

## **BOARD SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING WITH MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY CONSTITUENCY GROUPS**

The Institution of Higher Learning Board Members met with various constituency groups at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) on Friday, May 2, 2008, in the Business Education Building. The sessions were chaired by Dr. Bettye Neely. The purpose of this meeting was to receive feedback from faculty, staff, students, alumni, etc., regarding the qualities they felt the next president should possess. A job description will be composed based upon feedback from each session.

The following Board members were in attendance:

Dr. Bettye Henderson Neely, Chair  
Dr. Thomas C. Meredith, Commissioner  
Mr. L. Stacy Davidson, Trustee  
Mr. Bob Owens, Trustee

Also in Attendance from IHL office:

Dr. Reginald Sykes  
Ms. Annie Mitchell  
Dr. Laurie Smith

### **EXECUTIVE STAFF SESSION**

**8:30-9:10 a.m.**

Dr. Bettye Henderson Neely asked “*What characteristics would you like to see in the next leader?*”

Responses:

- Passion about Valley, the students, and the Delta. A person who supports the need to increase college attendance rates.
- Interpersonal communication skills; honest, fair
- A vision for the university and the broader community; can lead; sees the big picture and is familiar with processes related to how we receive funding from the state, nationally, etc.
- Communication skills; they should have a view of workers as partners, not just workers; able to carry out the mission; has appreciation for fiscal management; can utilize resources to its greatest potential
- Has political savvy; fundraising ability; is compassionate and believes in shared governance
- Understands the Delta; understands the importance of athletics within university enrollment
- Not an elitist; displays hope among students; able to interact with students and others

- Accountable; serious about education
- Able to identify human and fiscal resources; employ them in appropriate areas; utilize expertise; can make tough decisions

Dr. Thomas C. Meredith asked “*What do you see as issues facing MVSU that the new president will have to deal with?*”

Responses:

- This person will have to pause and look at resources and decide where to focus; define areas where we want to be good; we are spread thin in some academic and nonacademic areas; some may begin to deteriorate; turnover is too high
- He/she will face the drop in enrollment; need to look at what we are doing to retain students; build closer relationships with secondary schools; look at recruiting students from local schools
- Structures to ensure success once students get here; will have to deal with large classrooms; retention
- Promoting and defining the university; need to strengthen public relations
- Ensure faculty and students engage in research

Dr. L. Stacy Davidson asked “*What are the top three things we should look at?*”

Responses:

- The ability to relate to people of all levels
- The ability to motivate people
- Sound judgment

Mr. Bob Owens asked “*What do you see as the vision for MVSU being able to achieve in 10 years?*”

Responses:

- Increase college enrollment
- Maintain an enrollment of no more than 4000 students
- MVSU being key in terms of increasing college going rates of students no matter where they go to college
- Developing a niche
- Implementing a Ph.D. program
- MVSU already has a niche: accepting students where they are and bringing them up to where they need to be
- Respect for accomplishments already made; poised to build from there
- Stabilizing faculty; recruiting good professionals

Dr. Neely asked “*In terms of Ayers funding, where do you see us going with that?*”

Responses:

- Athletics already plays a big role with its soccer, volleyball; instrumental in recruiting other students
- As we build academics side we can attract other students

**Deans, Academic, and Non-academic Department Heads Listening Session**  
**9:15-10:00 a.m.**

Dr. Bettye Henderson Neely asked “*What characteristics would you like to see in the next leader?*”

Responses:

- Can communicate effectively; think strategically; has a scholarly record...(\*see additional comments from Deans/Department Heads)
- MVSU has distinct challenges because of its location, culture and students; this person would have to know the culture; be aware of this and; appreciate this area; have a vision to enhance the weaknesses; keep an eye on the image; be a visionary who knows and appreciates the culture and can move us forward
- A bibliophile; produce students who can compete; a researcher; can empower and challenge faculty, encourage student research; expand and renovate the library
- Understands the need for global education; getting resources so that students can compete in a global economy; we have little experience and programs in terms of global education
- Will consider the importance of advancing arts; MS culture and blues, MS heritage, Black culture
- Work to enhance research capacity and increase dollars from the federal side
- Demonstrate comprehensive strategic planning; fairness and equity in planning stages; inclusion of off-campus sites as part of the university
- Academic excellence through funding and other means of support
- Appearance of the campus; capital improvements to attract and keep students
- Understand fiscal processes that are productive, not punitive; user friendly policies and procedures
- Promote a niche for the university

