integral part of this journey. We seek to create opportunities for our students to go to university at home and to go away at the same time. We seek to create opportunities for students to stay home and to welcome international students in their classes. We seek to build faculty partnerships and to find research teams that can invite our faculty to do good work with them. This agreement lays the foundation for such initiatives with a partner with whom we have much to share.

Our new partner's mission is:

The University of Rhode Island is the State's public learner-centered research university. We are a community joined in a common quest for knowledge. The University is committed to enriching the lives of its students through its land, sea, and urban grant traditions. URI is the only public institution in Rhode Island offering undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the distinctive educational opportunities of a major research university. Our undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, research, and outreach serve Rhode Island and beyond. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni are united in one common purpose: to learn and lead together. Embracing Rhode Island's heritage of independent thought, we value:

*Creativity and Scholarship
Diversity, Fairness, and Respect
Engaged Learning and Civic Involvement
Intellectual and Ethical Leadership*

Our working mission is:

"The University of The Bahamas is a publicly-supported university providing excellent and accessible university education to students across the nation and internationally. We offer a broad range of undergraduate programmes and professional graduate programmes. We also offer a select number of graduate research programmes in areas where we can

achieve excellence by virtue of our particular environment and expertise. We are committed to academic freedom, high standards of teaching, scholarship and research and we aim to prepare students to participate fully in the social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual life of their communities. We offer and seek partnerships with other institutions and community groups, both nationally and internationally, that share our commitment to creating and sharing knowledge and education for a better world."

Clearly, our missions reveal common purposes and though our histories differ, I hope our futures will be rich in shared experiences. In particular, I thank The University of Rhode Island for welcoming two of our students this semester and ask that we now seek our we can activate the reciprocal half of an exchange by welcoming some Rhode Island students – perhaps on a field study course in Andros or San Salvador.

Let me now thank those who made today possible.

- First, thanks to the great support of the American Embassy, particularly the Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission who first had the idea we might collaborate in this way,
- Thanks to Dr. Pasquarella and Captain Manning for the open and warm contacts we made last summer
- Thank you to Dr. Caruthers for supporting this partnership and being with us today
- And thanks also to my colleagues, in particular Dr. Davis who was charged with a new mandate in August and delivered our first tangible result of this mandate in early fall. My colleagues and I are committed to creating the best possible experiences for our students and for our faculty – and to making The Bahamas proud of its University.

Thank you.

President Janyne M. Hodder
Seagrape House
February 7th 2007