

## Alcorn State University

### Listening Sessions Schedule

Wednesday, February 19, 2014

Time	Meeting	Location
9:00 a.m.	Faculty, Staff and Administration	Gold Room
9:45 a.m.	Students	Gold Room
10:30 a.m.	Alumni, Foundation & Community	Gold Room
11:30 a.m.	Community Leaders Luncheon	Faculty Dining Room

#### **Minutes from the Faculty, Staff and Administration---Wednesday, February 19, 2014**

Members of the Board Search Committee appointed by College Board President Aubrey Patterson to lead the search for the next president of Alcorn State University heard from constituency groups in Campus Listening Sessions on Wednesday, February 19, 2014. The discussions centered on the qualities and qualifications stakeholders believe the next institutional executive officer should possess. The Campus Listening Sessions were held in the Clinton Bristow Jr. Dining Hall on the Alcorn State University campus in Lorman. While all sessions are open to the public, each session focuses on the needs of a specific constituency group.

The session was called to order at 9:08 a.m. with an opening welcome from Trustee C.D. Smith, chair, search committee, of the IHL Board. He thanked everyone for joining the listening session including those at the Natchez campus who viewed the live webcast and were able to provide their input via teleconference. Smith stated that “no matter how far from home a member of the Alcorn family may be, he or she can be a part of today’s activities. We are here today to hear from you, to hear what qualities and qualifications you believe the next president of Alcorn State University should have. It is a critical part of the executive search process to identify the characteristics being sought as we search for a talented chief executive officer for the university. Our goal is to find the most qualified individual who has both the commitment to the history and the legacy, culture and the mission of the university and a vision for the university’s future. I deeply appreciate you participating in this session and sharing your expectations with us. At this time I’ll like to introduce the search committee and other members of the board.”

*Board Search Committee:* Chaired by Trustee C.D. Smith, the Board Search Committee includes Trustees Ed Blakeslee, Bob Owens and Robin Robinson (not in attendance).

*Trustees Present:* Audrey Patterson, President of the Board, Karen Cummins, Dr. Ford Dye, and Shane Hooper, Hal Parker, Christine Pickering

*Trustees Not Present:* Alan Perry, Dr. Doug Rouse

*Commissioner of Higher Education:* Dr. Hank Bounds

#### **Process Overview:**

Board Search Committee Chair Trustee C.D. Smith gave opening remarks and an overview of the process; “We are here to get your feedback and hear your thoughts on what kind of leader can take Alcorn State University to the next level. These are challenging times in higher education; we all know that leadership matters. So I hope you will consider carefully the history

and mission of the institution, where we are today and where we want to go in the future. It is important that we hear your voice. Minutes are being taken on each session and will be posted on the website. We will also provide the minutes to the board. What you say today matters, it will make a difference. Now I would like to open the floor for your comments.”

### **Qualities & Qualifications:**

- Is the process going to be same as the last search; and, if so, can you give us a time as to when we can expect a new president to be seated?
  - *Response from C. D. Smith:* We will talk about the process; however, it will be somewhat different. What we want to do right now is get your comments and your thoughts. We will discuss the process at a later time.
- We need to concentrate more on the agriculture side
- We need someone who loves Alcorn, someone who is a family man or woman
- Listens to what we have to say, deals with others with honesty and respect
- Recognizes the people who have gone on, made a life and heritage at Alcorn State University
- Leadership is one of the greatest things you can have
- We need someone who knows what it takes to be able to grow
- Knows the legacy and has ties to Alcorn State University
- Someone who will take Alcorn into the next century and be successful
- Give high consideration for a female president
- A person who understands chain of command... policies put in place and followed
- Visionary, brings us to the forefront in academia
- Includes the constituents from the community
- President that has the library at heart, more resources for the university as it relates to academics
- Caring and compassionate person
- Leadership as far as the students...someone who makes sure when the holidays come they are the last ones to leave
- What are the chances that the next president will be an Alcornite?
  - *Response from C. D. Smith:* That’s a very good question but we are here to hear your comments on what you would like to see and so I think what I heard out of you is you would like to see an Alcornite considered.
- Would like the next president to know something about agriculture and athletics so we can move along and be able to raise money so we can be where we used to be
- Our community is hungry for Alcorn. The local school system is anxious for us to play a stronger role in their development...we want it all. Our campus is teeming with great students, faculty and staff.
- We want someone who will set the right tone for the university.
- Invest in the communities around us. The schools need to have Alcorn involved. We need partnerships.

