

**Alcorn State University**  
**Presidential Listening Session**  
**August 31, 2010**

Attending were:

Dr. Hank M. Bounds, Commissioner, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

Trustee Bettye Neely, President of the Board

Board Search Committee:

Trustee C.D. Smith, Chairman

Trustee Stacy Davidson

Trustee Ed Blakeslee

**Schedule of Events**

1. Community Leaders
2. President's Cabinet
3. Deans and Senior Program Officers
4. Division Chairs and Department Heads
5. Student Representatives
6. Faculty Representatives
7. Professional Support Representatives
8. National Alumni Association/Development Foundation President and Alumni Representatives
9. Open Meeting for Campus and Community

At the beginning of the each session, Mr. C.D. Smith thanked the group for coming and indicated that this is a very important part of the search process, getting input from the various constituency groups. First, Mr. Smith introduced himself as an IHL Board Member and thanked Board president, Dr. Bettye Neely, for appointing him to serve as chair of the Search Process and indicated that he was honored to be a part of this process. He also recognized fellow IHL Board Search Committee members, Ed Blakeslee and Dr. Stacy Davidson, and Dr. Hank Bounds, Commissioner of Higher Learning. He thanked Dr. Bounds and the system staff for their work in getting the Board Search Committee to this point of the process.

We are now at a point where we are moving forward to recognize the search firm present with us today that we selected through a Request for Proposal process. This firm was selected as a result of its history of executive searches and they worked with lots of HBCUs, in particular. We welcome Dr. George Ayers and his staff. You can find more information about the firm on their website: [ayersandassociates.com](http://ayersandassociates.com). Also, a part of this process is the identification of a Search Advisory Committee (SAC), the SAC is made up of individuals from throughout the community and university environment, representing the various constituency groups made up of 25 individuals which are sitting with you today. As

we move through this process, the idea is to get your input, to find out what it is, what character, what traits, what characteristics you are looking for in your next individual who will lead this institution. Your input is critically important to the process as we gather input from all of the listening session. We will compile the information, it will be shared with the Search Consultant and advisory committee. They will work with the information and look at all of the applications from those who have expressed interest in leading this institution. Through this process, the Board Advisory Committee will ultimately, provide to the Board Search Committee not less than five (5) individuals to be considered. In the interview process, there will be two (2) interviews sessions and as a result, we will bring to you, what is considered to be a preferred candidate, that individual will then com to campus and you will have an opportunity to ask questions to that individual, potential outcomes from that, we will either name a new president of Alcorn State University or we will continue the search process.

Mr. Smith asked each group to share with the committee the qualities that they would like to see in the next leader for Alcorn State University.

### **Session 1: Community Leaders**

Session began at 7:48 a.m. with an opening welcome from Commissioner Hank Bounds who asked Mr. Percy Norwood to provide grace. Breakfast was provided.

Dr. Bettye Neely, President of the Board, welcomed the community leaders and stated that the board search committee was glad to see them and thanked them for participating in the process. She also stated that the board looked forward to selecting a great president for Alcorn State University. She then introduced Chairman, C.D. Smith, Mr. Ed Blakeslee, Dr. Stacey Davidson, and Commissioner Hank Bounds.

Mr. C. D. Smith thanked everyone for coming and participating. He recognized Senator Albert Butler and Representative Wilbert Jones. He stated that in addition to their interest in Alcorn, these guys work especially hard for the state of Mississippi.

Dr. Jim Borsig stated that one of the most important chores of the committee involves requesting and accepting proposal from firms to conduct the presidential search. Through the RFP process, we were fortunate to select Dr. George Ayers, of Ayers and Associates to help with the presidential search at Alcorn. Dr. Ayers has a

tremendous amount of experiences working with colleges and universities. Dr. Ayers thanked everyone for participating and introduced members of his team.

Chairman Smith explained that the listening session was implemented as a part of the presidential search process so that the committee could listen to the various groups and leave with the knowledge of what the various groups would like to have in the next president for Alcorn. He then gave an overview of the entire presidential search process. He stated the importance of confidentiality throughout this process. Afterwards, he asked if there were any questions regarding the process.

**Question:**

How long will the process last?

