

Executive Council Committee on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

November 11, 2021

Minutes of the Teleconference

HBCU COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Canon Martini Shaw (Chair), Ms. Martha Alexander, Canon Jamie Callaway, Dr. Joel Cunningham, Dr. Scott Evenbeck, Canon Anita George, Canon Michele Hagans, Dr. Eugene Lowe, Bishop Sam Rodman and Bishop Andrew Waldo.

Guests: Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley and Canon Ron Byrd.

Regrets: Fr. Lang Lowery, Mr. Kurt Barnes, and Ms. Cecilia Malm.

Cn. Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM EST. Canon Callaway offered a prayer. Cn. Shaw introduced Bishop Ruth, who has agreed to serve on the committee.

The minutes from the last meeting (both sets) were moved (Lowe), seconded (Hagans) and approved as presented.

St. Augustine's Update

Bishop Sam discussed the board meeting that took place at the end of October. The census was done, revealing just over 1,000 full-time equivalents, which is economic good news. SAU's long-range plans have shifted with Dr. McPhail's presence there. Few COVID outbreaks have occurred. They have hosted vaccination clinics for the school and community. There are a few residual legal matters from prior administrations that are in process of resolution. Overall, the financial position of SAU appears to be strong, thanks to enrollment and outside grants.

Conversations with the Chaplain are ongoing. The position is a paid employee of the school with assistance from the diocese and TEC to cover health insurance and pension costs.

There was a shooting on campus, a result of uninvited guests to a campus party, who had no connection to the university.

Bishop Curry asked Bp. Rodman to chair a working group on truth-telling, reconciliation, and healing. The mission and work of HBCUs are bright on the radar screen for that group.

Cn. Byrd noted the allocations in the TEC budget for support to the chaplaincies of both SAU and Voorhees going forward. Dr. Lowe inquired about the status of the accreditation. There is one remaining area of concern, from the original eleven, having to do with accounting and the antiquated software that is used in that area. There will be an update in February with a SACS site visit thereafter. The warning stays in place although the probation was lifted some time ago.

Voorhees Update

Bishop Waldo reported that he has been in touch with Dr. Hopkins to discuss the 40/60 split of support (SAU/Voorhees respectively) in the TEC budget will help in their chaplain search.

Bishop Ruth has spent time on the campus and spoke very positively about her visit. There is a good job description, to which a narrative will be added to help describe the chaplain's job for potential candidates. Funding begins January 1, 2022 and the primary focus is on finding the right fit for the position.

Cn. Byrd talked about the work accomplished at Executive Council. He had been in touch with Chaplain Hershey at SAU. Three women from Honduras will matriculate in January. The convocation from January 20-27 is planned and the HBCU Committee has been invited to participate, hopefully in person.

Cn. Byrd has been working with Chaplain Hershey on programs to attract black students to the ministry. They are looking to collaborate with VTS and others on that program.

Development Report

Ms. Malm had provided an update via e-mail to Cn. Shaw. The Absalom Jones fund is at \$84,000+ after a \$10,000 donation was received after a recent webinar. Rev. Hershey was asked to do a reflection at the recent DFMS In-House staff meeting, which was very well received.

At Voorhees, trustee Callie Walpole has been very helpful in identifying some major donor prospects for the school.

Consultant Report

Cn. Lowery discussed the enrollment at Voorhees, which is about 360. They utilize off-campus offerings, approximately 30-40 students. Both SAU and Voorhees need to be at 1,200 to keep their heads above water financially. He observed that the numbers are greatly affected at Voorhees by the location in Denmark, SC.

Cn. Lowery continued that across the top 25 HBCUs, the smallest enrollment is 3,000. Below target enrollment raises concerns about the longevity of the schools. During COVID, Cn. Lowery has seen consortiums formed around academic disciplines and resource sharing. What type of consortium might be developed for SAU and Voorhees that would make sense for both?

He continued that deferred maintenance is a concern on both campuses. Voorhees is better off in this regard than SAU but the money necessary to keep the campuses going is enormous and will be an ongoing challenge. Whether in Denmark, Raleigh or Sewanee, students have expectations commensurate with the price being paid for residence.

Dr. Lowe reflected on Cn. Lowery's remarks and expressed his own concerns about vulnerable enrollment. Cn. Lowery discussed movement in the corporate community around ESGs, observing that corporations are waking up to being good corporate citizens and could be the answer to saving the universities, as long as they are approached with a worthwhile strategy.

Dr. Evenbeck noted that the 25 HBCUs mentioned are public schools and that SAU and Voorhees are private. Many of the HBCUs have low enrollment, many are in SACS, and

finding a strategy to attract corporate support is important. He added that the strategic approach applies to philanthropic pursuits as well.

Bp. Waldo spoke to the fellowship of SC bishops conference at USC about 15 Voorhees students, which Dr. Hopkins attended. He said that the questions from the Voorhees students were profound and thoughtful ones, underscoring the quality of the educational work being done at the school. Additional discussion looked in greater depth at the issue of building maintenance. Dr. George raised the matter of collaboration helping financially.

Cn. Shaw will pursue a conversation with Dr. Hopkins at Voorhees to ascertain what help the committee could offer other than financial. Cn. Byrd's approach was from the development standpoint.

Next meeting: Monday, January 10, 2022 at 10:00 AM EST.

Cn. Shaw adjourned the meeting at 11:02 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Caparulo
Staff support to the committee