- We need to partner with our community, especially in Natchez. The president needs to have an appreciation of our Vicksburg programs...Alcorn is in such a rural area, so far removed from many of its constituents, that makes for a very unique management challenge.

**Conclusion:**

“Thank you all for joining us today, whether you joined us here in person or from Natchez. Your comments are very important to us. We are listening and we will take all of these thoughts into consideration as we move forward with our process.”

**Minutes from the Students---Wednesday, February 19, 2014**

**Process Overview:**

Board Search Committee Chair Trustee C.D. Smith gave opening remarks and an overview of the process; “We are here to get your feedback and hear your thoughts on what kind of leader can take Alcorn State University to the next level. These are challenging times in higher education; we all know that leadership matters. So I hope you will consider carefully the history and mission of the institution, where we are today and where we want to go in the future. It is important that we hear your voice. Minutes are being taken on each session and will be posted on the website. We will also provide the minutes to the board. What you say today matters, it will make a difference. Now I would like to open the floor for your comments.”

**Qualities & Qualifications:**

- Recognize all faculty and staff members at all levels; presidents usually recognize the people at the top
- Needs to understand it’s important to be transparent
- Share vision with students
- Needs to look at all departments so that all departments are running effectively and efficiently and people’s time is not wasted, especially with registration
- Needs to be a stickler for policy and procedures. It makes everything work better.
- Also needs to look at salaries. Why are you hiring them? People with no degrees making same as those with master’s degrees and PhDs.
- Needs to focus on the students on the main campus. This is the heart of the university. Then we can help everybody.
- Technology and Infrastructure. We need a president with a vision to move campus forward.
- Some faculty are not always helpful. The president needs to interact with students, go back and check on administrators. Financial aid was terrible. Customer service.
- We need someone with a solid track record, not a caretaker. Someone that has demonstrated that he can be innovative, take risk but not be reckless.
- We need someone who can build good morale. Someone that won’t have new hires coming in at a much higher salary than people who have been here for years. We need someone like the University of Houston president, who is progressive. Built a plan to be a

Tier 1 school and did it in two years. He had a fundraising target of \$500 million and raised \$1 billion. We need to cut down costs by helping students graduate on time. We need to invest in students. Invest our time and energy.

- What's the process for nominating a candidate?
- We need to a president to focus more on academics. All programs should be accredited. If you're doing well in class, you should be able to do well on professional exams.
- We want the new president to recognize that the Natchez Campus is here.
- Needs to be aware of student safety. Campus police does a good job, but some areas need attention. Needs to look after well-being of students as a whole.
- Be interactive with students, have students' best interest as priority
- Needs to accommodate the basic needs of students and bring back the shuttle buses
- The president needs to look at the situation in Natchez, including a cafeteria and transportation. We need scholarships for Natchez Campus nursing school students and be more involved in Natchez.
- In biology, we don't have all the supplies we need, like more microscopes.
- Student athletes have to travel a lot and have to miss class a lot. We need cameras in class. The president needs to be more engaged with the student body and buckle down with faculty. There's a frustration with financial aid. We need a president who leads by example and is passionate about what he does.
- In Natchez, we need a bookstore, instead of just one guy coming in one day per semester and running out of books. We need someone to send a bus to pick us up to go to games.
- We need someone who will look out for the well-being of the departments. Mass communication doesn't have its own building or the equipment needed.
- Housing for Faculty/Staff and Students
- Transportation between campuses
- We need someone with a vested interest in leadership and growth and development of students. Needs to head some initiatives.
- We need someone who understands the strategic planning process, who has a vision and knows how you include people in the process, that can give marching orders for the university so that everyone knows the goals, so that it's not just on paper, but can move from paper to action
- Needs to be concerned with out of state scholarships.
- Needs more interest in athletics, not just football and basketball, but other sports also
- All organizations should have same equal opportunity, with everyone funded the same
- We need opportunities for cheerleaders. Cheerleaders are everywhere and get nothing in return.
- We need a president to look after student well-being, affect change and support us as we move forward.
- Needs to be concerned about students who have families (married couples and children) and have married student housing.

