

Executive Council Committee on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

September 23, 2020

Minutes of the Teleconference

HBCU COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Canon Martini Shaw (Chair), Ms. Martha Alexander, Dr. Joel Cunningham, Canon Jamie Callaway, Canon Anita George, and Dr. Eugene Lowe. **Those absent:** Dr. Sean Decatur and Canon Michele Hagans. **Regrets:** Dr. Scott Evenbeck, Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple and Bishop Andrew Waldo

Guests: Mr. Kurt Barnes, Father Ronald Byrd, Bishop Sam Rodman, Canon Lang Lowrey, and Ms. Cecilia Malm.

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM with a prayer offered by Bishop Rodman.

The roll was taken; the minutes from August 5 were moved (Lowe) seconded (Cunningham) and approved as presented.

St. Augustine's Update

Bishop Sam discussed the meeting between Bishop Curry and President, Dr. McPhail. The school has been in session in person since the middle of August. Because of their protocols for safety there were only two reported cases of covid-19 among students and faculty. Enrollment is down from projected numbers, 750 students registered but the budget was looking for 950 – 1,000. The board has been warned by SACS; the board was to have met tomorrow (Sept 24) to address the warning but the meeting has been cancelled. Matters regarding board activity were discussed in some detail. There is great confidence and excitement throughout campus concerning Dr. McPhail's presidency.

Development

Ms. Malm reported an increase of \$5K to the Absalom Jones appeal this year and she noted the value of recurrent donors. She has been meeting with institutional advancement at Voorhees and looking at ways the church can support fundraising there. She has also been in touch with Hershey Mallette Stephens to help her make connection with funding sources. John Larkins (SAU alumni) and Cecilia have been in touch via e-mail to talk about how alumni can participate in fund-raising.

Fr. Byrd asked about the Absalom Jones appeal next year be designated for chaplaincies? Mr. Barnes – If it goes to non-staff compensation it is legal. If it is directed to support a chaplain specifically, it can't be done because it is not tax deductible. Ms. Malm observed that there are donors who are thinking about the institutions and students. Specific donors might be asked to support chaplaincies. Voorhees has no chaplain at the present time. The suggestion was made that it would be ideal to have an endowment to support both chaplaincies.

Canon Lowrey reported about a recent survey of 5K HBCU students covering 17 schools that showed 80% of students were negatively impacted by pandemic with loss of employment/income. The financial structure and underfunding of HBCUs is causing a fight for survival in these colleges. Schools that have gone back in person are in better shape but enrollment is down 40%-50% at SAU. SAU is unsustainable with a number below 900 students. Voorhees' enrollment is down 40% from last year and is in crisis.

Dr. Prince Brown, the new head of development at Voorhees, joined the call at 10:28 and President W. Franklin Evans shortly thereafter. President Evans introduced Dr. Brown.

Dr. Brown described the situation regarding Voorhees and the covid-19 pandemic. Out of caution for students and faculty, they went entirely virtual in the fall with no students on campus. They consider it a wise decision as no student has contracted the virus from being on campus. The reduced enrollment and reduced revenue create a whole new campus environment. Many students require hands-on attention, which cannot happen with virtual learning, and many students do not have tech capability to do the work they need to do. The decrease in enrollment is from 510 projected to 359 actual. Revenue from housing and food services is gone and there is a \$2.8 million deficit. Expenses not incurred were salaries for housing and food service staff. \$500K has not been expended. Cares Act funding did not help. Dr. Brown asks the committee for a one-time show of support to get the school through this situation. The case statement developed to illustrate the need is appended to these minutes. Ten to twenty prospects willing to support their efforts are sought. Committee members are asked to give names to Ms. Malm. They are looking for between \$500K and \$1 million before the end of the year and an alumni-focused fundraiser has been launched.

Dr. Evans added that the cancelled fall athletic program might resume in January, which is a savings, although revenue from cancelled Homecoming activities is absent. This might happen in the spring. Several other fundraisers have had to be cancelled as well. Voorhees has declined in greater enrollment numbers than other HBCUs in the country.

Questions arose about second semester. They are projecting an increase in enrollment and having students on campus but they still have to raise \$2.8 million. Spring enrollment is usually less than that in the fall so the budget is being based on 359 students, anticipating that some may leave between semesters.

Dr. Evans discussed the conundrum around the chaplaincy at Voorhees. It was noted that both dioceses in South Carolina are in transition. Bishop Waldo has announced his retirement. A candidate for chaplain had been interviewed but was considered to be a poor fit for the school.

Ms. Malm talked about the development of a good prospect list for funding Voorhees. Canon Lowrey and Ms. Malm will reach out on their own. She described the disproportionate impact on the HBCUs by the pandemic and the fact that this is especially a justice issue.

Fr. Byrd will help with identifying possible candidates for the chaplaincy and will work with Dr. Evans in that regard. Dr. Evans explained their interest in having the chaplain also impact the

wider community. Bishop Henry Parsley and Carrie Walpole (Archdeacon) were both discussed as possible resources.

Canon Shaw thanked Drs. Evans and Brown for attending the meeting. Dr. Brown pointed out the critical role that Voorhees serves in rural South Carolina. They left the meeting at 10:58.

Next meeting: October 29 at 9:30 AM.

