



**College of The Bahamas Union of Students**

**Remarks**

**Jamaal Knowles**  
**College Of The Bahamas Union of Students President**

**PRESS CONFERENCE: Faculty Strike over Negotiations**  
**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2010**

**2:30pm, Mini Band Shell @ Independence Park**

We, the students of The College of The Bahamas, are now at a critical moment in the semester where we are gearing up to prepare for our final examinations in order to complete a successful term. For the past 3 months many students have been working tirelessly day in and day out attending classes, turning in assignments and preparing for test and exams. For many of us this takes a lot of time, energy and sacrifice especially since a large portion of the student body, work full time jobs. Some of the students are married with family obligations that require needs to be met as well. And these are only a few of the many things that we engage ourselves with on a daily basis. Not to mention all the extracurricular activities that we indulge in weekly as a means to keep ourselves balanced mentally, spiritually, physically and socially.

At this institution there are many students that are struggling financially to make ends meet because either their parents don't have the monies to pay for their tertiary education and provide them with food or because they have to re-pay loans borrowed in order to attend COB to attain a degree. Students do all this in hopes that some day when they finish they can establish a career for themselves and be able to provide for their families financially. This is what many would call true sacrifice. Doing this is what many would call putting it all on the line.

After all their hard work and effort, students are shocked that the Faculty would consider to strike a time as such, when our exams are about to begin. The very same faculties that would look students in the eye and say that we are the number one reason why they are here, the very same faculty that sometimes go to great lengths to encourage us to turn in assignments on time and ensure that we complete the syllabus before the end of the semester.

To the Faculty we understand from the communications that you have put out to the nation that the College has hesitated for years and months with neglecting your request to have the negotiations

signed and ensure that your needs are met as their employees. We understand the frustration you face as many of us work as well. We know that this must be very taxing on many of you, as you try your best to produce quality and efficient work to the students with limited resources provided to you by the College. We are aware that sometimes you have to invest your own personal funds into classroom activities to ensure that your teaching methods and presentations are delivered effectively so that the students would understand the material clearly. We know all of this because we too experience the very same thing while we are out to work on our jobs, trying to put our best foot forward.

However, we do know that when we applied to the job we made a commitment to the company, to the customers and to ourselves that we would do everything in our power to perform at the best of our abilities despite whatever situations are presented to us on a daily basis. Everyday that we wake up out of bed and put on our clothes to go to work and come to school, we should make a decision to be at our best and give our all to everything that we will do within that day. And this is not just because of our obligations to work and our families but because the Almighty God has given us life, health and strength to see another day and we owe it to him to be grateful. We owe it to Him to be good stewards of whatever is given to us.

So faculty we urge you to reconsider your decision to strike during the beginning of the examination period. We urge that you do not disenfranchise us the students of COB. Instead we ask that you be an example to us and the nation that despite your circumstances in life, despite whatever it is that you are going through on the job you will not allow your situations to cause you to affect those that are innocent in the matter but you would make a decision to sit to the negotiation table with the relevant people responsible for your problem at hand and solve your matters in cooperative manner.

To the administrators of the College we the students are appalled to see that you have waited so long to meet the Faculty Union at the negotiating table to solve and correct matters important to Faculty that have hindered their progress and ability to perform effectively while on the job. You have said on several occasions that you are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that students receive the best at The College of The Bahamas. However your actions toward the negotiations process speak a magnitude of contradiction to your statements about your concern for students. In order to meet the needs of students it is obvious that you should at least meet the needs of the faculty who are in constant communication with students. It is imperative that Faculty are given the proper facilities and benefits that would ensure that they are equipped enough to give of themselves effectively to the students in the classroom. We do agree with some of the complaints made by the faculty; however we don't feel as though we should be pulled in the center of the negotiation process by them planning to have a strike during our exam time. We are more concerned with taking our exams and completing College quickly without any hindrances. Therefore, we urge that you go into lock down with the Faculty at the negotiating table and see to it that you exhaust all avenues to avoid the strike.

To the students, COBUS is truly infuriated and disheartened to know that the negotiations process between the College and UTEB has extended to such lengths. They have pulled us into the mids of the matter and now all our diligence and efforts throughout the entire semester are now at the helm of the Union that are planning to strike during our exams and the College who are reluctant to agree with a lock down but working to put together a contingency plan. Students we want you to know that from the beginning of this week we have been meeting with President Hodder and the executive branch of UTEB to find a solution to the matter. However, from the meetings it appears as though both parties are holding to their guns and not willing to compromise for the

betterment of the students. However, despite the uncertainty in the matter at this time we urge that you not worry because we want you to know that COBUS will do everything in its power to resolve this issue at hand. We urge that you continue to complete your assignments on time and prepare for your exams. Also during this time we ask that you check your student emails daily because we will be communicating with you frequently to keep you abreast of the situation. My fellow classmates this is only the beginning of our efforts to satisfy you and see to it that justice is served and the students prevail. So we ask for your continued support during this time so that when we call for action you would be able and willing to be mobilized to fight for your rights as students.

Now let me once again reiterate to the Faculty and the College;

We the students of The College of The Bahamas do hereby declare and affirm that we will have no part in supporting the Faculty strike that is schedule to commence on 16th April, 2010 neither do we support the College in its reluctance towards the negotiations process by not agreeing to have a lock down with UTEB to complete the whole ordeal. We urge that both parties get there act together and see to it that the students are not the victims of there selfish gains and theatrics.