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# *Focus 2008-2009*

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President's Address  
Faculty & Staff Seminar 2008

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Monday August 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

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Good morning colleagues,

Let me add my welcome to that of Dr. Chipman-Johnson. Welcome to the 2008-2009 Academic year. I hope this has been a time of rest and renewal, a time for family and friends and that you are here this morning excited at the prospect of the challenges that will meet us in the year to come. For those who have held the fort throughout the summer months, I thank you and hope that you, as well, are looking forward to this new academic year.

2008-2009 will be an exciting year. We expect to meet with the National Cabinet shortly, at which time we will be asking the government to adopt legislation creating The University of The Bahamas. We will be presenting to government the progress that has been made in 35 years of history of the College and demonstrating that we can offer a University of which all Bahamians can be proud. We believe we have a convincing case. We believe we are ready for new legislation, ready to stand in the world as a full-fledged university with performance indicators that measure us appropriately against others of our kind.

At the same time, as Dr. Chipman-Johnson has pointed out, becoming a university imposes new standards of excellence against which we will measure ourselves – standards of academic excellence, administrative excellence, customer service excellence, excellence in the stewardship of our physical environment and excellence in our relationships with one another, with our students and with our stakeholders.

This morning, using the Strategic Plan, the recommendations of the Task Force on Quality Assurance as well as observations and data collected by our colleagues across campus, I am going to set the course for 2008-2009.

### *Our mission and the focus for 2008-2009*

Our mission is to build the nation through education, research & innovation and service at a university level. Embedded in this mission is our responsibility to support the expectations of our students for a high-quality university experience which prepares them for life – for work, for family and community and for citizenship. I expect you to commit to this mission every single day.

We are building a world-class university to serve the nation and to welcome others who might find in our university programmes and services of such a high standard that they come to us from other countries as well. We are building a university where research and innovation will help find the answers to important economic, environmental and social issues that face the nation. We are building a university to support cultural development as well as economic prosperity for all. You could not be doing more important work. Only through increased levels of education, innovation and service will the nation be equipped to deal well with the challenges of the next ten, twenty, fifty or a hundred years.

This is the direction. This is what we must do. And everyone must play a part.



I am going to outline how this mission translates across each sector of The College. Having to meet these new expectations may mean that you will do less of some things and more of others. Having to meet these expectations will mean that you may also be doing things differently. But know that we must deliver on these mandates if we are to be a successful university. These are also the achievements I expect the executive team to monitor and these are the achievements our students, our public and government will be monitoring.

No department can meet its goals without collaboration from other units. This means that each unit must understand what others are doing that may require assistance and be ready to offer such assistance as required.

As you take on these mandates, I invite you to look at your services, your programmes, your policies and your practices, and answer the question: "why do we do this?" with a better answer than: "because we have always done it that way". Instead these questions are the questions that require an answer:

- *Are you contributing to building a culture of research and innovation focused on national needs and issues?*
- *Does what you do represent best practices in universities of similar size with a similar mission*
- *Are you offering excellent services to your colleagues and to our students?*
- *Are you building The University of the Bahamas to be the crucial infrastructure for social, cultural, environmental, political and economic development that Bahamians have a right to expect?*

Answering such questions is going to be hard. In some cases, it will be tempting to give excuses for why there can be no change. That's the way we always do it. We have no money. Our staff are not well enough trained. Our supervisors are not well enough trained. Our students don't care. Our faculty don't care. We need more land. We have no time.

All of these are excuses that stand in the way of really thinking through how we might do things better. Excuses do not build excellence. We have problems – who doesn't? But the point of our work together is to solve problems together. Sometimes the solution will work; sometimes it won't. And when it doesn't, it just means we need to try something different.

For example, we need to improve the process of registration so that we can better plan how many course sections we need. It is not helpful to say that our students don't pay their bills on time. Of course, they don't – and neither does anyone else who doesn't have to. What process can we put into place that will make it easier and more usual for students to pay their fees on time? That is the problem to be solved. What combination of policy, practices and education can we put in place to reduce the number of late registrants and offer our students better choices?



If we agree that it is important to provide healthy and affordable food services to our community, we cannot say that we should go along with serving low-quality high fat foods because that is what our students like. Everyone in the country knows that there is too much consumption of low-quality high-fat, high sugar foods. That is why there is such a high rate of diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. We need to discover how to provide affordable and attractive food to our students – and to faculty and staff - so that we start building better health habits that will protect us from disease.