Consultant Wrap-Up

Ms. Malm reiterated the push at Voorhees to raise \$1 million by the end of the year and that the development office would like to be as helpful as possible. Consultant recommendation is that TEC should do as much as we can between now and the end of the year to assist in their efforts. Possible donors were discussed, where they are, and what capacity exists. Mr. Barnes added that he had looked at sustainability funds for Voorhees for the triennium and found that there is about \$75K available (pending confirmation from controller) almost immediately.

Grace Church Brooklyn Heights priest, Allen Robinson, may be helpful to Dr. Evans as a presenter on Zoom. It was agreed that he could be a significant alliance. Ms. Malm has been aware of that possibility. A direct appeal to Fr. Robinson from the church might be worthwhile in securing endowment funding. Ms. Malm and Canon Shaw will contact Fr. Robinson together.

It was moved to adjourn (George) at 11:10, seconded (Callaway) and carried.

Canon Shaw adjourned the meeting with thanks to all attending.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Caparulo
Staff support to the committee

A Case for Support Due to the Impact of COVID-19

Voorhees College, a historically black institution of higher learning based in South Carolina has been affiliated with The Episcopal Church for nearly 100 years. The College urgently needs financial assistance to continue providing the high-quality educational experience for which it is known.

Historical Perspective of the College

Voorhees College is a private, historically Black four-year Institution (“HBCU”) located in Denmark, South Carolina and rural Bamberg County. Originally named the Denmark Industrial School for African Americans, Voorhees was founded in 1867 by Ms. Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, a graduate of Tuskegee University and protégée of Booker T. Washington. Ms. Wright wanted to establish a school in rural South Carolina modelled after Tuskegee. However, the school was burned down three times by terrorists opposed to the education of African Americans before being successfully established in its current location of Denmark. In 1902, Ralph Voorhees, a New Jersey philanthropist, made a donation that enabled the school to purchase land and construct buildings.

Under the leadership of its current president, Dr. W. Franklin Evans, and a dedicated Board of Trustees, the student body has increased along with student retention. Academic outcomes and institutional giving have also improved over the last five years. And, Voorhees students and alumni continue to receive awards and recognition as leaders in business, education, government, health care, and the arts among many other fields.

Our Connection to The Episcopal Church

In 1924, Voorhees became affiliated with The Episcopal Church through its partnership with the American Church Institute, an organization founded by the Church in response to the alarming disparity between educational opportunities for African Americans and Whites. The Institute focused on founding and supporting schools in the South that were providing higher education to African Americans.

The Episcopal Church and the Dioceses of South Carolina, Upper South Carolina, and North Carolina have all been in close relationship with the school and have helped to support Voorhees for nearly a century, providing education to thousands of young people. The historic St. Philip’s Chapel is housed on the campus and is staffed by a college Chaplain, who together with faculty and students, provide services, religious education, and programming to the community at-large.

Mounting Financial Crisis at HBCUs

HBCUs in the United States have historically operated under financial pressure, with smaller endowments and more limited fundraising capacity. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, of the \$41 billion raised by American Universities in 2016, less than one percent of these funds went to HBCUs. Endowments at HBCUs also lag significantly behind non-HBCUs by 70% (American Council in Education, 2017).

Voorhees serve students who are often the first in their families to attend college and the families themselves have limited financial resources. Alumni tend to be enthusiastic, but as first-generation college graduates, have not amassed the level of wealth that can enable large gifts until years after they pay off loans and absorb some of their debt incurred from pursuing a degree.

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the financial challenges even more acute. Voorhees applied for and was awarded funds under the CARES Act which enabled us to convert to an on-line educational platform and complete the 2019/20 academic year. With an abundance of caution, Voorhees started the fall semester using a complete virtual on-line teaching model. Due to the kind of students we serve, this decision has substantially impacted the financial health of the institution. In particular:

- Voorhees has experienced an income shortfall of over \$1 million due to the loss of room and board fees.
- In-person fundraising events which typically raise over \$250,000 per year has yielded a fraction of this amount to date. We have had to canceled one of our most profitable fundraisers, President’s Scholarship Gala, and replace it with a virtual Day of Giving, with the hope that we will meet our goal of \$250K.
- We have experienced a 30 percent drop in enrollment and matriculation due to students deciding to defer their college plans, resulting in a loss of approximately \$1.3 million dollars in tuition.
- Among the most popular fields of study for Voorhees students are the areas of sports management, criminal justice, and service sector professions like health care and education. These areas have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and Voorhees alumni working in these fields have experienced job losses or reductions. It is expected that we will see a decline in alumni donations this year.
- The CARES Act funds will be insufficient over the long run to make up for estimated income losses. As a result, we will be faced with limiting financial aid and we may have to lay off faculty and staff.

Drop in student enrolment	
151 students @ \$9988	\$1,508,188
Student housing shortage	
359 students @ \$3673	\$1,318,607
Total revenue shortage	\$2,826,795
Expenses not incurred	
Salaries & fringes	\$ 142,000
Food & associated expenses	\$ 300,000
Total expenses not incurred	\$ 442,000
Total net shortage	\$2,384,795

Your Support is Urgently Needed – Now!

We believe in the Episcopal Baptismal Covenant whose pledge is to “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.” The gospel work of justice, education, reconciliation, and formation is happening at Voorhees College and your support at this critical time will help sustain the institution and aid us in continuing our record of producing leaders for the nation and world.

Please make a donation today, visit: <https://voorheesedu.wufoo.com/forms/online-payments/>, text IAMVCSTRONG to 41444, or send a check to: Voorhees College, Office of Institutional Advancement, 213 Wiggins Drive, Denmark, SC 29042