Dr. Thomas C. Meredith asked “*What do you see as issues facing MVSU that the new president will have to deal with?*”

Responses:

- Many programs were initiated that “don’t have feet”, haven’t moved along, are stalled out
- MVSU’s image external to the campus; negative images and barriers that may impede relationship building
- Graduate studies rigor and quality; lack of resources
- Find a comfortable enrollment level
- Ability to manage an increase in enrollment

Mr. Bob Owens asked “*What do you see as the vision for MVSU being able to achieve in 10 years?*”

Responses:

- Stronger relationships with external forces like the alumni
- Quality university rather than numbers
- A player in the global economy
- Visibility as a college town

Dr. L. Stacy Davidson asked “*Are there administrators on campus that may already be a candidate?*”

Responses:

- Yes, even in this room; there are people with experience and dedication; the campus will need to trust and embrace that person
- Yes
- Yes

\*Additional typewritten comments from Deans/Department Chairs (distributed handout):

With the selection of its next president, Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) will enter into a new era of institutional and academic advancement. The University’s stakeholders are poised to be full participants in the decision and policy-making processes that will determine the immediate future and shape the University’s character and mission well into the distant future. We believe MVSU possesses the potential and possibilities to be a better university and a more committed steward for the promotion of academic excellence, scholarly productivity, and service to the Mississippi Delta, the state of Mississippi, and the nation.

Moreover, we believe MVSU has the capacities to develop and sustain first-rate programs, promote the qualities of socially conscious and engaged citizenship, teach the virtues and practices of democracy and academic freedom, and demonstrate a deep commitment to the values of liberal and professional education. To this end, we want new presidential leadership that demonstrates a commitment to communicate openly and effectively, think strategically, and act decisively.

If MVSU is to develop and sustain high quality, competitive academic, scholarly, and service programs, then we need a president with a record of outstanding scholarship, unimpeachable moral leadership, prudent judgment, sound managerial acumen and skill, and a deep commitment to the values of liberal and professional education. Moreover, MVSU’s success, vitality, and future promise will be determined, in part, by a presidential leaders that knows and understands the critical role that institutions of higher learning must play in providing education and enlightenment to citizens in an advanced humanistic, scientific, and technological society.

The following *qualities* specify the characteristics we believe the next president must possess in order to lead the University:

1. A friendly, professional, and open-minded personality.
2. Executive leadership experience with a demonstrated capacity to think and plan

strategically, recruit strong and competent academic administrators and faculty, delegate important responsibilities to vice presidents, deans, chairs, and directors, and promote teamwork.

3. Experienced and extensive academic leadership committed to strengthening the faculty, staff, departments, colleges, and programs.
4. The political savvy to establish close working relationships with the IHL Board, the state legislature, state governmental executives, other institutions of higher learning, local political and governmental officials, and community stakeholders.
5. The capacity to promote good campus-community relations by giving attention to the contributions MVSU can make to the solution of community problems.
6. The ability to promote a positive image of the University, project the University's mission and goals, and represent the University to all constituent groups and the public at large.
7. The experience and acumen for developing positive external relationships with philanthropic foundations, corporations, public agencies, and alumni in order to enhance and improve the capitalization of the University, establish an endowment, increase gift income for the operating budget and capital projects, and attract financial support for current and future needs of the University.
8. Hold an earned Ph.D. in an academic discipline and demonstrate the intellectual qualities that exemplify the life of the mind, and a deep commitment to the values of liberal and professional education.
9. Support and promote shared and cooperative governance throughout the University.
10. Advocate high quality student support and services designed to improve student life and promote physical, mental, intellectual, and social wellness.
11. Advocate, promote, and support high quality academic programs to strengthen the curriculum, and enhance and enrich faculty and staff development.
12. Develop and promote a niche for the University which emphasizes its tradition of service and its commitment to developing comprehensive teaching and quality research.
13. Demonstrate knowledge of developing fundraising strategies and goals.
14. Demonstrate the capacity to assure fair and equitable allocation and efficient use of resources based on comprehensive strategic planning.
15. Advocate and promote the establishment of a research and development agenda and

program that focuses on the condition of the local community and the problems that structure everyday life in the Mississippi Delta.

16. Demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to sound fiscal, accounting, and management practices.
17. Demonstrate the ability to communicate with all university constituents, to listen, to learn, to show compassion, and to be accessible to and advocate for the University community.
18. Demonstrate the capacity to be fair, impartial, and consistent in the decision-making processes.
19. Demonstrate the capacity to be accessible and approachable in relating to all university constituents.
20. Demonstrate the ability to formulate and articulate a vision for the University and the potential of the University to become a center for teaching, research, and service.
21. Adherence to and proper implementation of IHL policies and procedures.
22. Demonstrate a familiarity with and commitment to HBCUs.
23. Demonstrate the ability to combine seriousness of purpose with a healthy sense of humor, earthiness, and irony in all matters.
24. Recognize, support, and promote the diversity represented in the faculty, staff, students, and administrators; and enforce affirmative action policies and practices designed to secure diversity.
25. Support and enhance information technology in the interests of academics, management, research, and general functions of university life.
26. Demonstrate a global perspective and promote international educational experiences.
27. Maintain a strong commitment to openness and consensus building.
28. Value and foster academic integrity.
29. Demonstrate the capacity to make timely and difficult decisions.
30. Scholarly standing in her/his academic discipline, and a deep appreciation of the teaching, intellectual, and mentoring roles of faculty.

**Faculty Senate and General Faculty Listening Session**  
**10:10-10:55 a.m.**

Dr. Bettye Henderson Neely asked “*What characteristics would you like to see in the next leader?*”

Responses:

- \*\*See additional comments from the Faculty Senate
- Strong record of supporting academic integrity
- Experience in promoting and supervising accreditation
- Strong presence with student body
- Intra and interpersonal skills
- Someone who is morally and mentally sound

Mr. Bob Owens asked “What do you see as the vision for MVSU being able to achieve in 10 years?”

Responses:

- At par with other institutions in terms of technology
- Academic integrity; raise standards; recruit from top rather than bottom; need additional resources otherwise we are fighting a losing battle
- Uphold professors’ standards of academic integrity; professors have no fear in upholding academic integrity
- Improvement in university processes
- Globalization and rising beyond this area; partnerships with other universities
- Closer relationship with Delta communities; strong support for non-traditional students
- Economic development; partner with external entities
- Improve manual process of graduation; too paper oriented
- Deal with new IHL funding formula
- Improve primitive registration process; shorten length of registration
- Academic programs that attract students
- Transparency
- Not being buried in lost paperwork
- Develop cultural activities
- Infrastructure investment
- Open door policy

Constituent question to the board: “*What is the board looking for in the new president?*”

Board response:

- Visionary leader
- Committed to the university for 8 to 10 years
- Can make advances in technology

- Whatever is needed for “this” university; we already know the general characteristics wanted for any president
- Want to listen to constituents and take their thoughts into consideration
- Someone who is ethical, responsible, believes in shared governance, understands finances

## **Staff Council and General Staff**

**11:05-11:45 a.m.**

Dr. Bettye Henderson Neely asked “*What characteristics would you like to see in the next leader?*”

Responses:

- \*\*\*See additional comments from Staff Council
- Friendly, professional, people-person; a proven executive, not just on paper
- Embraces technology
- Political savvy to deal with the board, legislature, local officials
- Fiscally accountable
- Ability to advocate a research and development agenda
- Proven fundraiser; establish an endowment
- Super people-person, public relations person, believes in shared governance, empowers others; strengthen programs
- Assure fairness through strategic planning
- External relationships with philanthropic organizations and alumni
- Catalyst for economic development
- Has a vision for teaching, research and service
- Earned Ph. D.
- Embraces diversity

Dr. L. Stacy Davidson asked “*What are the top three things we should look at?*”

Responses:

- Visionary who can relay his/her vision to the community
- A people person
- Planning ability
- Generate harmony with students; head cheerleader

Mr. Bob Owens asked “*What do you see as the vision for MVSU being able to achieve in 10 years?*”

Responses:

- Has incorporated technology in the MS Delta; Use of the incubator; use of the untapped brain power of staff
- Focus on research rather than just teaching; encourage faculty to engage in research
- Increased utilization of staff

Dr. Thomas C. Meredith asked “*What do you see as issues facing MVSU that the new president will have to deal with?*”

Responses:

- Facilities
- Well-trained staff
- Deferred maintenance

**\*\*\*Additional typewritten comments from the Staff Council (distributed as handouts)**

1. A friendly, professional and open-minded demeanor.
2. Executive leadership experience with a demonstrated capacity to do the following: think and plan strategically, promote teamwork, recruit strong, competent academic administrators, and delegate important responsibilities to vice presidents, deans, chairs and directors.
3. The political savvy to establish close working relationships with the IHL Board, the state legislature, state governmental executives, other institutions of higher learning, local political and governmental officials and community stakeholders.
4. Advocate and promote the establishment of a research and development agenda and program which focuses on the condition of the local community and the problems that plague everyday life in the Mississippi Delta.
5. Demonstrate the capacity to assure fair and equitable allocation and efficient use of resources based on comprehensive strategic planning.
6. Demonstrate the knowledge of and adherence to sound fiscal, accounting and managerial practices.
7. The experience and acumen for developing positive external relationships with philanthropic foundations, corporations, public agencies and alumni in order to enhance and improve the capitalization of the University.
8. A proven fundraiser who can among other things establish an endowment, increase gift income and attract financial support for current and future needs of the University.
9. Hold an earned Ph.D. in an academic discipline and demonstrate the intellectual qualities that exemplify a deep commitment to the values of liberal and professional education.
10. Demonstrate the ability to formulate and articulate a vision for the University which will enable it to become a premier center for teaching, research and service.
11. Embrace information technology in the interest of academics, management, research and the general functions of university life.
12. Support and promote shared and cooperative governance throughout the University.

13. Advocate, promote and support high quality academic programs to strengthen the curricula, and attract and retain top quality students, faculty and staff.
14. Advocate and promote efficiency and accountability throughout the University.

## **Student Leaders and Student Body**

**11:55 – 12:25 P.M.**

Ms. Vaneshia Morgan, Ms. Kenturah Charles, Brandy Brown, Ms. Portia Weeks, Mr. Timothy Lampkin, Mr. Emmitt Riley, III, Mr. J. Howard, Mr. Matt Mezger, and Mr. Damien Dodson. Each student briefly introduced themselves and their classification.

Each student was allowed an opportunity to voice their concerns for the next president. The following responses were made by the students:

- Someone who will work with students, who will take the time to listen to students.
- Effective leadership.
- Student oriented, someone devoted to using programs and resources that will invest time in the students; utilizing some of the talents of the students, such as, tax preparation.
- Open-minded, one who will listen to student organizations. One who can put a system in place that will allow paperwork to continue to flow during the absences of designated individuals, (appoint an alternate person to sign in their absence); someone who knows how to generate funding.
- Energetic, outgoing, interactive with students, capable of enhancing learning ability, diverse background, determined and hardworking and someone who will take this University to another level.
- Dependable, one who will make their voice heard, add new growth, and new ideas.
- A positive attitude, accountability, a passion for MVSU, a love for the institution and not just for the job. One who is interested in the student body, a love for students.
- Motivation, one who is excited about the University (Dull teachers make dull students). Someone who can live up to the University's motto, striving for preeminence.

**Session adjourned at 12:20 p.m.,** with comments from Dr. Neely .

## **MVSU FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**12:35 – 1:25 P.M.**

The following members were in attendance:

Mr. Ned Tolliver, Dr. Walter Roberts, Mr. Harry Bonner, and Mr. George Jarman. The meeting was held in the Conference Room in the Business Education Building as a business luncheon meeting. Prior to the official opening of the meeting, Dr. Meredith briefly gave an overview of the search procedures and steps in the presidential search.

The Session began at 1:06 P.M.