We need to keep the campus cleaner. It is not helpful to say we can't because our students litter. We know they do. What we need is a combination of policies, practices and education to change this behaviour. These are all behaviours that can change for the better with education, with good policies and programmes. Indeed, this is in part what building a better country is about – through education, research & innovation and service. We are tasked with building, with innovating, with creating novel solutions to problems.

Innovation also implies that strong teams work through the productive conflict of ideas. Though we are not yet doing this well at all times, we are doing it better at the Executive Team level. When a team tries to solve a problem, every member of the team has to contribute. Good ideas can come from anyone. So if you are a supervisor, listen to your colleagues and ask them how they think a problem might be solved. If someone has a better idea than yours, be proud. Your team will perform better. And before you reject an idea, think it through. If an idea is not workable, explain why clearly and truthfully.

Being tough on issues and gentle with people does not mean going along with everything to be popular, but being respectful, valuing the opinions of others and staying focused on the issue to be resolved.

#### ***The work ahead by sector: Administrative Support***

And now, let me lay out this year's agenda, beginning with the administrative areas. First, the search for a replacement for Denton Brown is continuing and we hope to have this position filled within the next month. Meanwhile, we are grateful to Tshombe Godet who was with us in June and July and to Cheryl Simms who is with us at the moment. Both have been extremely helpful. Denton Brown has also assisted us with a number of specific mandates and we are grateful for this support.

#### ***Business and Finance***

We have now completed audits up to 2006 and we need the 2007 and 2008 audits by December 2008. We also need to complete yearly audits on a regular basis within three months of closing. The Business Office must also implement best business practices using the automated technology we have bought and implementing all of its relevant modules. I understand we will continue to need external help to do this. I expect you to complete implementation and the related training this year.



You need also to deliver unit budget reports on a monthly basis to all unit heads so that they can be accountable for managing their budgets. Controls need to be improved to allow for greater unit autonomy in making changes to its unit budget and to ensure good cash flow management. Finally, you need to have strong practices with regards to separating restricted funds arising from gifts, from research grants and from scholarship and bursary money. You need to present for Council's adoption the appropriate policies with regards to delegation authority – policies that reduce paper and levels of bureaucracy while at the same time increasing the accountability of budget officers in each unit.

You must also be careful stewards of our financial resources and to pay particular attention this year to cash flow issues and to our major capital projects. We will be managing the money very tightly this year and we need to be frugal and focused in our expenses and in the timing of our expenditures.

### *Buildings and Grounds*

With respect to janitorial services, I am asking you to plan and execute a program that addresses environmental concerns. This includes changing behaviours with respect to littering and general campus cleanliness as well as implementing a recycling programme. We cannot be speaking about the importance of our natural environment if we, at The College, do not begin to model good practices with respect to its care. I invite you to work closely with the Communication's Office to explore how a combination of education, policy and new practices can help us all to adopt the three R's - reduce, re-use and recycle. I invite you also to explore with The Ministry of The Environment how we might partner with them in regard to recycling in particular.

With respect to Security, we have increased the number of officers and we expect you to ensure a safe campus. We expect it to be safe and perceived to be safe. Your first concern must be for the safety of our students, faculty and staff. You must also be concerned with the maintenance of proper order on our campuses and with the protection of property. I ask you to continue to engage in training activities as you have done and to demonstrate to the nation that we have the best, most effective, most courteous and best trained security personnel. I ask that you be visible to students, faculty and staff since, as you well know, visibility is the most important deterrent to criminal and negligent behaviour. I know that parking will present particular challenges this year and I expect you to be responsible for ensuring the adoption of the parking policy and for its effective implementation. Remember that educating our community is equally part of your duties.

In the Physical Plant area, we expect miracles. We are short of space and we need to upgrade many of our faculty offices and labs. We also need to continue to beautify our campus, increase the spaces for students to 'hang out', landscape our grounds appropriately and manage our energy resources carefully. I expect you to propose a plan and cost analysis for upgrading offices and labs so that we can begin to carry out some of the work required. We will need to re-allocate funds from some areas to others if we are to do this and this will require the cooperation of all sectors. The executive team is currently working it out this reallocation. I also invite you to improve communication with unit heads where requests originate. It may be that you cannot fix a given problem today, but the unit head needs to hear from you when you will fix it and you need to keep your



word. We also need to begin to think how we might reduce energy costs and use energy more effectively. Again, you might explore with the appropriate government agency how we might start a pilot project in this regard – starting perhaps with the use of energy-efficient light bulbs and with determining the level at which air-conditioning units should be set. I understand that some countries have already set standards for air conditioners to be set at 75° - could we do this at The College?