**Conclusion:**

“Thank you all for joining us today, whether you joined us here in person or from Natchez. Your comments are very important to us. We are listening and we will take all of these thoughts into consideration as we move forward with our process.”

### **Minutes from the Alumni, Foundation & Community---Wednesday, February 19, 2014**

#### **Process Overview:**

Board Search Committee Chair Trustee C.D. Smith gave opening remarks and an overview of the process; “We are here to get your feedback and hear your thoughts on what kind of leader can take Alcorn State University to the next level. These are challenging times in higher education; we all know that leadership matters. So I hope you will consider carefully the history and mission of the institution, where we are today and where we want to go in the future. It is important that we hear your voice. Minutes are being taken on each session and will be posted on the website. We will also provide the minutes to the board. What you say today matters, it will make a difference. Now I would like to open the floor for your comments.”

#### **Qualities & Qualifications:**

- Aware of Campus Safety, police more focused on parking tickets than in safety in dorms
- Seek equal funding for Alcorn State University
- Ultimate desire of counties, partnerships, make community outreach a major focus
- If problem from last president not addressed and corrected, need to have been given more information, needs to be fixed before next president comes in.
- Are you aggressively seeking out applicants or are they going to come to you? There is concern that those who are highly qualified don't feel comfortable applying unless they are recruited. I hear there are problems, not privy to specifics—if we knew them that would help us give advice to you. The last two presidents didn't last long. We need someone with a high level of corporate financial experience or someone with those skills.
- Knowledgeable/Abreast in the field of Agriculture who can make great progress. We need a leader to get us to the next level.
- The search committee is only composed of Trustees; need to expand to alumni, community leaders. Some priority should be given to females. Males have had their opportunities. It's time for a female president.
- We need a president who will embrace the ministry of the Wesley Foundation and the Methodist Church.
- Understands the mission of Alcorn as it relates to land-grant institution, who has a commitment to work with those communities.
- Forthright
- Clear and Transparent
- Experienced leader – We do not want someone that needs to be trained – Track record in leadership
- Experienced in Fund-Raising
- People Person work with students, community and the alumni association

- Know the importance of a good solid relationship with the ASU National Alumni Association
- Knowledgeable of analytics and the needs of the students. If you come from a majority-white institution, you may not understand our students. STEM is critical. We need someone who can reach out and seek those partners—like NASA—that can provide resources and opportunities to our students.
- Knowledge of recruitment and retention rates
- Good interpretive skills of state and federal laws, especially dealing with financial issues. Need someone who is competent, has a vision, knows how to motivate so that it is a shared vision and know the culture or how to change the culture and enable us to grow. Need to be able to deal with difficult people and be a good communicator. Needs to be transparent and inspire faculty and staff. Needs to be good at conflict resolution and impartial. Be able to market skills and promote Alcorn.
- Academic Facilitator – look at the academic climate and make adjustments, understand the climate and the area of Southwest Mississippi, expand academic offerings
- Must be interested, committed to moving ASU to the next level and have great character
- Need housing for married students/families. We need more attraction to campus, activities to get crowds up at games.
- Embrace the “communiversity” concept; keep community in mind, strive for higher education, technology, warm operating community. We pledge our efforts to make ASU the greatest university in the state. We’re working on a partnership with ASU and MSU.
- We need someone who is stable, who is not looking to Alcorn as a stepping-stone. Some who will come here and do a good job. Needs to recognize that change bring about growth, but also support the history and legacy of the university. Needs to instill legacy in students. Know that enrollment numbers are important, but it is not everything. Quality matters. When you educate a student without morals, you produce a menace to society. Some are afraid for safety. We need to work on disciplinary process. We need to be consistent. We are supposed to be drug and alcohol-free. We extend deadlines, but we need to help them understand the importance of deadlines.
- The process for vetting and background checks needs to be thorough
- Southwest Mississippi is the most undeveloped part of the state, as far as economic and community development. In some university towns, it seems like you’re already on campus when you enter the town. We need people who will help develop the community, get an MDA grant to build dorms in the community.
- Needs to be committed to ASU, not a Vita builder. Needs to expand programs in Vicksburg. The Board needs to do a thorough background check.
- The Board needs to involve us more, present us with a candidate and let us choose.
- We need to have alumni on the search committee.
- Know the importance of educating the “whole student”
- Alumnus of the University

