

Executive Council Committee on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

February 4, 2019

Minutes of the Teleconference

Attending the meeting:

HBCU COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Canon Martini Shaw (Chair); Canon Jamie Callaway, Canon Dr. Anita George, Dr. Scott Evenbeck, Dr. Eugene Lowe, Dr. Joel Cunningham, Canon Michele Hagans, Bishop Arthur Williams, Dr. Sean Decatur, Ms. Martha Alexander.

CONSULTANTS: Ms. Cecilia Malm, Canon Lang Lowery.

STAFF: Mr. Kurt Barnes, Fr. Ronald Byrd, Ms. Nancy Caparulo.

REGRETS: Bishop Sam Rodman, Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple, invited guests.

ABSENT: Dr. Scott Evenbeck, Dr. Sean Decatur; Bishop Arthur Williams.

Canon Shaw called the meeting to order at 9:02 with prayer. The roll was taken and Dr. George congratulated by everyone on her canonization.

Canon Shaw provided an update on matters at St. Augustine's. Dr. Ward decided that he would resign effective July 2018, with the intent to announce that measure in a positive note. He created a press release to that effect. Canon Lowery added his perspective on these events.

A search committee has not yet been formed. Justice Perry is likely to succeed the present Chair, Dr. Smith. Dr. Lowe discussed a strategy for interacting with the board in the meantime. Canon Callaway talked more about the nature of the board. The suggestion was made that a board retreat be held where the PB could attend.

Canon Lowery focused on the need for a smooth transition and the possible number of people who may leave with Dr. Ward's departure. Canon George agreed with the idea of a board retreat.

Dr. Everett Ward joined the call at 9:20 AM. Canon Shaw welcomed him and brought him up to speed regarding the conversation thus far, including the importance of nominations for new board members. Dr. Ward thanked the committee – and the church - for the support that has been given both to the college and to him personally since he arrived in 2014.

Dr. Ward reported the university is doing well albeit with issues that need to be solved. There is an enrollment of 816 FTE and the budget had been built on fewer students, which is an advantage. They will have to begin preparations for the 10-year accreditation process. The provost is already working on the timeline and a campus-wide committee has begun to work on it. The board will need to address student housing issues. A capital campaign must be mounted for the university. Dr. Ward is very pleased that the SACS probation has been lifted. He feels it is a good time for another president to take up the mantle. He alluded to issues with the board regarding governance and strategic planning. The board's role appears not to be entirely clear. Dr. Ward described his notice of six months, a provision of his contract, and he plans to continue to work with the board to achieve a seamless process of transition. He observed that people are excited about the current state of the university and his commitment is to maintain a positive message. Dr. Ward complimented Bishop Rodman and Bishop Copple for being extremely strong board members.

Dr. Ward emphasized that if the committee knows of good candidates for the board their names be given to Bishops Rodman and Copple as soon as possible. The board would be benefitted by members who have higher education experience, means, and involvement with TEC. Dr. Ward is not involved in the nomination process.

Questions were invited. It was observed that Dr. Ward's achievements have been more than significant and commended him for same, especially given the state of the university when he first took his position. There are 25 board seats provided in the school's board via by-laws. There are now 18 voting members, two of whom have resigned, Peter Meredith (Norfolk) who has been very supportive financially and Dr. Janet Sutherland, who was the key board member with academic experience. There was some advocacy among a board member that the empty seats should not be filled at this time. Father Green is an honorary member of the board without vote, as is the PB. The president and legal counsel do not vote.

Dr. George thanked Dr. Ward for giving his all to hold the university together and to bring forward. She appreciates his integrity and dedication to St. Augustine's. Dr. Ward returned Dr. George's sentiments and added that he would always do whatever he can for the university. Dr. Cunningham said Dr. Ward's position going forward shows wisdom and generosity and is the best way for him to work through the transition. Ms. Alexander had been at Founder's Day and recalled a lovely moment with a student on that occasion.

Dr. Ward was adamant about the continuation of the HBCU Committee, most particularly in the area of fund-raising (grant opportunities and scholarships). He also supported the continuation of the relationship with Canon Lowery for development and sustainability, expressing his concern about the appropriate handling of school-owned property.

Dr. Ward invited the committee to visit the university before July and to contact the board chair with an assurance of the committee's ongoing interest in the school. He left the call at 9:45.

It was observed that work with the university becomes more complicated with the resignation. The focus now is the board, its process, and its development. The committee must work on potential trustees. Board appointments are critical to the health of the school. Currently, there are votes needed to have Dr. Ward leave before July. A discussion ensued of various experiences with the board and its members.

Canon Shaw suggested having another teleconference to include Bishops Rodman and Copple in order to decide how the committee moves forward. Suggestion was made to add Dr. Decatur, who is involved with a multi-million dollar capital campaign for the university.

Conversation covered timing for a face-to-face meeting at the university, the budget for such a meeting, and the critical importance the board's nominating committee. Ms. Alexander advocated for a board retreat. Thorough discussion followed about when to visit the school.

Canon Shaw will contact the group after touching base with Bishops Rodman and Copple concerning a date for the next meeting. He adjourned this meeting at 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Caparulo
Staff support to the committee