### *Capital Projects*

We are building the Harry C. Moore Library and Information Centre and we are building in Northern Bahamas. We are preparing T18 to be the new Pharmacy Lab. We are also planning for the new Graduate Business Centre and for GTR Campbell Small Island Sustainability Complex on Gladstone Road. While we have not yet secured the permanent services of an experienced overseer of major capital projects, we are grateful to Melanie Roach, former Director of Works at the Ministry of Works who has joined us on a contractual basis to oversee the current work.

We need the Faculty of Business to plan the Graduate School of Business as well as The Small Island Sustainability Team to plan out its facility. I am asking The Chair of The School of Business, Remelda Moxey to lead on the first and the Dean of Pure and Applied Sciences, Brenda Cleare, to lead on the second. I expect that the Estates Administrator Anthony Burrows and Melanie Roach will also be involved in this planning process. As usual, Vice-President Pandora Johnson has been extremely helpful in the coordination of such projects and I am asking her to assume this role again.

I am also asking Pandora Johnson and Anthony Burrows to propose a plan for mapping out all our property, an inventory we to do in order to secure title transfer from government to The University of The Bahamas. As owners of our property, we will need to know exactly what the floor plans of all our buildings are and we will need to have all the land we occupy surveyed. This will also be a specific transition project for which we will need to create a reserve. It may be, however that by partnering with our own faculty in architecture, this may become an exciting academic project as well. We need to develop and adopt a Master Plan, but it is not clear that we could afford to do this in this budget year. At minimum, however, we must complete the inventory I have just described.

### *Human Resources*

Last year we sought to recruit a new Associate Vice-President Human Resources. The search failed as we could not identify someone who had the requisite level and range of experience in higher education. We have asked a local search firm to redo the search for us.

In Human Resources, we also have a busy year ahead. I am asking for the Pension work to be completed as the creation of a Pension Plan is also a part of creating The University of The Bahamas. I also invite Human Resources to propose an Employee Assistance Programme on the model that many other employers have used.



Some of our employees struggle with personal and family issues which we cannot solve on the job. What we can do, however, is find a way to direct our employees to affordable resources that assist them in their times of stress. Human Resources must also work with The Bahamas Public Service Union representatives to come up with new promotion criteria that are clear, transparent and meaningful by the end of Fall 2008. As you know, we will also be negotiating with the Union of Tertiary Educators of The Bahamas; a process we hope will be marked by our shared commitment to build The University of The Bahamas as a place of academic excellence and this will also require support from Human Resources.

### *External Affairs*

Many of you have had the opportunity to meet Gabriella Fraser, our New AVP, External Affairs who is responsible for Communications and Public Relations as well as Alumni Relations and Development. The major goal in the communication portfolio is to send a consistent message about The College within the context of a clear communications plan. This plan must of necessity be driven by unit goals - for recruitment for example, or for registration or for any other major function. I expect Communications and Public Relations to take a customer-focused approach to all internal clients who need their assistance and an institutional approach to all our public messages. We also require a branding exercise to establish the logo, colours and general brand for The University of The Bahamas. We have sent out a request for proposals for this work. This exercise must also have broad community involvement from faculty, staff, students and alumni. I am also asking Communications and Public Relations to take responsibility for the look of the website and to work closely with others to find out how we might improve both the functionality and design of our website. We need to decentralize updates to the unit within an appropriate content management policy.

In Fall 2006, we created the Alumni Relations and Development with a mandate to increase alumni engagement and private donations to The College. Much has been achieved in a very short time on both the alumni relations and on the development front. You will have seen the first College Alumni magazine and you will have been part of the new Annual Giving Programme which received more than \$20,000 from Alumni and more than \$10,000 from faculty and staff. Alumni Relations and Development has also made academic dreams come true with major gifts for The School of Business, The School of Communications and Fine Arts and for the inter-disciplinary faculty team that designed the Small Island Sustainability programme, the programme which led to the single largest ever donation to a university academic programme in the region (\$10M). Between July 2007 and June 2008, The College received in cash \$4M in private donations, an unprecedented level of private giving. This year I expect that Alumni Relations and Development will grow its operation, increase major gift donations and substantially grow support for the Alumni Annual Fund and giving from Faculty and Staff. We will need to increase gifts at all levels to achieve our university mandate. I expect that demands for quality donor stewardship (thanking/reporting to donors) will increase and that this work will require collaboration across the departments and faculties for best results. We will only be able to increase private giving if we appropriately thank and report back well to our current donors. We must diligently fulfill our obligations and tell our donors what we have done with their gift and how their gift had impact. Another challenge for Alumni Relations and Development is that of up to date records on Alumni. This is a critical area and in the coming year Alumni



