

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HBCU

### Membership

The Very Rev. Canon Dr. Martini Shaw, <i>Chair</i>	Pennsylvania, III	2021
Dr. Scott Evenbeck, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Indianapolis, V	2021
Dr. Martha Bedell Alexander	North Carolina, IV	2021
The Rev. Canon James Callaway, D.D.	New York, II	2021
Dr. Joel Cunningham	Tennessee, IV	2021
Dr. Anita George	Mississippi, IV	2021
The Rev. Dr. Canon Michele Hagans	Washington, III	2021
The Rev. Dr. Eugene Lowe	New York, II	2021
The Rt. Rev. Andrew Waldo	Upper South Carolina, IV	2021
The Most Rev. Michael Curry, <i>Ex Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Ohio, V	

### Changes in Membership

Dr. Sean Decatur, resigned 12/2020

### Mandate

#### 2015 - AN028

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council establishes a committee of Executive Council from the task group formed January 11, 2015 to continue to support and understand the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the important relationship with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council charges the committee to explore and make recommendations to Executive Council by General Convention 2021 the long-term needs of the HBCUs to ensure access to students of color for future generations; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Executive Council authorizes a budget up to \$15,000 for this triennium for the work of the committee with composition to consist of the current membership of the task group and

that the committee may consist of eight to ten members jointly appointed by the Presiding Officers and provide to Executive Council an annual report at the June meetings of Council; and be it further Resolved, That the Executive Council expresses gratitude to the members of the task group for their contributions in forging an important relationship between TEC and the schools and requests a report of the accomplishments of the task group to date be prepared by the end of 2017.

## Summary of Work

The HBCU Task Group was appointed by the Executive Council at the direction of a resolution in January 2015: that the Executive Council "... requests the Presiding Officers appoint a task group to consider how the Episcopal Church can better support Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including financial, administrative, leadership, and other forms of support." The two remaining Episcopal HBCUs are St. Augustine's University in Raleigh, NC and Voorhees College in Denmark, SC. The Executive Council Committee on HBCUs, chaired by the Very Rev. Martini Shaw, has met via teleconference and Zoom approximately ten times per year in the triennium. (Minutes of all meetings are filed in the GCO extranet.)

In 1865, The Episcopal Church's General Convention organized the Protestant Episcopal Freedman's Commission (renamed the Commission of Home Missions to Colored People in 1868), to establish schools in the South that would provide higher education and religious instruction to African Americans.

The American Church Institute for Negroes (ACIN), founded in 1906, was renamed the American Church Institute (ACI) in 1961. It was established to coordinate church-affiliated schools and refocus attention on the educational needs of men and women of color. The ACIN administered schools and colleges dedicated to the education of African Americans in the South to fulfill the Church's mission to close the gap between educational opportunities for African Americans and whites. In 1924 the Institute agreed to support the Voorhees College as its South Carolina member, beginning the Episcopal Church relation that continues today.

ACI began its work three years prior to the founding of the NAACP and dissolved three years after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. During those years, ACI witnessed a major shift in American society's approach to rights for African Americans, from a "separate but equal" segregation-based policy, to a growing movement toward a racially-integrated society at all levels, including education. While ACI's decision to cease its oversight of schools arose from concern that it was supporting

segregated education, its positive contributions to higher education for African Americans remain. Since 1965 support for the remaining Episcopal HBCUs has been provided through General Convention allocations, drawing on remaining ACI endowments and general church funds.

