

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UB Launch Event**

**29<sup>th</sup> January, 2024**

**Harry C. Moore Library and Information Centre**

**Allyson Maynard Gibson, KC, Chair, UB Board of Trustees**

### **Remarks**

ACCEPT ESTABLISHED PROTOCOL.

Ladies and gentlemen, I greet you all warmly and welcome you to our lovely University of The Bahamas campus on this historic day.

We are living through an unprecedented era of disruption and discovery; of opportunity, imagination and innovation and mankind's inexhaustible will to overcome and forge ahead. This moment beckons to us to activate unparalleled paradigm shifts in our thinking, our action and our vision.

This moment recalls the excitement among Bahamians on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1977, at the Official Opening of the College of The Bahamas ("COB"). Then Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Lynden O. Pindling (as he then was) started his speech with these words: "Once upon a time the common assumption was that The Bahamas would never amount to much and that there will never be the need for Bahamians with higher levels of education and training. In the outside event that The Bahamas did need some higher skills, then it was argued that such personnel could always be brought in from abroad." After setting out goals for COB he said this: "Ten years from today we will have developed the University of The Bahamas."

On that day Fifty years ago, he spoke on behalf of our parents and grandparents - a group of forward-thinking, ambitious visionaries who were determined to set a path of limitless opportunity and greatness for future generations. They anticipated that "the College will produce graduates who are not only technically competent but also who will have developed a social consciousness which will make them actively concerned about the nature of the society in which they live and, as informed citizens, have some views on the directions along which national development should be taking place". In 2016, these sentiments were captured in the Mission Statement in the Charter of UB. Fifty years later, we continue to be impacted by the powerful, potent and transformational seeds then sown.

Today, our national tertiary institution, stands as a beacon of transformation and a catalyst for excellence. UB graduates are impacting The Bahamas and the wider world.

University of The Bahamas has become a key institution and instrument of national development. We shall enhance our efforts as we work with other institutions to implement our National Development Plan.

- Today more than 4,000 students are enrolled. A growing number are making UB their first choice for excellent tertiary education.
- Our legacy of excellence has cultivated pacesetting alumni who are steering innovation, trailblazers and thought-leaders, entrepreneurs, and outstanding citizens of an inter-connected world - ample evidence of which are the names of the Alumni Cabinet mentioned by President Hodder.
- UB aims to become a regional leader for developing skilled human resources especially in education, health, tourism and hospitality, financial services (including the digital asset space), business, climate resiliency and small island sustainability.
- Our more than 22,000 graduates have a strong commitment to nation-building and the development of orderly, peaceful and flourishing communities, and our nation is the better for it. As a matter of fact, more than 40% of the current members of our Parliament are UB graduates.

I hope that Her Excellency, the Governor-General, will forgive me for singling her out as emblematic of the kind of dedication and commitment of the members of the COB/UB team. There is no question that they are visionary architects of knowledge, shaping minds and fostering growth. Without their unwavering dedication, the transformative, nation building that impact we celebrate today would not have been possible. While at COB as an adjunct professor and what would today be called the Director of Student Experience, Mother Pratt, as she was then, and still is now, fondly called, poured herself into her students. She is inextricably woven as a part of the history of UB. You and I continue to hear the personal testimonies. As mentioned, Her Excellency is emblematic of the commitment of COB/UB team members of that era.

Please join me in a round of applause to thank her and all current and former members of the Board and Council, faculty, administration and staff for their nation building service that has brought us to today.

The Board of Trustees celebrates that fact that the UB team members are still fully committed and serve in the same inimitable manner.

We are not resting on our laurels. We all agree that there is much land yet to be possessed. We stand on strong legacy, fueled by the indomitable Bahamian spirit, that enables us to achieve anything to which we put our minds.

UB's next step of national and international accreditation will be a validation to this nation and the world of, among other things, the extraordinary competence of our graduates and our faculty; the renown of our degrees; the robustness of our research; the life changing force of our student national and international experiences; and excellence of the services that undergird all that we deliver.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we move forward and upward together to the next 50 years, let us acknowledge that UB is you and UB is me. We are UB.

I invite everyone in this nation from Inagua to Grand Bahama, and all partners and friends near and far to join in this nation building journey.

All hands on deck and put on more speed.

Thank you.