



Mississippi Valley State University Presidential Search Listening Sessions August 27, 2013

Schedule:

7:30 a.m.	Community Leaders Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	President's Cabinet
9:00 a.m.	Faculty, Staff & Administration
9:45 a.m.	Students
10:30 a.m.	Alumni & Foundation
11:15 a.m.	Lunch with Faculty Members
12:30 p.m.	Open Meeting for Campus & Community

At the beginning of each session throughout the day, Shane Hooper, IHL Board Search Committee Chair, welcomed everyone and thanked the groups for attending. He gave an overview of the session, stating that the search committee is comprised of campus and community constituents. He also acknowledged the Campus Advisory Committee. Mr. Hooper asked the audience to share their opinions of the ideal characteristics that should be found in the future President of Mississippi Valley State University. He stated that the goal is to have the most qualified candidate with vision and a goal for the future.

Mr. Hooper asked members of the Search Committee to stand and be recognized. He also introduced persons seated at the front with him. Dr. Hooper stated that Ayers and Associates, a consulting firm experienced in finding chief executives for historically black institutions of higher learning, will be working with the Search Committee on this process.

Mr. Hooper discussed the purpose of the Listening Sessions, noting that the listening sessions are important to the selection process and the feedback is necessary. Leadership matters and we need to look at where we are now and where we want to be in the future. What you say today does matter.

Session 1 – Community Leaders' Breakfast

- The next President should have a vision for the community and be able to connect the city of Itta Bena with the university. Itta Bena and Valley should be able to work together. He/she should have a passion for the community so that Itta Bena can become a community town.

- Greenwood is also a part of the campus. The next president should be engaged in the area businesses and government.
- The president should really love the students and make sure they have the information they need. He/she needs to have love for students. If the president is involved, it will make a difference in the community.
- The school needs good leadership.
- Be able to adapt to the Delta ways. The students should be nourished.
- Be astute and knowledgeable of recruiting students and fundraising. He/she should be a partner with the community. The person needs to be visible in the community.
- Be able to communicate with the students and answer questions. Have a good attitude, be caring and able to relate to the Mississippi Delta culture.
- A president that can raise money and get student enrollment up. Some presidential experience. Need to be African American guided by the principle and belief of God.
- Should be very aware of the Delta culture. A small school but can be a great institution if effort is given to raise awareness.

Session 2 – President’s Executive Cabinet

- Budget experience and financial management experience
- Transformational leader that inspires trust, appreciates culture of the Delta and the state.
- Hold employees accountable
- Communicate with all constituents
- Visible internally and externally
- Challenge followers to take greater ownership for their work
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that enhance their performance.
- Must be transparent and collaborative
- Cannot have an elitist attitude and confine herself/himself to the Ivory tower.
- Must not be afraid of hard work.
- Fundraiser-oriented
- Okay with doing grunt work

Session 3 - Faculty, Staff and Administration

- Someone who understands the Delta and the unique role of the University.
- Someone who is confident, asks for buy-in, and not easily shaken by controversy.
- An individual with proven experience.
- Friendly, charming; meets with faculty and students on a regular basis.
- Has integrity and stresses accountability; has a high regard for faculty.
- Visible; a business person and helps the University.
- Has common sense in making decisions.

- Be able to embrace the unique culture of the Delta; use innovative ideas to foster educational success.
- Alter the atmosphere of the University (from negative to positive).
- Has a vision for growth; has passion for the institution; asks for feedback; gets everyone involved.
- Understands the type of students that come to the University; understands the needs of area businesses so students can be matched for jobs after graduation.
- A leader who is not afraid to make decisions; should not make decisions hastily without considering all possible options; make sure directives are followed.
- Choose people who can work well with the University; look at the personnel currently employed (faculty and staff) and use them to fill some of the administrative positions; promote from within.
- An effective leader who will strengthen academic programs, reward faculty and staff who are performing well and place them in positions to be filled.
- Make students a priority
- Man/woman enough to walk across campus by themselves.
- Someone who will fight for the University
- Would like to have a president from Mississippi
- Need someone who can take the University from point A to point B
- Need decisions made in the best interest of students
- Have a vision for the students, and will take the university to a higher level
- A leader that is fair, have concerns for faculty, staff, and students; Looking for someone that will demonstrate accountability, adhere to the policies and will not violate them
- Have some common sense
- Be well-grounded; Have passion for the University; Need someone that will help the University grow
- Conscious of what they are doing
- Need someone that will stay on the campus; need someone to be part of the flock, someone for the students, faculty, and staff
- Build partnerships and alliances
- Improve the graduation rate
- Someone who is going to bring in students
- We need a president who can help MVSU compete with Jackson State University.
- The new president should be visible and be present on campus after hours to visit with people. He or she must be willing to move MVSU forward.
- There should be a “paradigm shift.”
- Leader must have a vision and come here because of a passion for the job and not the salary. It must be someone who has concern and who is not afraid to be visible.
- The new president must understand and respond to the needs of the area’s employers.
- He or she should focus on how to make MVSU a fine liberal arts college.
- We need someone who holds up to their own standards. He or she must use the talents of the people who are already here. They should not just bring in people from the outside.