Relations and Development will need to achieve tremendous growth in the number of alumni for whom we have current contact information. If you have information about former students, please let our colleagues in Alumni Relations and Development know.

### *The work ahead by sector: Academic Support*

#### *Planning*

In the area of Institutional Planning, we will publish a College Fact Book – The College of The Bahamas in Numbers - which gives meaningful and reliable information about The College and which will allow for accurate measurement of change over time. I expect us to develop and make use of appropriate benchmarks. To this end, I invite all academic departments or schools to identify where there are academic departments or schools that could serve as useful comparators either because they are similar in mission and size to you or because they are what you would wish to become. We need to collect reliable data about ourselves, to compare our performance over time and to compare with those with whom we believe we can rightfully be compared. This is the job of Planning but it requires that all units collaborate meaningfully in this. We will continue to participate in international exercises aimed at benchmarking our performance as we did with the National Study on Student Engagement and with the Faculty Study on Student Engagement, the results of which our colleagues in Planning will shortly present.

#### *Information Technology*

Management Information Systems also has a heavy load this year. After showing us how hard team work with the Registrar's Office could deliver on online registration (we are deeply grateful for this work as well as very proud of our colleagues), we are asking for more. We are planning a complete technology upgrade for our network and systems. A request for proposals has been sent out and we have set aside the funds to complete this work over the next few months. This will create a more reliable network, a wireless network across campus and lay the foundation for the creation of interactive web services of all kinds. It will also support the Virtual Library Project led by The Library.

This may well mean some inconvenience as we reroute the network and complete new installations but the increase in quality will be well worth it. I am asking that we also begin to think about increased use of the web for all administrative as well as academic purposes – including making the College's e-mail the vehicle for official College to student correspondence.

I also expect a plan for on-going technology replacement so that we can, as early as next year, adopt policies and practices for equipment renewal upgrades and budget appropriately for this.

Management Information Services also needs to be very focused on the staff and faculty as clients as well as students. Less paper, more automation. Fewer signatures, more accountability.



Finally, we need a new and differently conceived website – one which lays content responsibility at the unit level while ensuring College-wide standards of language and presentation, one which has greater interactivity and one in which information is updated daily.

#### *Student Affairs*

In Campus Life, much has been achieved but more is required. In particular, we must learn to work with The College of The Bahamas Union of Students as an autonomous elected body which reports to the College Council. This will require renegotiating our relationship and placing it on a different footing. We must also increase activities for students on campus though I question whether the practice of placing these on a Thursday afternoon makes sense in a university. The idea that you have reserved no-class times in the middle of the week does not seem to make sense when we are pressed to be able to offer our students the courses they need at the times they want. Whose convenience are we serving? Why would there not be a range of student activities at different times in the week? I am asking Student Affairs to review this practice.

In Athletics, we have made significant progress in offering competitive athletics programmes. We will continue to do so. We must also vastly increase and diversify the level of intra-mural athletics and lay for our students the foundations of healthy weekly exercise.

In Counselling, we need research on students at risk for not graduating and the development of special interventions for at-risk students. This will require close collaboration with the Planning Office, with the Registrar's Office and with faculty in schools. Research tells us that students are most at risk in the transition from Year 1 to Year2, and data are showing graduation rates which need to be improved. Our current graduation for the 1996 cohort stands at 64% and while this compares favourably with graduation rates in some North American universities, it is too low. We should aim for a graduation rate of at least 75% across all disciplines. We need to know whether those who do not graduate with us have failed or whether we have failed them. How many students in good or excellent standing leave us before graduation and why? And what can we do to keep them? This is as important as understanding what we can do for those who are in academic difficulty. We will not reach this level without sustained and concerted efforts that I am asking Counselling to lead and Department and School Chairs to support.

