

Executive Council Committee on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

September 14, 2022

Minutes of the Teleconference

HBCU COMMITTEE MEMBERS and STAFF PRESENT: Canon Martini Shaw, Ms. Martha Alexander, Mr. Kurt Barnes, Canon Ron Byrd, Canon Jamie Callaway, Dr. Joel Cunningham, Dr. Scott Evenbeck, Canon Anita George, Michele Hagans, T.J. Houlihan, Dr. Eugene Lowe, Fr. Lang Lowery, Bishop Sam Rodman, Bishop Andrew Waldo, and Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley.

Guests: President Ronnie Hopkins and Dean Rev. Corey Smith of Voorhees University

Canon Shaw called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. Bishop Sam opened with prayer.

The May minutes were moved, seconded, and approved as presented. T.J. Houlihan was welcomed as he steps in to take on Cecilia Malm's work with the universities.

St. Augustine's (SAU) Update

Bishop Sam provided a report on activities with President McPhail and two supporters of SAU who helped raise \$75K for the school. Their aim is to raise awareness and support across a wider community.

Chaplain Hershey's work had grown so that the Chapel is a point of connection with the church as she has reached out to local congregations to build bridges. She is also working on reparations and is more connected with the work of the diocese along with the leadership team at the university. Orientation week took place and Dr. McPhail reported more than 1200 students enrolled.

Canon Byrd highlighted his [very positive] written report, citing President McPhail's adding Chaplain Hersey to her executive cabinet. She turned over the DFMS block grant money to Chaplain Hershey's management. Father Ron is working with her on financial reports, currently delayed by an ongoing audit. A Director for Spiritual Engagement was hired using funds from Trinity Wall St. Chaplain Hershey has several programs operating at the chapel. Three young women from Honduras have started at the school.

SAU received a \$500,000 grant from the National Park Service for 2022-23 to aid the restoration of the chapel. An Assistant chapel dean is needed. A retreat is scheduled for September 23-25; Founder's Day is in January.

The Absalom Jones Fund goal of \$75K was surpassed having received \$196K as of the end of July. This money is shared between the two schools. Fr. Ron noted that this fund increases each year.

Development

Mr. Houlihan acknowledged Ms. Malm's work in building the Absalom Jones fund. An appeal mailing is planned for January with a direct letter to all cathedral deans asking for participation. A logo is being developed for the fund. The development office is gathering background information on major donor prospects so that work can go forward.

Consultant Report

Fr. Lowery greeted those present and observed that the loan forgiveness program stimulated many people to reconsider college. Additional legislation could have a very significant impact on enrollments at SAU and Voorhees.

The News from Voorhees University

Welcome was extended to Dr. Hopkins and Rev. Smith. Dr. Hopkins reported very enthusiastically about the work using the Becoming Beloved Community (BBC) initiative. A campus master plan is to include a BBC community center as well as faculty and staff housing. This is a major capital project that needs funding and staff have been hired to support fund-raising for BBC work.

A good SACSOC review was received and reaffirmed for another 10 years with no monitoring report.

Voorhees will be offering a doctoral program in near future. A feasibility study is in the works. Enrollment is about 500 after a hit from COVID. They are aiming for 800-1000 students by 2027. Projection for this semester was 400 but 502 students are enrolled. Recruiting is active with a look toward increasing an international student presence. *US News and World Report* ranked Voorhees 33rd, up from 48th for regional colleges. Among HBCU's it is ranked 26th. President Biden started a program with HBCUs and IBM for a cyber security partnership.

Dr. Hopkins discussed various uses of grants and funding and said Voorhees is honored to have Bishop Ruth in the upcoming homecoming parade.

Rev. Corey Smith talked a bit about his educational and work background and said he is learning the lay of the land. He declared that Voorhees needed chapel services after years of not having them. He is helping create programs to meet the needs of the students. Services are held with discussion afterwards. He is instituting the daily office with morning prayer and compline. Many students are not Episcopalians and he views that as a teaching opportunity by using a broad approach and bringing spiritual engagement to the classroom. He is aiming to connect scholarship, spirituality, and servanthood to mesh with BBC initiative. St. Philip's Cathedral is integral to the work of the chapel. Rev. Smith is working to strengthen relationships with DFMS and the ecumenical world, approaching everything through a spiritual lens. Partnerships are growing with Christ Church (a white congregation) and St. Phillip's Cathedral as well as relationships with Episcopal seminaries.

Thanks were extended from Fr. Ron and Bishop Ruth to the Voorhees leadership.

Cn. Hagans and Dr. Evenbeck recounted much activity around the St. Paul's initiative. They observed that they're bringing in shareholders to revive the school and agree there is nothing specific for the committee to do except keep in touch.

Cn. Callaway talked about a meeting of the Association for Episcopal Colleges. Joe Swimmer wants to recognize the HBCUs in 2023 at the National conference with one university president to speak (March 8-11). Choirs from the two schools could go to Jacksonville for a joint concert to open the conference. Many things must be solved: travel, timing, housing, funding. The House of Bishops is meeting then.

Next meeting – Wednesday, October 26 at 9:00 AM.

A motion to adjourn was made at 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Caparulo
Staff support to the committee