They should embrace the culture here but also the culture of others who attend MVSU. They must be willing to bring about changes.

- We need an effective leader who will incorporate change, and work with communities. Reward people who are here and who have performed well. We need “integrity and accountability.”
- He or she needs to bring students here and think always of the students. It should be a graduate who has worked here.

*The panel was urged not to rush to find a president because of some prescribed deadline; Postpone the search if necessary until a suitable candidate can be found.

Session 4 - Students

- A President who is innovative, open-minded, cares about the needs of the students, and gets feedback from students.
- A President who comes in with the attitude of “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”. He needs to recognize that there are faculty and staff members who have been here for years who genuinely care about the students. I do not want a President who will come in and fire and move people around that the students are comfortable with. Finally, I would like to see a President with a heart like mine that pumps “green and white blood.”
- Have a vision to increase enrollment and not be afraid to go against the grain even if it means standing alone. He needs to be a motivator, encourager, knowledgeable, friendly, and one that holds every department accountable, including staff and students.
- We need a President who is not just a “picture-taker.” He needs to be involved and also sit and interact with the students.
- Someone who leads by example, a visionary that holds the heart of the University like founder James H. White. He also needs to be visible on the campus.
- Someone who cares about MVSU and student retention. We need to be able to reach him and he needs to be visible and address the various problems we have with the Residence Halls that include water leaks.
- We need someone who is friendly and outgoing, and willing to get to know the students and show them that he cares.
- We need a President who will live up to our motto, “live for service.” He needs to demonstrate service and is student-centered; address finding scholarship money, and general funding for the University.
- We need someone who supports athletics and student life. He needs to be able to interact with students, faculty and staff. He needs to be visible, courageous, a risk-taker and a people-person who is not afraid to be “a part of us.” He also needs to address the issues of scholarships and the current bus issue
- Someone who’s a problem solver and does not sweep things under the rug. Someone who also believes in interacting with not only faculty and staff, but students as well.

- Our next President should be a good leader, attentive, dedicated and love their job as well as showing up for events on campus.
- A president who can link the surrounding communities to Mississippi Valley State University.
- A president who will keep the current Faculty and Staff and work with them. A
- A president who wants to be at MVSU.
- A motivator and someone who will stand in the midst of adversity. This speaker also wants someone who will hold everyone accountable and someone who can increase enrollment.
- A president with an active campus presence.
- A president who leads by example, and is visionary, and touchable. “Live for Service:” want the president to exemplify and live my MVSU motto. Someone who can create funds for scholarships
- Someone with Valley roots who understands the culture and struggles of being a student at MVSU.
- Someone who cares about MVSU. Someone active in all phases of MVSU. Someone tangible.
- Someone outgoing, friendly, seen on campus, someone who wants to know the campus.
- Someone who will interact with the students. A visual leader. Wants someone who is innovative. Someone who can raise funds for scholarships. Someone courageous. A people person leader.
- A problem solver, who stands firm behind the students, faculty, and staff. Someone who will stand behind this University.
- Attentive, loves the campus, students, and university. Someone dedicated to the campus and well-being of this University.

Session 5 - Alumni & Foundation

- Someone with a vision, innovator, open-minded and who will embrace all of the stakeholders.
- Someone who will not regard the locals as a “back woods” community.
- Someone who supports the faculty, staff, and students and who genuinely cares about the Valley.
- Someone who lives on campus.
- Someone who will stand up to the IHL for Valley. A die-hard Valley supporter.
- Looking for youthfulness, stability, vision-someone who can look down the road 10-15 years. Will listen to stakeholders, listen to problems, surround themselves with good people, recruit and retain students. Someone who will get them here and help keep them from leaving.
- Someone who knows the Delta well! The Delta’s economic and demographic make-up, its character.