In Financial Aid and Housing, we have adopted a new policy on residence. I am expecting the same with respect to financial aid. Financial aid must be divided between scholarships which support excellence and achievement and bursaries which support need. Our policy must be well-integrated with that of government and other donors with respect to how we measure need and how we define merit. Students who pay at the Bahamian tuition rate, who need assistance and who are in good standing should be assisted and they should know what assistance they can expect and how to access it through information on the web. We should make financial aid applications available to students from our website. We should reserve money to attract and retain talented students who will be the backbone of our programmes. Consideration should be given to decentralizing merit



awards to Deans in order to assist their departments in recruiting talented students in programmes that have growth capacity. Some programmes need to have merit awards to recruit students who would otherwise leave the country as award recipients from our competitors. In addition, we must revisit our policy of not offering financial aid to College Preparatory students. Ministry of Education estimates for 2007 tell us that only 17% of high school graduates leave with 5 BGCSE's with Mathematics and English at grade C or above. This percentage falls to 13% for the Family Islands, excluding Grand Bahama where it is 10%. Clearly, a vast majority of Bahamian young people face an academic accessibility barrier to higher education. I understand that this is a national issue that needs to be addressed in primary and secondary schools but as long as we accept, as we do and as we should, that part of our duty is to assist students who have not met entry requirements, then why are placing an additional financial barrier on access to higher education? How does this serve national development? We also need to review how we offer financial aid to students in the Family Islands. Finally, we need to implement POWERFAIDS and to have detailed and reliable records that are well integrated with all our student information systems. We need to provide timely and accurate reports on a semester basis for financial aid and the performance of students who receive such aid.

In Student Leadership, we have developed strong programmes: The President's Scholar Programme, the Emerging Leaders (25 first-year students were inducted last year) and a new honour society, National Society of Leadership and Success (Sigma Alpha Pi). We need to continue these programmes and to explore the development of programme-based societies for high achieving students. We need to help those who need our help and we need to stretch those who can be our star performers.

### *Library*

The Library is of particular interest this year as we are building the new Library. We are also planning to open the new Virtual Library, massively improving the quality of services to students and to faculty with an increase in online resources and services. This project, carried out in partnership with The Lyford Cay Foundation, will place us among universities with the very best in Library services and it is critical to our credibility as a university. This is another project which requires strong inter-departmental collaboration which we have so far demonstrated. I expect the Virtual Library to be launched this semester.

### *Registrar*

The Registrar's Office has made great strides in improving the registration process, but again, more is needed and faculty collaboration is essential. Whether it is by turning in grades on time or opening the required sections of courses student needs, we cannot make registration better without institutional commitment to this goal and inter-departmental support.

Records needs to determine whether our practices are best practices and to make sure that we are reducing paper and increasing automation while ensuring strong controls that would meet international accreditation



standards for academic record-keeping. We need to implement independent audit procedures to verify that student records accurately reflect grades earned and degree progress. This is standard university practice.

We also need to review our recruitment practices, to attract the very best students in our high schools and to dispel the notion that if you come to The College, you won't be able to get the courses you need. We want to be The University of first choice for Bahamians. Admissions needs to work closely with Communications and with academic departments to redesign recruitment material and to develop a strong recruitment strategy based on the programmes of study. We need to build web-based applications for managing student applications and admissions decisions. Our policies should be clear and transparent and where there are borderline cases, these should be referred to the relevant Deans for final decision. In addition, as we develop new programmes, we need to give serious thought as to whether all will have the same entry requirements. In particular, our new programme in Small Island Sustainability, which is expected to be a national flagship programme, should probably recruit from the top end of high school graduates. By recruiting the very best, we will create a true flagship programme, capable of creating national leaders in this crucial area of national development and capable of attracting international interest. It will also be important to facilitate the admissions of members of the public who might be interested in taking courses within the schools and departments rather than those offered by Continuing Education but who do not want to sign on to a full degree. We might consider creating a special category for such independent students whereby they earn credits without being in a degree programme. This could help to increase enrolments in courses we want to offer but which are too often under-subscribed. It would also be a public benefit.

