

NOTES FOR REMARKS

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BUILDING THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you for the invitation to join you today to talk about our work in building The University of The Bahamas and how this work interacts with national development in general and with economic prosperity and social development in particular.

First, a brief reminder of the past.

The College was founded to be a source of academic and intellectual leadership in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and to educate and train Bahamians for the purposes of self fulfillment, productive work and nation building. The College of The Bahamas Act, created in 1974, was revised in 1995. This revision allowed the College greater financial autonomy, opened up its organisational structure, gave authority to grant degrees and empowered it to seek and receive private funding.

For the first twenty years of its existence, the College offered two-year associate degrees in addition to a number of undergraduate diplomas and certificates. Our graduates of the two-year programmes, have enjoyed great success and immediately or eventually went on to attend some of the very best universities in The Caribbean, The United States, Canada and The UK.

In 1991, The College began to offer a number of baccalaureate programmes, starting with the Bachelor of Business Administration.

Throughout these years, the qualifications of faculty also increased and more and more of the faculty began to have terminal degrees, usually doctorates. This was in large part due to enlightened policies supporting the professional development of faculty. We also built a strong support staff team in areas ranging from security services to information technology. And we had the benefit of successive thoughtful leadership in both the administration and on Council.

We also began to build our Alumni programmes whose flagship activity is, of course, our Hall of Fame induction. We have now inducted Bishop Neil C Ellis in 2001, financial expert Larry Gibson in 2002, pharmacist Laura Pratt-Charlton in 2003, attorney at law Tanya McCartney in 2004, Ms Vernice Walkine in 2005, and Police Superintendent Keith Bell in 2006. Further, a full 18% of the current elected members of Parliament are alumni of The College.

Where are we now?

- Today we offer on a free-standing basis, 6 baccalaureate degrees with 59 majors and 3 associate degrees
- We also offer the UWI law programme which we expect to make our own by 2009 as well as 4 graduate degrees in collaboration with universities such as Kent State.
- The College's enrolment in January 2007 was 5,409, 622 of which were at the Northern Bahamas Campus

- In any given semester, the proportion of students enrolled part-time hovers around 40%
- As of January 2007, there were 224 regular full-time faculty. In addition the College utilises about 70 part-time faculty. Around 24% of these faculty hold doctoral degrees or other terminal degrees in their field.
- As of January 2007, the College employed 373 staff in support and administrative roles
- The operating budget of the College for the year 2006-2007 is \$41,396,400
- Between 2005 and 2007, the College invested \$12,395,541 in infrastructure improvement
- We have activities in New Providence, in Grand Bahama, in Exuma, in Andros and in San Salvador
- We have signed agreements to collaborate with 2 universities in the past year, one with The University of Rhode Island where 2 Bahamian students from The College are currently on exchange and one with The University of Johannesburg where we hope to start exchanges next fall. We also have a new exchange programme with Monroe College in NYC in the area of tourism and hospitality.

We are building The University of The Bahamas block by block.

What then is the role of The College – soon to be University of The Bahamas in national development?

The role of The University of The Bahamas is to support and drive national development through education, research and innovation. National development is taken in its largest sense as economic, social, and cultural development.

The University of the Bahamas must build on the successes of The College to offer high quality programmes and to develop high standards of quality assurance. It must also develop new programmes. It must also make sure that in so doing, it takes into account needs across the archipelago and not simply in the main centres.

Table 1: Current programmes & Development Opportunities

	ASSOCIATE DEGREES	BACCALAUREATE	GRADUATE
Currently offered by The College of The Bahamas	Associate of Arts	BA	
	Associate of Science	BSc	
	Associate of	BSN (Nursing)	

	ASSOCIATE DEGREES	BACCALAUREATE	GRADUATE
	Applied Science	BSET (Eng. Technology)	
		BBA	
		BEd	
		(59 MAJORS)	
Currently delivered by other universities in partnership with The College of The Bahamas		LL.B (UWI)	MEd (Kent State University)
			MEd (Wheelock College)
			MA Teaching & Learning with Technology (Ashford University)
			MA in Library & Information Science University of South Florida)
<i>Under consideration as a free-standing programme by The University of The Bahamas or in partnership</i>	<i>Expansion of applied programmes in areas of employment demand</i>	<i>Law</i>	<i>MBA (Fall 2008)</i>
		<i>Pharmacy</i>	<i>Nursing</i>
	<i>Maritime technical training</i>	<i>Allied Health</i>	<i>Law, Maritime Law</i>
		<i>Public Administration</i>	<i>Allied Health</i>
		<i>Tourism</i>	<i>Marine Environmental</i>
		<i>Marine and Environmental Studies</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>
		<i>Expansion of applied degrees</i>	<i>Public Administration</i>
		<i>Engineering</i>	<i>Joint Doctoral Programmes</i>

Key fields are, of course, the tourism and hospitality sector and the financial services sector. In addition, there are needs in marine and environmental science, maritime law and the maritime shipping industry, construction, marina management, agriculture, fisheries, education, public policy, health and allied health, culture, entrepreneurship and more. Further, three potentially important areas for building a skilled and diversified Bahamian workforce which also overlap with key disciplinary developments for innovation are: (1) pure and applied sciences, (2) engineering, and (3) information technology. At all times, it will be critical to define which programmes can be developed as 'signature' or 'flagship' programmes of such a quality as to be best in the region and even in the world as well as how these will be funded. It will also be important to identify key national and international partners.