**Answer:**

We have a very short window, but we are not going to make the process short and deprive ourselves of the best match. The end date for receiving resumes is September 15. This is the target date for receiving application. The process remains open until the position has been filled. By the middle of September we will start reviewing the applications that have come forth.

**Qualities:**

- Exemplifies strong and visionary leadership that can take us to a new level by capturing the skills that are already in the community and use them to develop greater skills so we can become a productive community.
- Knows the legacy and has ties to Alcorn State University.
- Desires to help the university move forward during these difficult financial times.
- Embraces the communiversality concept.
- Understands that Alcorn is a research university, and that Alcorn should be known for cutting edge research.
- Conducts good management of the university's resources.
- Recognizes the agriculture strength of the university and build upon it

- Promotes a stronger relationship and partnership with surrounding cities and counties that make up Southwest Mississippi and neighboring Louisiana Parishes.
- Interests in Alcorn and the state of Mississippi. We need to find someone who is not just using Alcorn as a stepping stone for a more prominent position.
- Appreciates music, hospitality and retail, and culinary arts industries. Must be willing to implement competitive programs that are exciting and will attract the best students.
- Promotes economic develop throughout Southwest Mississippi, but specifically developing the 552 Corridor.
- Has the ability to work with the Nuclear Plant in Port Gibson and River Regions Hospital in Vicksburg to implement programs that would provide internship for students and implement a nursing program in Warren County.
- Has knowledge of this area and the desire to help our school districts develop students that are ready for enrollment at a university. He/She must also implement programs that will improve economic development in Southwest Mississippi.
- Wants to work with community leaders to develop a productive community.

## **Session 2: President's Cabinet**

### **Qualities:**

- To help us advance ASU and realize its impact in the educational environment
- The person should be a community stakes person
- The person should understand that Alcorn should have a visible presence on the local level, state level, and national level
- Have the ability to embrace our state legislatures at the state capital as well as in Washington, D.C.
- Alcorn State University is the first land grant institution
- The ability to market Alcorn State University and capitalize on that issue
- The person should have a human relations dynamic
- Be able to manage complex issues
- Corporate sense to be able to understand what it is to manage complex issues

- To know the value of promoting the Alcorn brand
- The Alcorn brand has a tremendous opportunity to translate into private support for the university
- To be an advocate to promote the Alcorn brand
- This person should be honest and have integrity
- Be a straight shooter; say what they mean and mean what they say
- Be able to bring community together in the best interest of the university
- Strong awareness and skills in fiscal and budgetary management
- The person should be politically astute to advocate in the halls of the legislature
- Ability to work with the board, commissioner and community leaders
- To be aware of our operations in Natchez and Vicksburg
- Be able to establish relationships between Alcorn State University and the community
- To understand that students are the life of the institution
- To make Alcorn State University attractive to our students
- Be able to address retention issues
- Focus on private support and not solely dependent on the state
- To attract investors to Alcorn State University
- The person should know where Lorman, Mississippi is located
- To be able to embrace southwest Mississippi
- To embrace enrollment management strategy
- To establish a retention program
- Understand budgets and budget modifications
- To evaluate programs to better service our students
- Embrace a sense of community; be a visible part of community
- To help secure our base in the surrounding towns
- To help identify a single program that shines at Alcorn State University and shift some dollars to support that program
- Lead the charge for endowments and fellowships; funding from corporate partners and companies to attract top professors
- The president should embrace customer service
- Embraces the appropriate leadership style
- A vision for changing lives of students
- Embraces shared governance
- Developing relationships with senior level executives, faculty and students
- To understand that we recruit students and help them graduate
- To help the community of southwest Mississippi

- The person should understand where they're coming; location of Alcorn
- Help to create economic growth around Alcorn State University

**Comments:**

Dr. Davidson asked the president's cabinet members about where they were raised and if they were from the south. Each member gave a brief statement on where they were reared.