### ***The work ahead by sector: Academic Programmes and Services***

#### *Academic Affairs*

Academic Affairs has the major responsibility this year for delivering an Academic Plan for The University of The Bahamas, one which identifies both the academic structure of The University and the programme development priorities. This plan must take into account our mission to support and drive national development and our need to develop programmes in areas where we have a competitive advantage and the capacity to deliver excellence. It will identify how we will deal with our responsibility for College Preparatory courses in the years to come while increasing our focus on the degree programmes. It will also propose how we will deal with Institutes by defining what these are and assigning accountability for their performance. The Plan should also address how we see the growth and development of the Northern Campus, now that we are building there. What programmes can be offered and meet criteria for university excellence at this campus? How will College Preparatory work and university work be coordinated on a campus that does not yet have the enrolment numbers that would justify a separation between these two areas?. This work, under the leadership of Rhonda Chipman-Johnson is well advanced. The Plan now needs to be distributed for consultation prior to being approved by The College Council.



Academic Affairs is also charged with the review and implementation of the recommendations of the Report from The Task Force on Quality Assurance, as approved by The College Council. In particular, we must begin the cycle of programme reviews this year and have a five-year cycle mapped out for the years to come. The time has come for an in-depth review of the degree frame. Currently, more than half our course sections are at either the College Preparatory level or the 100 level. We cannot build a University this way. We need to make greater use of majors and minors and we need to give students greater choices. A Liberal Arts and Science education does not have to mean as many compulsory courses as we place on the menu. And where we do not offer choices, we should stop talking about compulsory electives – an Orwellian notion that defies common English usage. We must also consider whether we could build honours programmes for talented students who already know they want to pursue graduate studies and for whom having an honours degree would facilitate graduate school admission. Honours programmes also facilitate the development of research projects and can serve to build the foundation of future graduate programmes while simultaneously complementing the research interests of our faculty. Finally, where we have degrees that require significantly more than 120 credits, where students cannot graduate in four years, we must look at best practices in universities we consider comparable and justify the practice.

I am also asking Academic Affairs to prepare a brief for Council on the implementation of an Academic Senate by January 2009 – a project that has its roots in the recommendations of the Governance Report received last year. Finally, Academic Affairs continues to be responsible for ensuring, in collaboration with departments, an overall increase in the number of faculty with doctoral degrees.

At each Faculty level, we need to develop the new academic structure which reduces the layers of academic bureaucracy while increasing academic departmental accountability, one that brings together faculty who can build strong academic programmes. Each faculty must begin to look at its programmes, its recruitment rates, its retention rates, its research record and the performance of its graduates and determine whether there need to be changes in programmes and or in delivery. Each Faculty should also establish a Dean's Advisory Board made up of community supporters and potential employers to ensure that we are in close touch with national need in our programme development activities. This has already been done at by the Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute and others should follow suit.

#### *Faculty of Liberal and Fine Arts*

What are the sustainable university programmes The School of Communication and Creative Arts can offer? Is the associate degree the highest degree it can support? Is there a mix of majors and minors that would make better use of our resources and increase the attractiveness of these programmes to potential students? In The School of English Studies, what can be done to increase the enrolment in the baccalaureate degree? Also, we must question the practice of requiring of all baccalaureate students that they take three English courses when year after year we are unable to provide these courses to them in a timely manner. We are failing our students because we fail to assist them to graduate on time. I know the arguments for the current dispensation. Our students don't read. Our students can't write. But we are not the only university facing such challenges and we



need to come up with a better answer than the one we have given so far. Why can't students use some of their other courses to meet a writing credit requirement – a practice some other universities have adopted to improve their students' writing skills.

Finally, the Faculty of Liberal and Fine Arts has accountability for oversight of the new Performing Arts Centre – which I expect will open some day – and we will need both a Manager and a set of policies to govern the use of this new facility.

#### *Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences*

In the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, much is undergoing change. While the Small Island Sustainability Programme is an inter-disciplinary one, it is currently being led by this Faculty and there is much to be done to make this programme a reality and to prepare to enrol students in this programme. I expect the Faculty to continue to lead on this project.

I also expect the School of Science and Technology to review its programmes and to take steps to improve the overall graduation rates of its students. While we enrol many students in the school, few graduate. Why? And what can be done to change this?

There are three areas crucial to national development the school needs to consider. The first is the need for trained marine and environmental scientists; the second is engineering and engineering technology, particularly in Grand Bahama and the third is energy, particularly renewable energy, an area crucial to our sustainable economic future. I am asking the School to explore how it expects to meet national needs in this area and to propose strong teaching and research programmes to do so. There is another area of national importance which we have never considered – careers in the maritime industry. Is there an opportunity here for us to develop strong programmes that can provide high quality employment in this sector for Bahamians? Perhaps Academic Affairs in collaboration with this Faculty might consider how we might help to build the nation in this regard?