- Someone who has depth and not just look good on paper. Someone who will surround themselves with various levels of staff and faculty and those people will support recruitment efforts enrollment will increase.
- Someone willing to be all around. Someone well-rounded who will look at everything on campus; get campus reports to nip minor problems in the bud and be proactive about addressing major problems, possibly preventing minor problems when addressed in a timely manner.
- The next president has to love the Valley, have understanding, and what it takes to be successful.
- The president will need to hit the ground running. There is no time or resources for another training session.
- An individual who has the training and experience. Someone who is qualified and able to take us from now to the future.
- Must have the necessary experience to serve as the head of a university the size and quality of MVSU.
- An individual who understand relationships between faculty and staff.
- An individual who knows that ultimately, their service is all about the students. That person needs to be visible on campus; walk the campus and talk to students; be aware of student concerns and needs; be an avid fundraiser and capable of raising money for scholarships. Understand that the dorms and student facilities are important.
- Have a working knowledge of athletics and the athletic departments – the value they bring to Valley with resources, money, and recruiting.
- They must be physical and realistic and aware that the university will not thrive on academics alone and support the athletic programs, band, choir which bring in the bulk of the student body and feed into the overall recruitment plan.
- That person cannot be one dimensional. Be able to speak well about the Valley to all stakeholders.
- Be an effective fundraiser and communicator. Must support athletics and the performing arts. Must be visible to students.
- Someone who is self-confident, well-rounded.
- Someone who has access to resources where they can make fundraising their priority.
- Ability to communicate and negotiate what MVSU has to offer.
- A graduate of this great institution.
- Looking for someone to be an active participant.
- Someone who will accept input from alumni and realizes that we (alumni) are the best resource and that we are necessary to the university. Someone who will support alumni as a partner and support our efforts to help recruit in our areas.
- Someone who understands the Delta and its local and global impact.
- Someone who will relate to the faculty and staff.
- The incoming president cannot have thin skin. They must be able to accept criticism whether constructive or bad.
- Someone who will be part of student life. Someone who will go to them and not wait on students to come. Someone who will foster a comfortable environment for students to have a forum.
- Available to the community.

- An advocate for the Valley.
- A people person and be genuine to stakeholders.
- A president with a backbone. Strong enough to remove the cancerous cells within the Valley to encourage growth in Mississippi and abroad.
- Be proactive and not reactive.
- Someone who will think outside the box. Someone who is technologically savvy and current. Someone who understands the demographics of the students enrolled at Valley. Someone who will go into the community.
- We need a “Dr. William Sutton” type of president.
- The president must have convictions and convey a positive image of the Valley. That they will focus on image-building in the community and on campus. That the president is a stakeholder who has a risk. If the Valley loses, they (the president) lose. If the Valley wins, they (the president) win.
- A sense of family.
- Someone who is able to embrace and support the community, faculty, staff, students and the alumni
- Someone who generally cares about the University
- Young enough to have stability
- Capable of listening to the students, faculty, alumni and community
- Surround themselves with good people of various levels
- Able to recruit and retain students
- Know the demographic, the economics of the delta
- Charge each department with recruitment
- Appoint someone to report what is happening on campus, so matters can be handled in the early stage
- Must be concerned and understanding and know what it takes to make Valley successful
- Should be able to grow, understand and articulate programs
- Attract and understand students, know their wants/needs
- A president who is visible
- Must have the necessary recruitment tools
- A president who not only focus on the academic programs, but also understands the importance of auxiliaries, i.e., athletic department, band, choir, etc.
- A strong communicator, not only to the faculty, staff, students, but to the community as well
- Recruitment and student retention
- Must have a vision for the mission and able to share with all stakeholders
- One who understands the importance of performance arts, athletics, etc.
- Must be self-confident
- A president who accepts input from alumni, faculty, staff, students and the community
- A president who can carry the Valley message
- One who knows the economic impact of the Delta
- Able to relate to faculty, staff and students
- One who can think outside the box
- One who understands the students

- One who is capable of listening
- Well-known in the community
- An individual who can make this campus the best campus for students
- An idealist

