

# The College of The Bahamas Research Journal

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For the past 28 years, *The College of The Bahamas Research Journal* and its predecessor, *College Forum*, have published peer-reviewed, scholarly articles on a variety of topics drawn from an array of disciplines. The editors have published articles written by College faculty, students and researchers, members of the local research community or by scholars with an interest in The Bahamas.

The articles selected for this volume are from diverse disciplines: political science, law, education, and psychology and all address important public policy issues which impact The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. College of the Bahamas student Cassandra Adderley studied neighbourhood noise and nuisances; Professor Michael Stevenson analyzed the legal and constitutional issues surrounding censorship; Mr. William Fielding set out standard definitions of animal ownership and levels of care that can inform the Animal Control Act; Dr. Janet Collie-Patterson identified and discussed factors that contribute to the challenges faced by the national educational system; and, a team of College academics including Mr. William Fielding, Miss Virginia Ballance, Ms. Carol Scriven, Dr. Thaddeus McDonald and Dr. Pandora Johnson explored the stigmatization of Haitian immigrants in Bahamian society.

In transforming the College to a university, there is a need for *The College of The Bahamas Research Journal* to increasingly become a forum for discussion, debate, analysis and critique of public policy issues since the role of academic research in informing public debate and public policy is of critical importance. The College of The Bahamas needs to lead and inform such debate in its research agenda, a role that, to quote from Stevenson's article in this journal "the community expected The College of The Bahamas to play a public educational role in society..." (p. 20).

As a small-island state, The Bahamas faces unique challenges and opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Public policy issues have implications for the country's social, cultural and economic life. Among the most critical national issues are the increasingly multicultural character of the population, regional trade policy and economic integration, taxation and economic development planning, crime prevention, education, national health insurance, environmental protection and sustainable natural resource management, and tourism.

University think-tanks, open fora, and scholarly journals can offer non-partisan views on issues of national importance that are grounded in research. Scholars can integrate diverse viewpoints, analyze policy options and facilitate informed debate among members of the general population. As such, they can place compelling, even contentious social issues within coherent national discussion.

With this volume, *The College of The Bahamas Research Journal* moves from a print to an on-line open access format. We hope that this move will allow greater access to College-based scholarly research, will raise the profile of the College and will allow researchers to contribute to the continued development of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

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