In the days of segregation, HBCUs were the primary means for black students to receive higher education. While the civil rights movement overcame that exclusion, inadequate public education continues to leave a large cohort of students of color underprepared for higher education, a vulnerable niche which HBCUs are serving admirably. In the words of Bishop Curry in the 2020 Absalom Jones appeal:

*Many faithful Episcopalians have been asking me what they can do during this time of twin pandemics the coronavirus pandemic and the pandemic of racial injustice in America – to make a real difference. – One way to make that difference is to invest in a better future for young people. HBCUs create dynamic and empowering educational environments for college students from diverse backgrounds. Now more than ever these institutions need our support.*

The HBCUs Committee has been consistently focused on providing advice and support to the two Episcopal HBCUs the church supports with block grants, St. Augustine's University in Raleigh NC and Voorhees College in Denmark, SC, both small institutions with historic missions serving the Black community which sustain important connections with The Episcopal Church. As is true across HBCUs, their budgets are largely tuition driven, so enrollment numbers are key factors in institutional viability. Compared to other denominations, such as Lutherans and Methodists, Episcopal Church support for our HBCUs is low. We are working with Ms. Malm in the church's Development Office to assist advancement efforts at Voorhees and St. Augustine's to reach out for greater church recognition and support from congregations, dioceses and Episcopal donors.

The committee liaises with bishop trustees of both institutions, along with their leadership and chaplains. The Saint Augustine's University board includes the bishops of the three North Carolina dioceses, while the Voorhees board includes the two in South Carolina. This year we welcomed the Rev. Hersey Mallette Stevens as chaplain at St. Augustine's. St. Augustine's University was tragically struck this October with the sudden death of its newly installed president, Dr. Irving McPhail, who died from COVID after a most promising three months in office. Widely recognized for his work in lifting minority students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, Dr. McPhail had quickly drawn together faculty and students. Voorhees College is also coming into transition at the end of the year when Dr. E. Franklin Evans, who turned declining enrollment around in 2016, departs to become the first black president of West Liberty State University in West Virginia. Voorhees, which had gone online in the fall, is planning to reopen to students in February 2021. The board named Provost Dr. Ronnie Hopkins as Acting President to lead the reopening in January, which was assured

in December when Voorhees received a surprise \$4 million grant from MacKenzie Scott's blockbuster no-strings gifts to 384 organizations. It was chosen as one of about a dozen promising HBCUs. It was by far the largest gift Voorhees has received.

The committee has worked with a TEC consultant (Lang Lowery), and with each institution, to help develop plans for student recruitment generally and for Episcopal students in particular. We have also received support from TEC development directors (Tara Holley until 2017 and Cecilia Malm), who connect the office of the presiding bishop with the administration of both institutions. Ms. Malm directs the Annual Absalom Jones Appeal dedicated to the two schools, which in 2020 raised \$50,000. In each committee meeting we address challenges and opportunities that the two institutions are facing to provide effective advice about strategies for moving forward. We have also advised St Augustine's on important issues related to its accreditation.

The committee has been particularly focused on supporting and engaging the chaplains in both places, and on working in conjunction with the cognizant bishop, seeking to provide stronger institutional buttressing for their work. The committee is considering dedicating a portion of the TEC continuing appropriation for the support of chaplaincy in each institution.

Both St Augustine's University and Voorhees College continue to provide remarkable opportunities for students with special higher education needs and desires. Especially in the tumultuous COVID environment, they face difficult headwinds in terms of marketing, enrollment consistency, and board and senior leadership. The pandemic has exacerbated their every vulnerability. The committee embodies the continuing care of The Episcopal Church for these two communities who carry the history and hope of our quest for the beloved community.

## Proposed resolutions

### **A053 Ensure the vital role of the Episcopal HBCUs in building The Beloved Community**

## Continuance recommendation

In the first five years, the HBCU Committee has addressed its charge from the Executive Council "to consider how the Episcopal Church can better support our Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including financial, administrative, leadership, and other forms of support." In working with St. Augustine's University and Voorhees College, we found a disconnect between ongoing church budgetary support and building deeper community support and recognition with these complex institutions. We see this committee as an essential link to productive futures for both church and colleges, and call for ongoing continuance of the committee until the 82nd General Convention.

The HBCU requests \$20,000 for the triennium to allow the resumption of on site visits to the two colleges, approximately one visit per year.