**Session 3: Deans and Senior Program Officers**

**Qualities:**

- A visionary person so that Alcorn State University can move forward to the extent to which ASU can reach out and be more than what it is right now
- Be a progressive person to move beyond things, move into new ventures, new ideas, new things
- The person should have strong skills in faculty governance; not in favor that the person would be a top down driven CEO or manager
- Use the expertise of the people that exists within Alcorn
- Strong skills in faculty governance
- A person who practices participative leadership and involve those around them in making changes
- The person should be well connected in that this is definitely a relationship type of position that they know others throughout the university, throughout the region and throughout the nation at large that can help connect Alcorn into many different facets
- Be familiar with the land grant system and the land grant mission
- Protect the programs that we have and extend out beyond and reach out to entities
- One of our strong assets is that we are a land grant university and we need a president that can support those ideals
- We need a president that understands what it means and particularly that Alcorn State University sits in the center of Southwest Mississippi
- This area in the state has a number of specific socioeconomic disadvantages and the president has to help address needs, be a part of the community and help the community build
- The president has to come with an understanding that we have special needs of the university as well as the outlining areas

- Alcorn State University has a number of economic opportunities for the university to explore in terms of providing services to our internal constituencies as well as our external constituencies
- Come with an appreciation for the rural culture of this institution and of this area
- Do not be accustomed to a faster pace of life and get here and it is cultural shock; you have to drive 45 minutes to a McDonald's let alone an upscale restaurant
- Alcorn is ranked number #23 among the HBCU's in terms of education; the new president needs to have the attitude to move ASU to the top ten
- The person should be involved in shared governance
- The person should also be an outstanding fundraiser
- The person should be a crisis manager from day one
- A person that understands that they may have to do some creative things to keep people on staff
- And so with everyone really looking at the job security and thinking about their families the person that comes in really has to connect with our community and understand that Alcorn State is not just a stepping stone to a bigger or better position
- The person is sincere and comes ready to work
- The president needs to be a strong leader
- One who is experienced and needs to recognize that Alcorn extends beyond this campus it extends to Natchez and Vicksburg and the surrounding areas
- The president needs to be a strong leader to make decisions and govern and fairly govern those campuses

**Question:**

Would you give us a general timeline when you see the person coming aboard here at Alcorn State University?

**Response:**

Dr. Bounds: If all goes as planned the board should name a preferred candidate that will come to campus the last week in November first week in December. And then I think in terms of when that person actually lands on campus will depend on his/her actual circumstances and what kind of transition needs to be from the job they are sitting in now. And perhaps we get them in early January but perhaps, you know, it could be several months after that. So it just, is really going to depend on who that person is and what their particular circumstances are.

Chairman Smith wanted to make sure that everyone knew that the process actually started in February when the vacancy occurred. We have worked through various phases of the 20 step process. We have selected a board search committee and a board search firm has been hired. We are moving along with this process and it's a proven process not unique to MS but it's one that we know will aid us in identifying the right leader for this institution.

**Question:**

What is going to be done to make sure that what we ask for is implicated in the process to get the right person?

**Response:**

*Commissioner Bounds stated:* Well, part of assuring that we get the right person really starts with this type of conversation, understanding what the needs are for the campus. Also understanding what the needs are for the community for the alumni representatives from a student perspective. We'll use all of that information to draft our guiding work that will guide how the campus search committee views candidates. The work that's being done now is critically important to make certain that we do just that. That's why we spend an enormous amount of time listening to what you have to say and then we use all of the information that we've captured to guide our process to the end. Then at the very end of the day when we bring a preferred candidate to campus it is one last opportunity to measure where that person is versus your original expectations. So we think, you know, is there any process out there that is bullet proof, no. But we think that we have as good of a process in place as anywhere I think that the search consultants can tell you that this is a fairly standard process that is used and it's a good sound process and we think it is going to really produce a good result for us.

**Question:**

I know how hard it is for us to get quality faculty to Alcorn because anywhere else they are paid a lot more money and that is true for the president too. I was wondering do you have a salary range or is it going to be the same as the present salary of the president and will there be additional compensation so that the next president will not use Alcorn State University as a spring board because it happened once and it may happen again. Do you have anything to say about that?

**Answer:**

*Commissioner Bounds stated:* I think your comment is a fair one. I really do. Clearly compensation becomes a factor when in both recruiting and retention.

