

# Executive Council Committee on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

December 11, 2023

## Minutes of the Teleconference

**HBCU COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Canon Martini Shaw, Fr. Dick Burnett, Canon Jamie Callaway, Dr. Joel Cunningham, Mr. Scott Evenbeck, Canon Anita George, Canon Michele Hagans, Dr. Eugene Lowe, Bishop Sam Rodman, and Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley.

Absent members: Ms. Martha Alexander.

**STAFF AND CONSULTANTS:** Mr. Kurt Barnes, Mr. T.J. Houlihan, and Fr. Lang Lowery.

**Absent Staff/Consultant:** Canon Ron Byrd, Mrs. Nancy Caparulo.

Cn. Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM EST and Cn. Callaway offered a prayer. The meeting was recorded for the purpose of minutes-taking.

Fr. Burnett was welcomed to his first ZOOM meeting, and it was noted that the spelling of his name should be corrected in the November minutes, which were then moved, seconded, and approved as corrected.

Cn. Callaway and Dr. Lowe were thanked for their work on the Blue Book report. Dr. Lowe discussed the rationale behind their presentation of the information. There followed a quick debrief of the recent presentations at the Joint Budget Committee hearings. There was no need to include a budget resolution in the Blue Book report as the expense is covered elsewhere in the GCO budget.

### Voorhees Update

Bp. Ruth was grateful for the information she had been provided to address the budget hearing. She is aware of economic disparities in the student population and how much that is helped by the HBCUs.

Bp. Ruth met with Mr. Houlihan to begin planning fundraising efforts toward the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary between TEC and Voorhees. She also had conversations with clergy of color in her diocese, anchoring the fundraising in the creation of scholarship funds for Episcopal students, especially those discerning for ministry. There are currently no Episcopalians in the student body, which is a challenge when trying to develop an Episcopal ethos at the school.

### Development Update (OOD)

Mr. Houlihan said the Absalom Jones Fund is behind about \$60K, commensurate with giving being down across the board. OOD is working on that reality using current innovative technology. They are working with the Communication Department on the Absalom Jones campaign, whose feast happens on February 13<sup>th</sup>. Visiting Raleigh helped develop the theme, *Blessed Abraham Galloway*. He and Julia Alling are working on an expanded mailing right now.

Bishop Michael was going to do his Christmas message from the chapel at SAU but that has been canceled owing to subsequent events. Bp. Ruth added that Voorhees would be grateful for a special message from the PB in 2024 about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### Consultant Reports

Cn. Lowery was on hand to say he has sent the SACS rules and regulations to the committee. Graduation rates are being looked at and SAU's rate is 24%. He understands 30-35% is the floor level. The school is now under a 'good cause extension' from SACS. Bp. Sam noted SAU was not timely in response to requests for additional information, notably their audits. Mr. Evenbeck said that a recommendation for all North Carolina schools to move away from SACS is abroad, and accreditation is on unsettled ground in NC. Dr. Cunningham added that it is not clear what will happen with the accreditation in the transition if there is a transition. If SAU can get its audits in and straighten out the lack of confidence in the trustees, the commission on colleges would likely extend the accreditation.

#### Treasurer's Report

Mr. Barnes explained the current budget process and timing between now and the General Convention. Whatever EC adopts on January 29 will be the budget that goes to the GC. Mr. Barnes discussed his lack of knowledge about the SAU 3-year lag in audits specific to the advance to SAU of their 2024 block grant and 2023 grant remainder. There will be no cash grant in 2024. If recipients do not meet agreements they are not be eligible for a grant. Voorhees agreed that 40% of their grant would go to the chaplain and 60% to the school. SAU did not make that agreement but agreed 25% to the chaplain. In future, with SAU Mr. Barnes will request separation of payments to support the chaplain and to the Diocese of NC. He will speak with Cn. Byrd to be certain reporting is up to date going forward.

Further discussion covered various issues concerning audits, the last of which was received in 2020. Bp. Sam recounted that an agreement was reached with SAU that any Absalom funds due to DAU wouldn't be distributed until the 2023 reporting was received and they have not been received by the deadline. The Treasurer's staff have been asked for the status of block grants and will report. The 2021 and 2022 audits remain outstanding.

#### St. Augustine's Update

Bishop Sam discussed confidentiality around the matters at SAU, particularly the dismissal of the President. The decision of the board was made for cause. There is no CFO at this time. There is an Acting President who the board and Bp. Sam are confident about. A brief look was taken at the no confidence votes in the current CFO and CEO. The faculty indicated no confidence in the board of trustees. Fr. Burnett aired his concerns about the press and the information imparted to them. Bp. Sam opined that never has there been proper controls over what is made public. The trustees were cited for two things: failure to provide proper audits timely and overreach in management, stepping over the president to manage staff. He added that he got a call from Logan Delaney, a former chair of the board who resigned during the turmoil with the president previous to President Ward. Mr. Delaney continues to support SAU. A pending gift of \$800K was to go to scholarships but has been delayed. He may send that to TEC to oversee and decide about the scholarships. He does not have confidence in the board. If he and his foundation decide to send the money to TEC, he will need guidance about how to do that.

#### Budget Hearings update

Dr. Lowe presented on November 9. On December 9 Dr. George and BP Ruth will attend and Bp Sam will do so on December 12 as will Cn. Callaway. The hearing experience was discussed in brief along with recommendations about identifying where cuts should come from to cover the increase requested. Having the same talking points was considered valuable in the event that email questions to individual members come forward. Bp Sam, Bp. Ruth and Dr. George will prepare the response for the committee that was asked of Dr. George at the last hearing. Additional questions from Joint Budget Committee will be sent to others on the committee.

Rev. Hershey joined the meeting at 11:15 AM. She described the anxiety on campus within the faculty and student body. About 10 people have been laid off under the rubric of cost containment. Rev. Hershey is spending her time supporting people to process the losses. She is concerned about the Honduran students and possible transfers that might be desired under the circumstances. Bp. Sam said the diocese could be helpful in that area.

The next meeting of this committee will be January 24 at 10:00 AM EST.

Dr. George focused on the problems with the board at SAU that have been noted by SACS. How can that particular association with the leadership be impacted?

Kurt – ELT asked whether Martini could attend and bring them up to speed about what you know about SAU. Next meeting is December 20 at 9:00 AM.

Cn. Callaway talked about messaging and his concern about students remaining or leaving the school. Group needs to be unified in the message in the affirmation of SAU.

Dr. Marcus Burgess is new interim President.

A motion was made, seconded (Bp. Sam and Cn. Hagans) and carried to adjourn at 11:30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Caparulo  
Staff support to the Committee