

**HBCU Committee
TELECONFERENCE**

Thursday, Nov. 29, 2018, 3:00 P.M. (EST)

HBCU Committee Members Present - Canon Martini Shaw, Chair; Dr. Anita Parrott, Canon Jamie Callaway, Dr. Scott Evenbeck, Dr. Joel Cunningham, Dr. Eugene Lowe

HBCU Committee Member Absent - Canon Michele Hagans

Consultants Present - Ms. Cecilia Malm, Canon Lang Lowery

Supportive Staff - Mr. Kurt Barnes, Bishop Andrew Waldo, Fr. Allen Bentrup (with Bishop Waldo)

A. Meeting Called to Order by the Chair at 3:02 P.M. (EST)

B. Opening Prayer offered by Canon Callaway

C. Reflections on our recent Face to Face Meeting at Voorhees College. Those in attendance expressed their strong positive feedback re: our time with the Board of Voorhees and the President. It was an excellent opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the Episcopal Church (HBCU Committee) and the Board / Leadership of Voorhees.

D. **Consultant Malm** reported on:

- 1) Upcoming Dec. 12 Event planned in D.C. for St. Aug's. Tara Holley is also involved with the planning. The Presiding Bishop will be in attendance.
- 2) The Absalom Jones Appeal letter signed by the Presiding Bishop will be sent next week to all Bishops and UBE constituents. An email blast will also be circulated to bishop and others.

E. The below report is a recap of **Consultant Lowery's** report to the Committee. The narrative below was shared with Dr. Ward:

"The HBCU committee convened today and asked me for a report on accreditation. I told them you made the deadline and filed the report. I said the next step was a meeting with the Committee on or about the 7th - 9th of Dec in New Orleans then the Committee should have their decision a few days later perhaps on Dec 11th.

I reported that I was cautiously optimistic that SAU would retain accreditation because:

- 1) Dept of Ed deferred interest of \$1mm /yr. which shows material support plus this is a significant cash infusion in itself.*
- 2) That the back-office sanctions were removed which was critical.*
- 3) That SAU posted an on-time audit with only a few weaknesses (note: the weaknesses remain a technical problem which is concerning)*
- 4) That Dr Silver and Ed Patrick have a reputation for fixing things and SACS should give credit for that*
- 5) That you were respected and connected in DC -Not to mention you have increased institutional giving every year of your tenure*

- 6) That SAU posted a surplus for 17/18 (critical for accreditation)
- 7) That your budget for 18/19 projected a surplus (critical for accreditation)
- 8) That the University has significant assets.
- 9) That the institutional effectiveness sanction seems like it is not a thing in to itself that would close down the University.

That said, the weaknesses could be a problem and the surplus budget for 2018/19 might not satisfy the Committee under diligence. And Enrollment and/or the cost side of the budget might fall apart under further evaluation. Yet all said I informed the committee that you and others at SAU were optimistic.

The question arose 'what if' accreditation is lost. I said that we had discussed a Plan B Plan with Polsinelli to file a stay then a lawsuit to retain accreditation. The cost would be at least \$50k and require some weeks advance of work to be ready to file if you lost accreditation the week of Dec. 10th. Several wondered if we might not should prepare for a Plan B. Could you please advise what you are thinking?

I say this because TEC is wondering about your PR strategy? Can TEC's new PR chief help the University devise drafts? And what about the fund-raising event in DC? How will it plan into the situation. Obviously good news could make it a celebration party! On the other hand, bad news needs to be thought through with the PB in attendance."

Consultant Lowery also reported that he is working with Voorhees in Development. He stressed: the importance of the College's alignment with the Episcopal Church. He also shared that he will be bringing to Voorhees a consultant to work on some HR issues.

F. **The Chair** will be in communication with the HBCU Committee et al as develops occur over the next few weeks.

The Chair will be meeting with **Canon Lowery, Kurt Barnes and Dr. Ward** re: Communication and Press Announcements. It is very important that it be stated how important the role of the Episcopal Church has been during this period of probation. The reality is, without the involvement of the Episcopal Church, the story today would probably be very different. The conversation between the **Chair, Barnes, Lowrey and Ward** will also focus on the possibility of a Plan B (if accreditation is withdrawn).

St. Aug's leadership will meet in New Orleans with the SACS Committee around Dec. 8th. It is hoped that within days from this meeting, SACS will express their decision re: accreditation and probation.

G. **The Chair** urged all to keep in prayer St. Aug's, the SACS Committee and the upcoming process.

H. The Next Scheduled Teleconference is: **Sunday, Dec. 9th, 4:30 P.M. (EST)**

I. The meeting adjourned at 3:57 P.M.