Clearly that's an issue and that's from president to faculty member. I think we all recognize that that's an issue. Quite frankly it is a tough issue to manage particularly in a state where resources aren't really, really deep. We think everybody in the room understands the financial picture we're down 13% from where we were in 2010 appropriated and I think we'll be down that much more in 2012. And so I wish that I had a magical answer there for you but at the end of the day I think it's just a challenge that we all have to recognize. We have to go into this process with our eyes wide open to that problem to that issue. I think that's part of the conversation that we have to have with any potential candidate. But that is going to remain a problem I don't see that issue going away for us any time soon unfortunately.

**Comment:**

***Dr. Davidson commented:*** I'd just like to say as a board member one of the reasons why we have these sessions is because each campus has its unique problems and unique personalities. This helps me to make decisions and listening to candidates that might fit your particular personality but doesn't fit another. That's why these sessions are so important to us because it gives us a feel for what you are and what your desires are and what you think your needs are because you are the ones who live here. So that's why I think these sessions are important and thank you all for participating.

**Session 4: Division Chairs and Department Heads**

**Qualities:**

- This person should see this position as a mission and a calling rather than a next step for their career trajectory
- To have a commitment to stay will be very, very important in this position
- I think a visionary person with a long view
- A president who will build something that you may not realize its impact in the future and be dedicated to see it to the end
- I would like a leader to be able to identify other leaders because no one can work alone
- she/he has to identify a leadership team that will help them make the important decisions and to counsel him/her in the right direction
- A leader has to recognize that the part is greater than its whole to have a quality academic program the university has to move in a direction where all its parts are working equally as well
- This person has to embrace change with compassion
- realize that ASU is a major employment agency within this region

- This person should manage in a way that is transparent and that is inclusive of all people
- This person should void of sexism, racism, and status
- Understands that we have good people and good staff working on this campus and look beyond the length a person has worked at the university and look at the legacy of that person/individual
- Looking for a person who's really dedicated and can see the goodness in Alcorn and see its greatness
- A person who's not a micromanager
- Someone who respects the chain of command
- A good delegator who tells the chairs through the chain of command what to do but then he let us do it
- The president can be a chain of command guy if he can delegate his authority but then he can keep an open door
- They need someone who is loyal, honest and someone who wants the knowledge about nursing
- We need the support of the president of the university when we say we need more budget
- We need the president for a long term more than a year or two of commitment
- We need a president for at least a 5 year commitment
- Our next president should be a person who is highly competent
- We need someone with a proven track record of accomplishments in academia or related organizations or entities
- We need commitment; commitment to Alcorn, IHL and the state of MS
- The ability to generate substantial financial resources for the institution especially in the time of declining state revenue
- We need someone with the ability to lead by example I think that's very important to lead by example not a lot of talk, do
- The role of president is critical for us to be productive
- Somebody who is very-very cognizant about the land grant function of Alcorn State University
- Somebody who understands agriculture, who may also have an acquisition for the humanities but understand agriculture; who can work with the faculty in agriculture, who can work with the research programs in agriculture, who can work with the extension programs in agriculture so that we can be productive
- A president who understands that grants are going to be a critical aspect of generating financial resources for this university for the next 5-10 years
- A leader who has a vision, ability, creativity and smart to build and sustain immediate and long term success at ASU with the limited resources allocated to the university and the location of the university

- Cultivate a genuine and competent involvement of teaching, service and learning
- To understand that ASU is a very vibrant university
- We'd like to have a president who takes action rather than talk
- We'd like to have a president who listens and consider everyone if they come to him as an important element of the situation
- A president who can take us to a better, higher level and be all we can be an institution of operation
- New president has a good and practical vision for the university and to see who we are and who we are competing with and how we can differentiate ourselves in this dynamic world so that we can grow
- President can keep a balance between the tradition of the university and the fresh air that the president brings in
- Our president has established connections with state officials, lawmakers
- We need to have somebody who can speak effectively for our university
- I hope that our new president can stay for at least six years
- We need stability in our administration and we need stability in our president
- We need a president who is committed to the university and the values of the university
- We need stability and we need someone who listens
- We need to know that the administration cares for us and respects us and will listen to what we have to say

### **Session 5: Student Representatives**

Session began at 11:40 a.m. with an opening welcome from Commissioner Hank Bounds. Corey Cooper, SGA President was to provide grace. Lunch was provided.