In Nursing and Allied Health, we are happy about our implementation of the new direct entry B.Sc.Nursing degree and pleased to be implementing a new Pharmacy Programme in collaboration with The University of Technology in Jamaica. This is an area where we also need to increase the number of faculty with Ph.D.'s and to develop a strong research profile, one aligned with areas of national concern. The School also needs to consider what other applied health professionals are needed in the country and how we can help to prepare these.

Across this Faculty in general, it might be a good time to think about the structure of Applied Degrees – degrees built on their own distinct frame, one that places the technical courses at the early end of the programme - and which may allow for an Associate degree exit after two years –but which seamlessly also allows for continuation in the third and fourth year with the more traditional discipline-based courses in the higher years. I invite the Dean, the Chairs and the faculty to explore such degrees. It may be that we could better serve the nation



through such degrees which may appeal to students in a hurry to get on to the job market as well as to young men who are seriously under-represented in our current student population.

#### *Faculty of Social and Educational Studies*

In the Faculty of Social and Educational Studies, we expect that this faculty will be divided and that social studies areas will go to new Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences while we will also get ready for a new Faculty of Education. This creates opportunities for the School of Social Sciences to explore how it might review its programmes and strengthen these by increasing the use of majors and minors, by thinking about job opportunities in new areas such as international relations, and by combining its offerings into degrees that appeal to prospective students. Social Sciences provide a fruitful ground for exciting inter-disciplinary programmes and these should be explored. In law, it is unlikely that we will offer our own degree until we have stabilized our faculty complement and strengthened the department. While we do this, we should also explore how we might develop an expertise in maritime law, another area of national importance.

The School of Education performs a critical national function and it has done it well. It has also done excellent work in preparing to become a distinct faculty. The School still needs to make a concerted effort to increase the number of faculty with doctoral degrees and to reduce in the overall number of degrees currently on offer. This can easily be achieved by using a major-minor model. The School of Education has shown strong interest in the development of graduate degrees and this is exciting. At the same time, it may be wise to first restructure the undergraduate offerings, to increase the number of faculty with PhD's and to consider building honours programmes – all of these can pave the way for the introduction of strong graduate degrees.

#### *Faculty of Business*

The Faculty of Business is charged with a number of important projects. At the invitation of government, it is leading the research in support of public sector analysis and development and it is leading another research project to support small business development. The successful delivery of results on these projects is crucial to our success as a University supporting national development.

The School of Business will also be busy this year planning for the Graduate School of Business and the MBA to deliver with this school. While we have not yet identified a new Dean, leaving Chair Remelda Moxey and



Executive Vice-President Rhonda Chipman-Johnson the task of sharing these responsibilities for yet another academic year, we have identified a candidate to support the School in its graduate programme development. Dr. Fred Crane, whom we interviewed last year but who cannot join us on a full-time basis, has been invited to assist and has accepted.

#### *Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute*

The work of The Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute is critical to national development. It has adopted a Strategic Plan which it is now implementing. Among its goals must be to increase enrolment. This is another Faculty where applied degrees might serve well. Faculty at the Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute are also deeply involved in the Small Island Sustainability Programme which we expect will be a flagship programme for us. Surely, the expansion of relatively small, Bahamian owned properties serving the high end of the market is an exciting prospect for national development. The Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute has also established that building a training hotel is part of its priorities and we will need to see how we might achieve this.

The Culinary and Hospitality Management Institute has also been willing to assist in exploring how we might offer food services on campus now that Sbarro's has left us and I hope this can lead to a fruitful outcome both in terms of campus services and eventually in terms of training facilities for our students.

#### *Research and Graduate Programmes*

In 1997, there were 5 research projects in The Bahamas reported in *Scopus*, the largest abstract and citation database of research literature and quality web sources. In 2007, there were 22 such projects. While it is not clear that these were all at The College, there can be no doubt that we have intensified our research activity. This intensification must continue. Not only because research intensity is primarily what distinguishes a community college from a university, but because the nation needs excellent research to make good policy choices, to develop the economy through innovation and to ensure the sustainable and long-term peace and prosperity.

