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## Office of University Relations

29<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### **Empowered and Inspired: UB Education Grads Ready to Shape the Future**

Nassau, THE BAHAMAS — Nearly 80 future educators, poised to make a lasting impact on the lives of students across The Bahamas, pledged to uphold the noble tenets of the profession at the University of The Bahamas’ Spring 2024 Teachers Commissioning Ceremony held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May at the Kendal G. L. Issacs Gymnasium.

The event was a part of the university’s commencement events and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Some 76 graduands are ready to start a new chapter as educators.

Among the jubilant grads were Cody Symonette, Darius Johnson and Kadian Thomas who each shared how UB has been instrumental in shaping their paths.

“UB definitely put in that work for me, so at least I’ll have a foundation in order to fully succeed,” said Symonette. “All of my lecturers, the Chair, the Dean, they definitely helped me to grow as an individual. And since I have sickle cell, it’s harder for me. So, for them to back me up, yeah, it makes me want to back those students up, especially those who have medical challenges like me. I definitely want to continue the cycle.”

Symonette’s story is one of many that show just how resilient and determined members of the UB 2024 Commencement Class have been over the years. UB’s values of knowledge, truth and integrity have been integral to that.

Johnson, who is graduating with a Bachelor of Education in Physical Education K-12 degree, said UB has “over-prepared” him for his career, sparking his interest in further education.

“I must say, I am pleased that I am finished, and I’m pleased with the experience I had,” he said. “Honestly, it even encouraged me to study a bit further. Now that I’m completed, I’m actually looking into doing graduate school, furthering my studies in physical education.”

Thomas, outgoing Senator for the School of Education in the Student Government Association and President of the UB 2024 Grad Council, reflected on her accelerated journey through UB.

“The contract said four years; I did it in three—1,995 days and only one bad day,” said Thomas, a wife and mother of two. “I would do this over in a heartbeat. I love my school. UB Strong!”

This feeling is one that I could not even write in a book. I would basically have to tell you verbally so that you can have that same adrenaline that I'm feeling in this current moment.

“This ride has been one that I will carry with me. Late nights, hard work, students calling, getting into classes. But the most important thing is a tribe, a community of lecturers, teachers who took their time to help us every step of the way. University of The Bahamas, you can call on me anytime. I will definitely be there for you.”

Keynote speaker Dr. Kathiann Antonio emphasized the noble calling of teaching and learning and reminded the grads that teachers are advocates.

“Advocacy aims to bring change and your job is to advocate for the students wherever you are,” said Dr. Antonio.

In delivering a response on behalf of education grads, BEd Primary Education candidate for graduation, Gem Major, said she and her contemporaries fully appreciate the solemn duty with which they have been entrusted.

“We are not simply being commissioned or receiving our pins, but rather, we are being entrusted with a profound responsibility: to uphold the pillars of knowledge, truth, and integrity for the next generation,” said Major. “We mark not just the culmination of our academic journeys, but the beginning of a noble profession, a calling to shape minds, inspire hearts, and illuminate futures.”

As these aspiring educators embark on their professional journeys, they carry with them the spirit and support of UB, ready to inspire and educate the next generation.

## **PHOTO CAPTIONS**

School of Education graduands, faculty and administrators following the Teachers Commissioning Ceremony held at the Kendal G. L. Isaacs Gymnasium.

Guest speaker Kathiann Antonio delivers a rousing message.

Provost and Vice President Academic Affairs Dr. Maria Woodside-Oriakhi.

School of Education grads at the ceremony.

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