#### **Qualities**

- Potential ties to Alcorn so that he/she would have an appreciation for the university
- Someone who cares and is interested in coming to Mississippi and have a love for Alcorn.
- Engaged with student interest and student activities.
- Approachable
- Not here for just another job or career, but here to make change and progress the university
- Sociable and able to make decisions

- Someone who appreciates the history, but is willing to make changes to fit our generation.
- In touch with students needs
- Someone who can help us to stay technologically competitive. It is important that we do not fall behind.
- Make guarantees instead of promises.
- Honest
- Someone with credentials who is ready to take us to another level. Do not use Alcorn as a stepping stone; longevity is important
- Compassion for students. Treat us with respect and help us in regard to financial aid and meal plans
- Come in and use resources wisely and upgrade our facilities
- Evaluate the needs and concerns of all departments
- Respect us as students
- Cohesive with the upkeep of the buildings; help us to get modern equipment
- Positive instead of negative
- Maintains a database of contacts for internships

### **Session 6: Faculty Representatives**

#### **Qualities:**

- The person that comes in really needs to have outstanding leadership skills and visionary
- Visionary in terms of what's going on around the country and some of the cutting edge issues that's facing our country and in the state of MS
- The new president understands the library and information literacy
- Somebody who's a good manager of our resources and who can expand and look out around and seek resources for the university
- We need a leader who can seek resources other than just what we go to the legislature and ask for
- A president who can increase our resources so we can be more effective as an institution
- Somebody who would carry forward the mission of Alcorn
- Not let Alcorn remain as a second rate university but something that stays abreast of technology forward and what's happening in the current trends
- We want Alcorn to rise up and we need a leader to help us rise up and reach those heights
- don't bring in somebody who's going to be on the job training

- bring in somebody who has proven record of directing an institution and making wise decisions
- Faculty members go out and achieve something they get grants they do good things but nobody says well done
- We need a president who will find time to show appreciation to faculty not on an individual basis all the group
- We need a president who will appreciate the work of the faculty and staff
- We also want a president who listens to the faculty senate
- We want someone who actually listens to faculty senate and take our concerns and give us feedback
- one that has a broad vision I guess and looking at us as a whole, as well as individual parts
- I think he needs to look at each school and the way it's funded and to be fair across the board
- We love Alcorn and we want him or her to love Alcorn as a whole
- We just want them to have a broader perspective and look at the individual components
- The president have policies in place for the operation of this university
- Looking out for the basic needs of the employees and realizing that we have professional and basic needs

### **Session 7: Professional Support Representatives**

Staff Senate President Donna Hayden spoke on behalf of the Staff Senate and thanked the Board for the opportunity to share what they are looking for in the next president of Alcorn State University. She indicated that she would be remised if she did not state one thing: Staff normally does not go on their own dynasty as staff. We don't always get the opportunity to leave the office to attend events like this because they are busy doing other things in the office or perhaps that particular boss does not allow them the right to leave at a particular time no matter how important that event maybe. Thanks for allowing staff to be a part of this process.

#### **Qualities:**

- Looking for someone who is the personification of the people because they feel that a leader cannot separate him or herself from the people.
- They want someone who is an active listener
- A person who will accept ideas no matter where they come from, whether he or she works at the physical plant, on the grounds, an administrative

assistant, dean or director, etc. that they accepts that person's ideas as being just as important as the next person's ideas