Responses:

- Effective communication, high moral standards, and visionary. One who can manage money effectively, if possible a Valley graduate. Valley deserves the best leadership.
- One who will meet with the Foundation Board, who will partner with the Foundation, one who can develop a good relationship with the IHL Board, students, faculty, and community leaders.
- Good fundraising experience, excellent credit rating and a clean background record.
- One who can relate to staff, who can motivate staff and students. Problem solver, diversity, has influence with state legislators, attend State meetings and capable of fighting for the University.
- Integrity, knowledgeable in athletics, coaches' accountability; high graduate output; short and long term goals; capable of making tough decision without being coerced by other staff members. A motivator, an encourager.

**Additional questions:** - There were two questions addressed to the IHL Board members and responses:

**Question:**

*Will IHL Board provide a car for the president?*

**Response:**

*Dr. Meredith stated that with all the traveling required, he understood that one would have some concerns about mileage accumulation. The Board can provide a vehicle for traveling.*

**Question:**

*How do you become a part of the Presidential Search Committee?*

**Response:**

*Dr. Meredith stated that the Search Advisory Committed is selected from members recommended by the University and community.*

**This session adjourned at 1:30 P.M.**

**MVSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD, ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY LEADERS**  
**1:35 - 2:20 P.M.**

The session began at 1:35 p.m. Although the group was extensive, the following members had an opportunity to voice their concern regarding the next president:

Dr. Sam McNair; Pastor Calvin Collins, Rev. David Matthews, Mayor Thelma Collins, Dr. William Ware, Rev. David Matthews, Ms. Jean Cadney, Attorney Luke Schissel; Mr. Troy Brown, Former President National Alumni Association, Mary Thompkins, Dr. Walter Nichols, Mr. Chuck Prophet, Ms. Beth Stevenson, Dr. Chresteen Seals, Ms. Angela Curry, Mrs. Mary Crump, Mr. Roy Curry, Ms. Mildred Brown, Ms. Emma Golden, Attorney Carver Randle and Kenturah Charles, Representative, Student Body.

- One who is not above approach, honesty, integrity; one who can move the University forward and enhance educational programs.
- A leader with a vision, one who recognizes the uniqueness of Valley, one who can make this a model university.
- Community-oriented, i.e., someone who has a love for the community, who can pull the community and the University together; one who knows the historical background of this University.
- One who can appoint, preside and articulate the needs of the constituent, one who can not only move the University forward, but have a vision to move the entire Delta. One who can convince the Board what is best for Valley.
- A leader with pride, a good relationship with faculty, student body and the community, one who is reachable, academically sound and a love for the University.
- Excellent leadership skills, longevity, knowledge to identify and recruit an excellent management team, diversity in student body, one who recognizes the importance of implementing a Ph.D. program, one who can work closely with state legislators, congressional offices and government officials. One who is committed to achieving diversity between campus and community.
- Excellent fundraising skills, one who respects the alumni and can build a relationship with the alumni, someone who can move the institution forward, interact with the community, and supplement general funds. A people person, a working president.
- One who is visible and builds relationships in the community, one who can blend Valley's resources with community and business development, i.e., get involved in business development.

- A leader who can promote and advocate partnership, job retention, and resources; develop a strong working relationship within the community; strong leadership skills, excellent listening skills, trustworthy, good business skills, ambitious, loyal to the University and the State of Mississippi.
- A leader who can move the University into the next century, i.e., change negatives into positive, change limitations into capabilities. One who can promote and allocate enrichment within the community; set up partnerships, community oriented.
- Loyal, committed, trustworthy, people-person, outspoken, experience in education; one who can establish new programs, lead by example, build a coalition, select competent faculty and staff, increase the university's financial stability.

## **GENERAL PUBLIC SESSION**

**2:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.:**

The session began at 2:40 P.M. The following members were in attendance.

Mr. Lester C. Smith  
Ms. Ruthie Robinson  
Ms. Viola Williams  
Mr. Douglas Lyles

Dr. Bettye Henderson Neely asked “*What characteristics would you like to see in the next leader?*”

Responses:

- One with long term plans, i.e., a five (5) year plan and a ten (10) year plan; improve the quality of education, independent thinker; adapt to changes
- Have a heart for the Valley, community and the city, must not be afraid of change, leadership qualities, willing to work; fundraising experience, ability to establish new programs
- Communicate effectively, must know the culture of the Valley and the community, one who is involved in the community

Session adjourned at 2:50 p.m.