#6 Faculty Luncheon

- We need a visionary, someone that will hold people accountable and not be afraid to make tough decisions
- The person should hold insight on what is going on with the university
- Have a high level of energy
- Be involved in the community
- Be a hands-on person
- One that is willing to work with faculty, student, staff and the community
- Be visible in the community
- Believe in faculty and have support in the work they do
- Make sure faculty is being paid, because it's difficult to recruit top faculty at the salary being paid
- Knows the needs of each department
- Have a great level of communication
- Someone that has the ability to explore opportunities
- Have the ability to communicate effectively
- Be able to generate scholarship dollars for our students
- It is very crucial the person is an independent and intellectual individual for our students, because our students have great potential
- Be able to fight for Valley State not just the students
- Don't be a yes person just because the board recommends something, because they don't run Valley State
- Someone experienced at a Valley-type HBCU institution
- Know how to recruit and retain quality faculty
- Know how to build and monitor a budget
- Know the responsibilities and understand the rights of faculty and students
- Oversee the overall plan
- Interviewees should be brought to campus, in order to get a feel of the university, because they don't get the real feel of the university being interviewed in Jackson
- Make this university just like JSU
- We need a leader to take us far beyond
- We need new technology our technology is antiquated
- A leader that has a vision to build up the whole community

- Put forth the effort and work in the community for this to be a fabulous place
- We need someone with common sense
- In comparing JSU, we can compete
- Someone who is open and transparency
- Straighten up our infrastructure
- Get the staff what they need to work
- Too many holes in the system
- Strong leadership quality to support faculty

#7 Open Meeting for Campus & Community

- Leader should reflect the students; they should be able to touch and identify with their president.
- Needs to live on campus; attend campus events like pep rallies and breast cancer walks.
- Should also bring alumni to student organizational meetings.
- Needs to understand the dynamics of the Delta. Needs to have energy and want to move MVSU upward.
- Needs to outline a five year plan; describing what and where. Needs alumni not just the MVSU National Alumni Association. Alumni will become members based on university leadership.
- Needs to be able to raise money; energize retired alumni to put something back.
- Need to steward and galvanize the campus community. Needs to present plan to the legislature; then it needs to come to pass.
- Needs to be able to build consensus with faculty.
- President needs to be hungry for educational opportunities; think outside the box; not stick to tradition in the Delta.
- Needs to change perceptions; build partnerships with alumni in key positions.
- Staff needs to be held accountable for doing their job.
- Needs to know how to shake hands of students and infiltrate this society. Needs to be tough-skinned.
- Need a strong communicator that can get Valley out there.
- Needs to have a vision for increasing financial support. Needs an infectious personality that bleeds out; needs to receive national affection. Needs to cultivate private funds. Needs the strength of a pastor or minister.
- President needs a vision to attract young people; needs that type of power.
- Need a leader who understands the wants, needs of faculty, staff and students; to bring us together as a family. Everyone needs to be supported; no one needs to be treated as less than. Support is needed for all departments and activities on campus; (i.e., football and music).
- Partnerships need to be built in neighboring cities with restaurants and stores (i.e. Subway and Walmart) to allow students to use their bookstore charges. Need to meet the needs of students holistically. Increase the revenue from local businesses and the local community. The local community needs to know who we are; we need to be supported by the Delta; to bring the Delta together.

- President really has to want to work to improve the university.
- Know how things are done. Know different ways to get the job done; even though we need our own style. Needs to be able to recognize when things are not running well and implement new more effective processes (i.e. Wifi in every building).
- University made up of different cultures and we need to bring different cultures here. While we have diversity of culture, we do not have diversity of thinking.
- There is life beyond the Delta; know how things work in other cities and states; more fast-paced and modern way of doing things. Supportive of student organizations. President needs to be with students. Can't compete with other institutions. We are small enough to advance; to be a powerful machine. We need to change things and modernize.
- Need someone who is a people person with a heart for young people and need to be visible.
- Someone to identify with students, for example:
 - Eat in the cafeteria
 - Go out and run track
- Students being able to identify (being within touch) with the president means a lot to a student, more than they would ever know
- Bring alumni to every meetings/events
- Understand the dynamics of the Delta
- Has the energy to move the university upward
- Concerned about the image of the university
- Be an ambassador for the university
- We need leadership change to hold staff accountable and to learn how to treat people
- We must be customer service friendly
- We need a person to galvanize relationships
- A person with tough skin
- Must have a vision to increase financial support
- An infectious personality that bleeds out as a national infection
- Savvy mindset
- Financial sponsorship of athletics
- Develop the mindset of a wow factor
- We need an individual to attract young people
- President should be very powerful a wow factor in the community
- We need someone to bring us together as a whole.
- We need someone to think about our students' holistic needs, because our students do not have a lot of money
- We do not need anyone that doesn't have a clue about our university to bring in new people that possibly have been fired or laid off somewhere else
- We need people that really want to work
- People do not know that we are here....we need to be more visible in restaurants and stores
- There is diversity among the student body, but not in the leadership
- Have a futuristic way of doing things
- Be supportive of our student organizations....the president needs to be involved with students