- Recognizes that you cannot always use a formula approach will developing or working within a university.
- Someone that recognizes the reality, regardless of environment
- A leader with a proven record of competence; not a micro-manager (a leader and a manager are not one in the same, for a leader makes things happen through a shared vision; thus people give to visions not to organizations. Simply put, a good leader can get others to give to his/her vision for ASU and not just to the school itself. A manager, on the other hand manages things, for example, time, paperwork, material, equipment and so on.
- A leader committed to the vision and mission; one who will empower faculty and staff to assist him/her in implementing the goals and objectives of the university
- Someone who can delegate responsibility through the chain of command and allow the person the space and time to implement the given task.
- Someone who is honest; not a talker, but a doer; one who is open to ideas, supportive and will and can stand behind and defend the university.
- A leader who can get others to follow him/her by strategizing and mobilizing others to reach their highest potential; one who is a good listener and cares about the people he/she leads.
- Someone who will do the right thing not the most popular thing, one who is able to get others to "come on board" with ideas that will move the university forward.
- Someone willing to work sedulously with the administration (department chairs, directors, vice presidents) to determine that all personnel are working in areas and paid a salary that is commensurate with his/her experience and educational attainment.
- Is a leader that knows how to deal with conflict to get a job done, because a leader who refuses to deal with conflict causes the entire university to suffer; or better yet, to fail. Thus the lack of conflict resolution results in hostilities; something we can all do without.
- Someone who is able to lead the university and its constituents without malice or personal gain.
- Someone who can provide a clear system of incentives to employees such as awards and recognition, a pay raise or bonus that is warranted, a promotion, or more or less responsibility. Not one who will hire someone just because he/she is a friend or a family member.
- Someone who is influential and powerful; not power hungry, in a nutshell one who can recognize that power is the force of influence and authority; thus one who realizes that his/her followers are the ones who gives him/her the power to lead; one who will have the skills of a leader who knows when to

use power and when not to; one who demonstrates good judgment which is key for the position as president at Alcorn State University.

- Works well with MS Institutions of Higher Learning as well as the other national leaders
- Someone who will defend our university
- Someone who is not looking for expensive consultants groups to come in and tell us what we already know
- Someone who will support faculty, staff and students and our programs because morale is low
- Someone who will have an open door policy
- Someone who will raise the moral and be more transparent
- Someone will be work with the community and build community involvement
- Someone who will support the office support within the departments
- Someone who does not contradict policy and procedures in place just because they are faced with a difficult problem
- Someone who will show confidence in our faculty and staff for the procedures in place for the students
- Someone who will not look at himself as a just a president but as a leader for faculty, staff and students (good leadership skills)
- Someone committed to ensure that policies and procedures are carried out as approved
- Someone who will not compromise a situation
- Someone who will have the best interest of university at heart
- Someone involved or have a proven record of community outreach and empowerment, support K-12 schools in Claiborne and Jefferson counties

### **Session 8: National Alumni Association/Development Foundation President and Alumni Representatives**

#### **Qualities:**

- Alcorn needs a president that understands our mission and the business we are in
- Visionary planner and leader that can assure the success of our students
- We need a high energy president, because this is hard work
- A visionary leader, with outstanding moral characteristics and integrity
- Strategic organizational and management skills
- Places an emphasis on academic excellence
- Sound communication skills
- An institutional builder that's able to attract quality students and faculty
- A strong fund raiser and willingness and interest in building new relationships
- Someone who can work with the board

- Outstanding academic credentials
- Alcorn is our oldest public black institution and build diversity that we need so that Alcorn can flourish in the future
- An ideal candidate who understands and is passionate about the HBCU, specifically the one in southwest Mississippi (Alcorn)
- One who has had experience or be affiliated with an HBCU
- Appreciate Alcorn's rich history and its students body, faculty, staff and alumni are critically important
- Effective communicator that believes in a student centered approach to higher education
- Projects positive image of the university
- Recognize the importance of being visible on campus
- Demonstrate a concern for student issues and seek to engage them in improving academic standards
- Believe in the mission of the university, bleed purple and gold
- Be able to articulate its strengths and accomplishments internally and externally
- An innovative thinker
- Keeping the vision and mission of the university
- A track record of cultivating and valuing the role of alumni in recruiting and fundraising in supporting the university
- Value and expand the focus of the Alumni Affairs office
- Sense of belonging to the undergraduate students in order that they may retain them as alumni once they leave Alcorn.
- An effective fundraiser with experience in raising funds from private individuals, nonprofit, government and corporations
- Keep abreast of the best practices in higher education
- One who wants to join our family for the long haul to be here with us, walk with us, love us, and bleed purple and gold with us.
- We don't want someone who wants to get a mark on their resume
- Someone who will work to increase enrollment and continue with campus improvements
- Someone who will work with the community; a community builder
- Someone with a spouse that wants to reside in Mississippi and have an interest in working with the students, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Someone who will not be stand offish
- An Alcornite will know the turf
- A person who will be dedicated and committed

