



Remarks

Dr. Jonathon Rodgers

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

University of The Bahamas Media P.A.S.S. (Plan for Achieving Strategic Success)

5th November 2020

Good morning everyone.

The theme of this annual Media P.A.S.S. meeting could not be more appropriate, given the events that we have all experienced during the past year, and the challenges that we will all face individually and as a university over the next decade.

In response to the challenges of Hurricane Dorian, the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic economic recession, the administrative team of the University of The Bahamas, under the leadership of President Rodney Smith, acted swiftly and decisively to manage the affairs of the university.

In the aftermath of the decimation of the UB-North campus caused by Hurricane Dorian, the university team at the northern campus in Grand Bahama, under the leadership of Dr. Ian Strachan, in combination with the UB team at the main campus and at UB-North, were able to relocate students to make-shift classrooms in Freeport, the main campus in Nassau, and to Hampton University in the United States. Demonstrating Bahamian resilience at its finest, UB-North was back up and running in no time after Dorian wreaked havoc in Grand Bahama.

UB was the first Bahamian institution to implement the confinement protocols, and widely disseminated health protocols to ensure the safety and health of the university community. Another testament to the strong leadership at UB.

The administrative and academic team has done a phenomenal job of ensuring that 90% of all academic programs are now online and being taught remotely, and by all accounts, students will be able to complete their courses. This seamless switch of the delivery of courses from the lecture hall to the home speaks to the hard work and organization of the university faculty and Academic Affairs, aided by the expert support of the IT department.

In June of this year, the university was mandated by the Ministry of Finance to cut its budget by 20% when the university already had a huge budgetary shortfall. A task force was appointed to

make strategic budgetary reduction recommendations. The recommendations were made and still we were able to successfully implement cuts without laying off any staff or faculty members. I can ensure you that this was no easy task and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the Task Force on Reduction on a job well done.

Apart from dealing with these challenges, UB now has a better understanding of its financial position, has successfully implemented the Banner IT system, has improved its governance infrastructure, filled key administrative positions, worked hard to revamp existing programs, introduce new ones, and has started cutting-edge initiatives, like the Climate Change Adaptation Resiliency Research Centre. And it continues to diligently work towards achieving SACS accreditation that is needed in order to move UB to the next level.

Also, we are about to break ground on the new residency facility and we are contemplating a possible convocation center to be built on the Clarence Bain Building property. We are also in talks with the government to create an economic zone around the university campus that will provide an income stream needed to support the future growth of the university.

Given the success that UB has experienced thus far in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian, the rapid adaptation to virtual learning caused by the COVID pandemic, and all of the other achievements that I have already mentioned, the Board of Trustees is confident that UB will be able to overcome any future challenges and will continue to survive and thrive in the future.

There is an old saying that when the going gets tough the tough get going. The UB team has experienced a very tough period and has shown that it is tough enough to handle any other challenges ahead.

I want you to know that the Board of Trustees has absolute faith in the University's capacity to move forward in the face of adversity, and I want to thank you for all of your hard work. I and the Board look forward to working with all who wish to forge the path of the university onward.