

# **UTEB & BTVI, TOGETHER**

By: UTEB's PR Committee

In this time of heightened individualism and separatism, it is very important to be reminded of the significance of collective strength and unity. There is so much to be gained through combined thought and focus. Indeed, unionism is built on the principle of solidarity - strength in numbers. It is this perspective that has driven the leadership of the Union of Tertiary Educators of The Bahamas (UTEB) to extend its membership to the second government supported tertiary educational institution in our island nation: The Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI).

In the spring of 2020, BTVI faculty applied to the Minister of Labour for UTEB to be recognized as their bargaining agent. This initiative was prompted by the perceived need of faculty at this technical and vocational institute for collective bargaining and strategic guidance from the only established tertiary level union in the country. Discussions were started in summer 2019 with the newly elected President of UTEB, Mr. Daniel Thompson, and representatives of the BTVI faculty.

The road to unionization is often fraught with challenges, but with perseverance, even the most resistant barriers eventually give in to reason and the need for a progressive way forward. The faculty of BTVI are gradually gaining their confidence and standing up for fairness and equity within their work environment. Despite several attempts at union busting, they are beginning to realize what can be achieved through our combined efforts and purpose. The faculty of BTVI currently await a response from the Minister of Labour granting permission for them to proceed with their official collaboration with UTEB. With official recognition, thirty-five faculty at

BTVI will have the assurance that their rights and concerns will be addressed and represented under an established and recognized collective bargaining unit.

Tertiary level educators in The Bahamas are a very specialized group with unique and exceptional abilities. Through the addition of the faculty of BTVI, the Union of Tertiary Educators of The Bahamas is also enriched and strengthened. Realizing this unionization effort will move us all forward under one umbrella, continually striving for greater equity and a more progressive union.

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