- Someone who will have Alcorn at heart
- Alcorn needs someone who knows Alcorn
- Alcorn is unique on 1700 acres of land
- Alcorn is a land grant institution
- Someone who can see how southwest Mississippi can impact the community with the staff who can make the community grow
- The next president should be student friendly and aware of the issues concerning the students at the university
- The president should be concerned about the faculty housing
- An individual with a skill sets for leadership and to use sound management practices
- Be resourceful at delegation and the art of managing people
- The president should be an Alcornite
- A vision to establish short term and long term plans of the university
- Financial expertise
- Good communication skills at all levels
- Experience in fund raising and the art of motivation
- Stability
- The president should be student centered
- Understand the land grant mission of the university
- Recognize talent and empower people; president can't do everything
- Someone who understands economic development in the area
- We need a great leader who has Alcorn's best interest at heart

**Question:**

With the university in the midst of SACS Accreditation, why is there a rush to get a president?

**Commissioner Response:** People who are familiar with this know that this position has been vacant for a while. We hired a firm that would help us with this process. SACS is an ongoing process; we have been heavily engaged in that process. We clearly recognize that we cannot do anything that will impact the SACS process. Whether we bring in a president tomorrow or a year from tomorrow, there will be things going on. I feel comfortable with where we are and the length of the process. I think it is a process that we will all be proud of in the end.

**Comments:**

Alcorn has outstanding graduates scattered throughout the world and abroad. Any where we are; we are a family.

It is important that one recognizes that Alcorn State University is a unique place. You have to have it in your heart and you have to be dedicated to its mission. We need someone who knows Alcorn.

It is unique out here on 1700 hundred acres of land. It cannot be Harvard, but it is a land grant college. It is important that the potential candidate is aware of this and can appreciate it.

Alcorn is a different kind of university in the sense it is an 1871 Land Grant University and one of the oldest public HBCUs. The president has to be able to build upon this, appreciate it, respect it and go out and build the kind of diversity that we need in order for this university to flourish in the future.

**Session 9: Open Meeting for Campus and Community**

**Qualities:**

- Someone who is well-rounded
- Has good financial management skills
- Familiar with the southern culture as well as Alcorn's culture and atmosphere
- Willing to preserve our history as a HBCU.
- Someone who encourages the support of all athletic programs and support all student athletes
- Visionary Leader and a Team Builder who knows how to bring people together and break the culture of stove piping at the university
- Student Centered and Friendly
- Strong background in business and finance
- Understanding of outreach and economic development
- Committed and has an understanding of who, what and where and how we are, where we are, and what we are doing
- Political savvy, knows how to work the halls of MS Legislature and US. Congress

- Build the university concept with the City of Natchez and throughout Southwest Mississippi
- Committed to taking care of business
- Strong administrative and finance background

Chairman Smith commented that the board had a very productive day at Alcorn and received lots of good information about what the various groups would like to see in the next president. This information will be compiled and shared with the Board Advisory Committee, Search Advisory Committee, and Consultants. I can assure that we are going to do our very best to identify the best candidate for Alcorn State University that will be compiled for the advisory group I can assure that we are going to do our very best to find the best match for Alcorn State University.

Commissioner Bounds commented that this has been a very good day and it is clear that alumni, faculty, staff, and students all care about the university and its future. We had the opportunity to meet with a group of outstanding articulate student during lunch just as we have seen here in this session. I am absolutely impressed by the students. Whoever serves as the next president will inherit a great student body and an enthusiastic faculty, staff and alumni group.

Dr. Blakeslee commented on the Clinton Bristow Dining Facility and the new dormitories. He had a great day at Alcorn. The sessions were good and we have a better understanding of what your expectations are.

Dr. Neely commented that the board had a great day at Alcorn. The different groups have spoken loudly and we have heard you. We look forward to returning to the campus at same point before we complete this process. The consultants are working with the campus advisory committee to help us choose a great leader for Alcorn. Thank you we had an enjoyable day.

Members of the Campus Search Advisory Committee were asked to meet with Dr. Bounds.

The Listening Session adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

**Notes and minutes taken by  
Janice Gibson, Sherry Davis and Karen Shedrick**