Our first contribution to national development and to prosperity is an increase in available high quality programmes to meet the human resources needs of the country. We believe that increasing this capacity at home makes good financial sense in addition to being good public policy.

Currently, the annual tuition cost is \$100 per credit in the early years and roughly \$150 per credit in the senior years. This means that if a student is enrolled full-time, usually 30 credits, annual tuition will be \$3,000 in the early years and \$4,500 in the later years, bringing the tuition cost of an Associate degree to approximately \$6,000 while that of a Bachelor's degree to around \$15,000. In comparison, tuition costs for Bahamian students at most Canadian universities would vary from a low of \$10,000 a year to closer to \$20,000 per year, making the tuition cost of a degree anywhere from \$40,000 to \$80,000 and these figures do not take into account the cost of travel and living abroad. Students at American universities will typically pay even more. For example, undergraduate tuition for one year at The University of Miami is currently approximately \$32,000.

Also investing in high quality university programmes in The Bahamas is critical to increasing overall participation rates in higher education in the country. Currently we are told approximately 14% of Bahamians between the ages of 18 to 24 are enrolled in higher education. This compares to about 20% in the region and closer to 40% in the United States. If one considers the high proportion of part-time students at The College and some of the difficulties in achieving university entry level performance

out of high school, The University of The Bahamas is best placed to contribute to increasing this participation rate – especially since we also invest in College prep instruction.

Our challenge in this area is to find partners who wish to work with us in the development of new programmes and to assist in finding the funding necessary to develop these programmes until they are financially sustainable simply through the tuition and government grant revenues.

In all cases we will be seeking to develop high quality programmes as well as identifying flagship programmes which can stand as best in class in the region and in the world. One thinks, of course of the tourism and hospitality sector where we now have a detailed strategic plan to do just that. But there is also the financial services sector, marine and environmental sciences and entrepreneurship where we should have sufficient competitive advantage to develop such programmes.

Our second contribution to national development and prosperity comes through research. The University of The Bahamas must contribute to national development through research and innovation in The Bahamas. Research is seen in the first instance as of two kinds.

First, there is a need for research in such areas as environmental studies, economics, sustainable development, social development, cultural heritage and development, public policy, education, and health. This type of research suggests the creation of multidisciplinary teams which address real life concerns likely to affect public policy decisions. Second, there is also a need for high quality research in flagship or signature programmes which will be driven by developments in those disciplines and which can attract world-class researchers and faculty.

Third, we must contribute to a Bahamian innovation agenda. The University of The Bahamas must become a driver of innovation. Innovation here is being used to mean the development of a solution to a problem in a product or process which leads to a substantial improvement in that product or process and has benefit to the public or private sector. It is the search for creative, effective and efficient applications of solutions to problems. Across the world, prosperity is increasingly linked to national capacity to meet global challenges, to innovate and to develop new products and services and across the world, nations look to their university as the place where a particular mix of talented

researchers and students and innovative entrepreneurs work together to develop products and services which later become the new businesses and the new social policies.

As the leading institution of the country having a pool of intellectual resources and talents the University of The Bahamas can, and will provide policy-relevant research and consultancy which seek to establish strong collaborative links with the local business community and meet present and future challenges. As research provides an education that is informed by leading-edge concepts, the University envisages bringing a paradigm shift towards fostering a positive research climate aimed at boosting the development, operations quality and competitiveness of small businesses (knowledge creation and diffusion). Indeed, knowledge, collaborative research projects with industry and investment responsibilities should be closely tailored to the needs of the business sector with a view to accelerating the pace of growth, competency, productivity and competitiveness of small businesses in The Bahamas.

One can begin to think in terms of the development of centres of excellence or of institutes or of loosely connected clusters of people with shared interests who meet around activities at The University in a way that:

- brings together key players in economic development;
- upgrades technological infrastructure and skills;
- induces the exchange of important technical and market information;
- accelerates learning and innovation;
- stimulates the formation of new businesses;
- improves entrepreneurship and managerial capacity;
- reduces investment risks; and
- increases profit margins and growth rates.

Examples of such innovation environments around universities abound. The Internet itself was created as a university-based system long before it was a household good. Blackberry was born at The University of Waterloo. But innovation is not only a function of product development; it is also part of process development.

To play this role effectively, The University needs to build strong ties with all sectors of economic and social activity and we are in the process of doing so. Already the Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute has created its own steering committee to support and drive its strategic direction. We expect to building such advisory bodies in all our faculties. Currently, we are also asking members of the broader business and volunteer community to sit on our search committees for deans or other senior officers and we think we should be seen as an open and dynamic partner with whom to develop new programmes or new research and innovation agendas.

