

# Executive Council Committee on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

February 14, 2022

## 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.

**Guests:** Mr. Kurt Barnes, Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley, Fr. Lang Lowery, and Ms. Cecilia Malm and Canon Ron Byrd.

Canon Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. Canon Byrd offered a prayer for Absalom Jones. Dr. Lowe followed with the last stanza of a hymn written by Harold (?) for Absalom Jones.

The minutes from the January meeting were moved (Evenbeck), seconded (Hagans) and approved.

### St. Paul's Update

The agenda was reordered to accommodate Canon Hagans' time constraints. She had spoken with Chris Stevenson and his group who have created St. Paul's Education Institute. They are actively pursuing teaching educator curricula and entrepreneurial seminars to reactivate St. Paul's. When the college closed, there was a significant impact on the community around it, especially job loss. They are in need of engaging with the community and repairing trust. The group is looking for spiritual support from the committee and help connecting with St. Augustine's, Voorhees and Sewanee. No financial resources were requested. There is a large group supporting *St. Paul's for Life*. A large event is planned for March 2023 at the Dominion Center. Discussion looked at various activities happening to keep St. Paul's visible and plans moving ahead.

### St. Augustine's Update

Bishop Sam provided an update on the board meeting, noting the atmosphere as the best he has experienced yet. Enrollment update: 937 full-time equivalents in the fall that had an impact on the budget. Owing to the PPP loan (converted to a grant) and another large governmental grant (American CARES Act - \$4 million), the budget shows a \$4 million surplus. Enrollment projections for spring are 920 students, representing less attrition than is usually experienced.

The athletic director's report was very positive concerning the athlete's level of academic achievement. They raised \$180K on Giving Tuesday, an 80% increase from last year. The endowment is \$12 million, \$2.3 million of which is restricted; the fund is currently undergoing analysis. Annual fund yielded \$10 million in grants in the last year.

Chaplain Hershey's installation has been postponed because of Omicron. There will be a new date in the coming weeks. The diocesan celebration will be broadcast from SAU's chapel next Saturday and is entirely virtual. She has been encouraged to have the installation at a time when many members of the committee can be present.

SACS made a substantive change visit in early February. Two recommendations resulted: more extensive staff evaluations and reviews and doing more detailed, in-depth descriptions course by course. There is a monitoring visit around the recent warning status coming up April 12-14. A year ago, 11 of the 12 areas needing to be addressed had already been done. They anticipate a finding of full compliance after the April visit. A discussion on the accreditation process followed.

#### Voorhees Update

Bishop Ruth reported on President Hopkins' preparation for Founder's Day. They have acquired the elementary school to use it as a Becoming Beloved Community site; an executive director has been appointed. A key part of his work is how to position the work of the chaplain, a position description for which is posted and has gone out to deployment officers. Some conversations have begun, and the committee's help is desired to improve both conversation and exposure. There are 328 undergraduates at present and 24 in the graduate program. SACS visit was in October and accreditation of the post-grad program is anticipated. Pres. Hopkins has several initiatives around Becoming Beloved Community. Work is ongoing on campus to "spruce up" its appearance. The community is back to worship there using COVID protocols.

On April 7 the college will become a university. Pres. Hopkins' installation is the next day. There have not been bomb threats at their location, but they have increased safety protocols with guidance from the FBI.

Voorhees did a wonderful online observance of Absalom Jones Day.

Canon Byrd talked about the Voorhees chaplain's job description. Applicants are hoped for soon. At SAU Chaplain Hershey is excited about the collaborative scholars' program that helps to discern ministry. A retreat is being planned at the Seminary of the Southwest in the fall.

Three students from Honduras are in the pipeline but a snag in the process owing to I-134, requiring a sponsor to complete the application process at SAU. Scholarship requires support financially and with mentoring. Canon Byrd asks committee to consider being a mentor to one of the three women scholars and help with the I-134 process. The hope is to have them in place for fall semester in 2022. Bishop Allen has been coordinating from Honduras.

The Office of Black Ministries is sponsoring 4 students from SAU to General Convention. Sponsoring Chaplain Hershey and Sally Simpson to GC also. They will support the booth and other activities during convention.

Mr. Barnes discussed a miscommunication concerning budget funding for HBCUs that resulted in an upset with the UBE, now hopefully resolved. Bottom line: the financial request for support to the HBCUs was in the draft budget developed by the EC Finance Committee; and monies have been specifically allocated to support the chaplaincies. Mr. Barnes discussed the grants that were separated into block grants and educational enterprise grants (the latter for which the colleges must apply). He and UBE plan to ask PB&F to recombine those grants in the coming budget.

Canon Byrd noted that scholarship season is now and early March. He asked committee members to encourage students to apply to Mr. Barnes and Ann Hercules within the 30-day application window.

Up to \$10K is available for each qualifying/chosen scholar. Mr. Barnes has spoken with the directors of development at SAU and Voorhees to help them understand the process of reporting.

Canon George wondered how UBE could be kept informed about the work of the committee. While Fr. Byrd can do communication about that, Mr. Barnes will address the deputies of color on May 7 about the budget. Fr. Byrd is active with conversations with UBE. He observed that of the 880 deputies 28% are people of color, the highest percentage yet at a GC.

#### Consultant Reports

Fr. Lowery commented Mark Melton's being interim provost at Voorhees is significant as a step forward in setting books to rights. He talked about the student loan and scholarship reporting process. Accounting for these is a critical piece for SACS. The Perkins Grant was noted in particular.

There was some discussion about the Voorhees decline in students.

Cecilia Malm said the Absalom Jones fund is in full swing. The OOD dispersed the 2021 funds to SAU and Voorhees in the amount of \$56,827 each unrestricted. This year so far, over \$50K has been raised by the feast day, exceeding all historical results. She thanked Cn. Shaw and others for their help with this appeal. Many churches will have collected over the weekend. OOD had secured a presentation slot at CEEP but cannot do presentation owing to COVID restrictions. Dr. Hopkins is scheduled to speak at a luncheon on February 24 in Atlanta.

Next meeting: April 6 at 3:00 PM

Moved (Lowe), seconded (Cunningham) to adjourn at 11:08 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Caparulo  
Staff support to the committee