COB IN THE COMMUNITY

The College of The Bahamas in Research: A Process In Motion

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ABSTRACT
Though not previously thought of as a “research” institution, much has been written or published about the College of the Bahamas by past and present faculty and students as well as scholars not associated with the institution. To what extent, though, are researchers publishing about the College of The Bahamas and what percentage are published in the College’s research journals as opposed to elsewhere? The focus of this article is on a select body of research published over the past 40 years by the College of The Bahamas research journals and publications as noted in the ProQuest database in which the college is the subject of the research.

INTRODUCTION
In 1974 the Government of the Bahamas passed the Act for the establishment of the College of The Bahamas (COB) as an academic institution to provide post-secondary education for Bahamians. In his 1975 Communication to Parliament, then Minister of Education and Culture the Hon. Livingston N. Coakley noted that, “the college would … engage in research that is directed towards the optimal utilization of the country’s natural resources” (1975). In spite of this proclamation, the primary focus of lecturers during the College’s early years was on programme development and teaching, as opposed to research. However, while not so much in the forefront, research within COB has had a very long and historic affiliation with the institution. As the College grew, and as faculty prepared themselves academically to advance the institution beyond programme offerings at the certificate and associate degree levels, research assumed a more prominent position.

The Early Years
In 1980 COB published its first academic journal, College Forum. It was an annual publication, which enjoyed a 17-year run, with the exception of a break in 1985 and an 8 year gap between 1986 and 1994. With no research office or staff in place, this publication fell under the direction of the Dean of Academic Affairs, Claire Hepburn (Bynoe & Hepburn, 1980, p. 1). Volume 1 would be followed by the publication of an additional eight volumes culminating with Volume 9 in 1997. The content in the inaugural volume ranged from articles on Bahamian history and general science, to education and library science. The focus throughout the life of this publication was never exclusively COB or even Bahamian, but was rather general in scope. Of the nine volumes published, three had no content with direct reference to the College (Table 1).

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Like the College Forum, almost all of the research articles published in the College of The Bahamas Research Journal were on non-COB matters, written by COB faculty as well as scholars from overseas.

In spite of the gaps in the publication of this title (2004, 2006 and 2007), there were notable significant changes occurring. As noted by the Managing Editor of the journal, later issues of this title focused more on public policy matters; hence there was an increased focus on local community concerns and general education matters (domestic violence, Bahamian history, agriculture, the local economy, gender issues, etc.). Another matter of great significance was the publication of the first online, open access edition, making the publication available to an even wider and more technologically-savvy audience. This method of publication would see a significant increase not only in the number of persons viewing this publication, but also in the number of articles downloaded (Ballance, 2010).

In 2010, with the publication of Volume 16, the editorial board once again saw a need for a change in the journal’s focus so as to remain relevant to its readers and to attract additional researchers and increased readership. The journal would once again undergo a title change to become the International Journal of Bahamian Studies (IJBS). Like the mandate articulated by then Principal Jacob Bynoe and Dean of Academic Affairs Claire Hepburn, who noted that the “journal represents an effort not only to spread the results of academic activities in the College, but also to stimulate participation in such activities and an exchange of ideas by a broad cross-section of interested members of the Bahamian community” (1980, p. 1), the IJBS was intended to be a more international publication although “all articles will now have a Bahamian focus or include content or topics of Bahamian interest” (Ballance, 2010, p. i).
Unfortunately, none of the issues under this journal title have published an original research article with a focus on COB. Coverage has been exclusively on local community or Caribbean concerns.

ProQuest Presence

Searching COB as a subject in ProQuest™, a database abstracting and indexing research from approximately 90,000 authors and containing more than 6 million digital pages (http://www.proquest.com), revealed that the College was the subject of research from the early 1970s. Between 1980 and 2014 there were 17 thesis/dissertations focusing on COB in the areas of education, counselling, curriculum, administration, information science, and institutional history (Table 3). The most popular area of graduate research was education, with continuing education prominently featured. COB as subject matter would also feature prominently in academic journals in articles by John Enger (1983), Barry Greenberg (1981), John Reid (1979), and Autumn Tooms (2007).

Table 3. ProQuest™ Dissertation Citations with COB Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Research Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Higgs</td>
<td>University of Nebraska, Lincoln</td>
<td>Business Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>The American University.</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>McPhee</td>
<td>Oklahoma State University</td>
<td>Academic Guidance Counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Klovekorn</td>
<td>University of Miami</td>
<td>School Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
<td>School Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Roach</td>
<td>Andrews University</td>
<td>Adult Education; Continuing Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>SUNY Buffalo</td>
<td>Curricular, Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Texas Southern University</td>
<td>Higher Education, Economics, School Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Bouchard</td>
<td>University of Miami</td>
<td>Academic Guidance Counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Cleare</td>
<td>University of Tennessee</td>
<td>Educational Evaluation; Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>McCollin</td>
<td>Univ. Southern Mississippi</td>
<td>Continuing Education; Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Vanderpool</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
<td>International Cooperation; Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Pinder</td>
<td>Penn State University</td>
<td>Adult Education; Continuing Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Keck-McNulty</td>
<td>Kent State University</td>
<td>Academic Guidance Counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>Nova Southeastern University</td>
<td>Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Dames</td>
<td>University of North Texas</td>
<td>College of the Bahamas History</td>
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Conclusion

Research is a significant focus in tertiary education institutions. It was a part of the vision for COB from its inception and has grown as a primary expectation over the years. Research as produced by current and past individuals over the past 40 years of the College’ existence is well documented in academic as well as non-academic publications. College-specific research within the College’s publications is sparse, but is much more evident in the wider scholarly arena. Over the years, the focus of research has shifted from its former regional and local perspective to a more global presence. While there has been an increase in research and publication, perhaps researchers of all kinds within the institution will take advantage of opportunities available via the College’s research journals to inform ourselves and the global academic community of what COB is about and how our practices and procedures...
might impact the global academic arena. As the institution prepares for the move to university status, there will be an even greater focus on what we do, on how we do it and on associated outcomes. With a focus on accreditation and student success, there will be an even greater need for us to “research” ourselves. In keeping with the College’s mandate to play a wider role within the local community, conducting research and publishing the findings will add legitimacy to the academy.

REFERENCES


SELECTED ARTICLES ABOUT COB

Brown, L. M. (2002). Going global; traditionally, the percentage of African American students who studied abroad has been low; however, university officials are looking into ways to increase those numbers. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 19*(6), 28-31.


DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ABOUT COB