- Embrace student concerns, not just the concern of the student leadership

**Conclusion:**

“Thank you all for joining us today, whether you joined us here in person or from Natchez. Your comments are very important to us. We are listening and we will take all of these thoughts into consideration as we move forward with our process.”

**Minutes from the Community Leaders Luncheon---Wednesday, February 19, 2014**

**Process Overview:**

Board Search Committee Chair Trustee C.D. Smith gave opening remarks and an overview of the process; “We are here to get your feedback and hear your thoughts on what kind of leader can take Alcorn State University to the next level. These are challenging times in higher education; we all know that leadership matters. So I hope you will consider carefully the history and mission of the institution, where we are today and where we want to go in the future. It is important that we hear your voice. Minutes are being taken on each session and will be posted on the website. We will also provide the minutes to the board. What you say today matters, it will make a difference. Now I would like to open the floor for your comments.”

**Qualities & Qualifications:**

- I’m concerned about ASU from a religious standpoint. The new president will need to understand past, history, culture. Needs to love ASU. Understand high calling of religion. Hold principles dear. I don’t mind calling names. I know someone who has put in application before, has been here 30 years, served under Dr. Washington. Dr. Franklin Jackson knows ASU, has served on committees. He is the individual we need to lead.
- I want to thank the Commissioner and the Board for coming today. Since the death of Dr. Bristow, there has been a lot of transition. We need someone who is a good fit for ASU and understands ASU. We need someone willing to commit 5, 7 or 10 years. The faculty and staff have hung through tough times. They need stability. The president needs to love ASU and be willing to wear multiple hats: lobbyist, fundraiser. The Board needs to understand that the president has to oversee alumni and athletic fundraising. We don’t have a lot of resources at the foundation. We have to stretch every dollar. We need to reach beyond. This area of the state is not developed. The community is another thing to consider. We need the president to reach out and assist with economic development. We need to get ASU involved in creating a plan for consolidating Claiborne County and Jefferson County Schools. These are critical issues you need to understand. It used to be 85-90% of the faculty and staff lived in Claiborne and Jefferson Counties. Now only about 15% do. Recruitment to the area is very difficult.
- We need a president who will bridge the gap between the university and local schools, assist with AP classes, provide professional development for staff, provide dual enrollment opportunities for students, help educate parents on how to be better parents.

- We need a president who understands the uniqueness of ASU. USDA has reformed its mission statement and placed a focus on nutrition and health issues. This is an emphasis that we see as beneficial. We can capitalize on that opportunity. ASU is building a farmers' market in Natchez with a USDA grant. They will also help teach farmers how to process, prepare, package, label and market their products. They have discussed the possibility of MSU joining ASU in Natchez to jointly house the coop/extension service operation in Natchez. It works when you work with the community. The curriculum we need in Southwest Mississippi—Baton Rouge has the second largest film studio in the country—include special skills like electricians, carpenters, key grips, etc. We also need more AC repairmen, elevator repairmen, engravers, watch repair. These will make the community stronger, get results.
- I want to thank the Board for the progress in Vicksburg. We want to bring the nursing program to Vicksburg. We need the new president to continue to work with Vicksburg and Warren County.
- Faculty housing is critically needed. You should ride by and look at faculty housing before you leave. A lot of 1930s/1940s structures. Maybe we can look at a public/private partnership to build them.

**Conclusion:**

“Thank you all for joining us today, whether you joined us here in person or from Natchez. Your comments are very important to us. We are listening and we will take all of these thoughts into consideration as we move forward with our process.”