We have adopted the terms of reference for a Research Advisory Board to act as a driving force for research – and to eventually become the Senate's Research Committee. I expect this Board to be in place by early September and to be very active this year in particular. This Board is charged with preparing the research policies we need and with the distribution of in-house funds which will allocate for research start-up grants to be distributed to faculty on a peer-reviewed basis. This year, we will allocate \$30,000 to such grants. In addition, the Research staff must support faculty research development and seek out opportunities for research, either at the national or international level. For example, I am told that government is seeking better data on energy use patterns and costs in The Bahamas as a prelude to establishing a national energy policy. Such a project fits well in The College and I was pleased to learn that a proposal is being developed with this focus in mind. There are undoubtedly many other examples. In addition, we are building the financial policies and



practices that will allow for researchers to have their own restricted accounts and to disburse funds from their research accounts for research purposes and to be directly accountable for the management of these funds.

Research needs to be seen as driven by discipline expertise and carried out at international standards of excellence. Research is supported by Vice-President Linda Davis and her staff but it is driven and carried out by faculty in the schools and departments. Increasingly, world-wide, there is also a recognition that students even at the undergraduate level can and should be involved in research. This is a trend we should follow.

At the moment, we continue to offer graduate degrees in collaboration with other universities and I expect this will continue. This year, however, we have committed to the development of a graduate degree in business and the School of Education also has been developing an interesting proposal. I am asking the Academic Affairs Team and the colleagues in Graduate Programmes to design a general policy on the development and approval of graduate programmes for The University of The Bahamas.

#### *International Relations*

We have been successful in increasing the number of student exchanges and study abroad opportunities for our students, but to do more we require the collaboration of faculty, of academic affairs and of the Registrar to ensure that we do not place undue obstacles in the academic path of our students. International experience provides significant academic enrichment in the undergraduate learning experience and many universities see exchanges or study abroad as a critical feature of the excellence they claim. If this is the case in large settings where the home campus already has a diverse student body, it is even truer for our students who study on a relatively small campus with a relatively homogeneous student body. In addition to the academic merits of such experiences, our capacity to provide study abroad and international exchange is a major recruitment tool – particularly for Bahamian students who may otherwise choose to attend universities abroad for the full four years. As we review the degree frame, we need to take into account how we might facilitate study abroad opportunities and make it easier for our students to have their credits from international universities easily fit into their degree requirements.

International Relations is also about building partnerships that depend on faculty willingness to work in collaboration with international institutional partners—joint courses/programmes and research collaboration. For example, we have faculty participating at a conference on small islands at The University of Prince Edward Island this fall, another on sabbatical at Brock University as a result of our partnership agreements. We must continue to seek these out if and when they serve our faculty's needs.

#### *Outreach*

With regard to Continuing Education and Outreach, we need to develop and implement a distance education plan. Such a plan has been hampered by the difficulties of having strong and reliable infrastructure but there are signs of progress in this regard. Our own new network should help and I understand that some of the



videoconferencing technology that was both expensive and unreliable is becoming both more affordable and more reliable. This is an area which requires great inter-departmental collaboration as we want a system that not only offers College Preparatory courses and personal and professional development courses but one that also increases the availability of regular on-line and mixed delivery degree courses. Also, when we offer courses in our Family Island centres, we need to make sure that we offer appropriate financial aid as we would if they were on one of our main campuses.

Outreach must also serve the needs of employers and we are happy that we are offering courses to a number of these, such as the Nassau Airport Authority. But we need to do more to market our services, to facilitate the delivery of high quality training services and to become the place to go for rapid and effective treatment of employer demands for training. This will mean developing stronger marketing of our services and great internal cooperation to ensure high quality client services.

#### *Policy and Governance*

Finally, at the policy and governance level. As you know, Antoinette Seymour has accepted an Acting assignment as Council Secretary. Our goal in this area is to provide Council with accurate well-prepared briefings and policies for approval and to facilitate Council deliberations by correctly identifying the issues we face as well as the risks of any decision and by providing strong analysis in support of whatever recommendations we might make. We expect this year to be a demanding one for Council as there will be a number of critical decisions to make as well as a number of policies to adopt in anticipation of a change of status. This will require great discipline in the preparation of useful and thoughtful analysis and recommendations. Our Council has also given us clear indications that it expects documents to be submitted well ahead of meeting dates and that it expects high quality information and analysis before taking a decision. We will work on this together.

#### *Conclusion*

This then is the 2008-2009 working agenda and I am deeply committed to its realisation. It is an ambitious agenda. It is a team-based agenda. It is an exciting agenda. Dive in, work hard and deliver; this may be one of most rewarding years of your career.

We are building the future of The Bahamas –what better work could there be?