Maybe we can package guava duff for sale both in the country and for export or how to create eco-tourism experiences for visitors or how to innovate in the financial services sector and develop new products and services.

Finally, 30 years after independence and at a time of rapid economic growth, The Bahamas must support and produce learning and teaching at the highest levels and keep its most talented and educated as faculty and staff at The University of The Bahamas to build the future of the nation.

In order to play this role in national development, we have identified nine core strategies which are guiding our work across academic departments as well as administrative units. The following are overarching strategies which apply to all we do, in every department, in every school and faculty and in all administrative units. These are the building blocks upon which specific goals and objectives will rest.

1. Build for Excellence

As the national university, The University of The Bahamas must build for excellence in all dimensions. The creation of a university is a major investment made by all Bahamians and deserves a commitment to excellence in teaching, research and service.

2. Respect and care for students

We will strive to provide high quality services to our students and to adopt a whole person approach in our dealings with students both inside and outside the classroom.

3. Respond to national needs

The University will respond to national needs as defined both internally by faculty and students and externally by government and the private sector.

4. Identify competitive advantages

The University of The Bahamas will seek to identify those areas where by virtue of our particular context, history, geography and culture, we can offer programmes and services that can be best in class.

5. Support innovation and initiative

We will encourage the values of innovation, initiative, creativity and risk-taking. At times, we will undoubtedly make mistakes; without failures we would not be creating anything new.

6. Empower people and create effective teams

We have many creative and talented people and the efforts of everyone will be utilized to meet our goals. We will use teamwork in the service of our goals.

7. Focus on goals, results and the long term

We will advance our agreed goals. We will be alert to the management of unexpected and unintended outcomes and mindful that building a university is a long-term process.

8. Demonstrate transparency and accountability

We will exemplify best practices with respect to transparency and accountability and we will build our public support on the strength of our demonstrated ability to keep our promises.

9. Engage the country

We will engage all sectors of the country in this process and make the case for the investment required in the university.

These strategies are meant to be deployed in meeting all our goals and we shall soon be launching our full draft strategic plan for consultation in the community and we hope we will have broad and significant response from all sectors on the specific goals we are pursuing in all our areas of activity.

Our how, however, includes not only key strategies and goals but some very important assumptions. We cannot build The University of The Bahamas on the resource base given to The College of The Bahamas.

We are making the following assumptions with respect to the growth and expansion of our resource base.

1. There will be national support

The creation of a national university is a national project, one very closely tied to nation-building and our first assumption is that the nation will be supportive of this venture. We assume that all major stakeholders in the country share our view that it is time to build a university and to expand our academic and outreach programmes, our research and our capacity to take our place in the international family of universities.

2. Public funding will grow

The second assumption is that public funding will be set at a level which allows for the realization of this plan. The current level of resources is inadequate to meet the goals outlined. The College of The Bahamas is currently funded on a “flat” grant which does not take into account the actual costs of delivering programmes and which does not account for increased enrolment and the consequent costs of services. We believe that there are possible public policy shifts which would make funding The University of the Bahamas at an appropriate level a possibility even in a climate of restrained government expenditure.

3. Tuition levels will reflect costs and will increase

Student tuition must grow and so must student aid. In other words, those who can pay should pay a fair cost for their education and, those who cannot, should have access to loans and financial aid. In both cases, the policy must encourage the building of national capacity and a national university capable of delivering a level of quality similar to what students expect when they attend universities in other countries.

1. Philanthropy will grow

The University of The Bahamas requires private as well public support. While The College of The Bahamas has benefited from donor generosity since its inception, particularly in the form of scholarships, special efforts are now required if The University of The Bahamas is to build the quality expected of a national university. A key goal will thus be the execution of a successful major funding campaign at a level that has not yet been realized in The Bahamas. Plans are underway to make this happen

2. There will be a National Endowment for The University of The Bahamas

We propose that the government of The Bahamas creates a national endowment for the University of The Bahamas. The National Endowment would be managed as an independent foundation with its own board of trustees whose mission would be to grow the endowment and to fund key projects of The University of The Bahamas.

As we build for the medium and long term we are also deeply engaged in major short-term projects. Among these are the construction of The Library, the construction of a new Northern Bahamas campus, the increase in the number of terminal degree holders among the faculty, the improvement to the registration process, the adoption of a new quality assurance framework, the expansion of our international links and our research activity, the development of new outreach programmes and distance education, the review of our governance, planning the new statute and the quiet phase of a comprehensive campaign.

This then is a brief overview of our vision to build The University of The Bahamas and to work with partners in both the public and private sector in order to create an institution which can drive economic prosperity as well as social and cultural development. We hope you will join us in this venture and let us know how we can serve your needs as well as how you might wish to partner in helping us meet ours.

Thank you.