

Public Session Minutes

BOARD MEMBERS

Present: Hon. Kweisi Mfume, Chair, Regent; General (Ret.) Larry Ellis, Vice Chair, Regent; Hon. Tracey Parker-Warren, Secretary, Regent; Rev. Dr. Harold Carter, Jr., Regent; Dr. Linda Gilliam, Regent; Dr. Shirley Malcom, Regent; Mr. Wayne Resnick, Regent; Ms. Shelonda Stokes, Regent; Mr. Jeffon Stubbs, Student Regent; Mrs. Penelope Taylor, Regent; Dr. Marquis Walker, Regent; Mr. Winston Wilkinson, Regent

Absent: Rev. Dr. Frances Draper, Regent

STAFF MEMBERS

Present: Dr. David Wilson, University President; Dr. Kevin Banks, VP for Student Affairs; Mr. Sidney Evans, VP for Finance; Mr. Thomas Faulk, Principal Counsel for Morgan State University, Office of the Attorney General; Ms. Armada Grant, AVP for Human Resources; Mrs. Cassandra Grogan, Executive Administrator for the Board of Regents; Ms. Sherita Harrison, Interim General Counsel; Ms. Kim McCalla, AVP for Facilities, Design and Construction; Dr. Maurice Taylor, VP for Academic Outreach and Engagement; Dr. Kara Turner, VP for Enrollment Management; Dr. Don-Terry Veal, Chief of Staff to the President; Dr. Lesia Young, Provost and Senior VP for Academic Academics

The Morgan State University Board of Regents held an emergency meeting on Friday, March 20, 2020 via teleconference. Chairman Mfume called the Public Session to order at 12:03 p.m. The Chairman offered an overview of the agenda. He noted that if there is a need or a desire to move into Closed Session, the Board will do so in accordance with the Open Meetings Act for the State of Maryland with the statutory authority to close a meeting under the General Provisions Article 3-305(b)(7)(10).

Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the Regents and members of the public. He stated that this is a very devastating time for all of us, whether we are at the University, in the city which the University is located, in the state and obviously the entire nation. Our families are impacted, our employment is impacted, our health is impacted, and the general psyche of America is being tested in a number of different ways as is that of people around the globe who are all trying to deal with something that has never ever occurred before. Thus, it was very important for members of the Board, alumni, and members of the public and others to get a full update on where we are currently, as of today. He then yielded the floor to the President for opening remarks.

Dr. Wilson stated that the University has been really busy over the last several weeks making preparations, putting plans in place, and making rapid-fire decisions in order to prepare the University for COVID-19. In the case of Morgan, public safety restrictions have been placed on us by the federal and state governments, and health officials have given us particular guidelines that we need to follow at the institution. The Board will hear in the following updates the kind of decisions we have made and are continuing to make with regard to this ever-changing situation.

Coronavirus Update: Overall Effects on the University

Preparation, COOP and Infectious Disease Plans

Dr. Taylor reported that the University had already begun, at a couple of levels, developing an Influenza Plan in 2009 and a more comprehensive Crisis Management Plan in 2012. These were two fairly complete draft plans that were pulled together in early February of 2020, prior to the onset of the coronavirus, to complete a Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP). We are currently in the process of incorporating the aspects of Influenza Plan along with as many of the pronouncements resulting from the COVID-19 to include the Governor's announcements, the University President's announcements, and any other relevant information coming from the CDC, the Maryland Department of Health and the Baltimore City Department of Health.

Moving to Online/Remote Instruction for the Remainder of the Spring Semester

Dr. Young began by stating that innovation is a core value at Morgan and it has truly been our guiding principle as we work to prepare academically for this pandemic. The decision was made to complete the academic semester using remote instruction. While we recognize that this is not ideal, we know that it is the most viable option for ensuring that our educational objections continue to be met and ensuring that our students have the opportunity to successfully complete their courses. While we know that remote instruction is not the best method, Morgan is well-prepared to move into remote instruction for a number of reasons: (1) Morgan made the decision to transition to a new state-of-the-art learning management system called Canvas, and (2) the University has made the decision to acquire some state-of-the-art tools that interact well with Canvas such as Zoom and new virtual laboratory simulation tools for STEM courses in science and engineering (i.e., Labsearch, etc.). Additionally, we have student training, student tutorials as well as a student help desk support 24 hours a day.

Dr. Young noted that we are using the term remote instruction, which is slightly different from online courses. Remote instruction allows our professors to deliver their materials either synchronously or asynchronously such that it is in the best format for students. In addition, we have encouraged faculty to be very flexible in working with students as they adjust to their new mode of instruction. We have encouraged faculty to be very flexible in their grading policies, and have also asked faculty members to think of implementing their assignments in ways that are innovative that allows students to demonstrate course mastering but are more manageable as they work remotely.

With regard to research, many of the federal agencies have announced that no-cost extensions will be given to principal investigators. Faculty members have been permitted to continue their research; however, for the health and safety of everyone, they have been asked to make specific provisions as it relates to students. All undergraduate workers and researchers should be given remote work assignments. Similarly, all graduate workers and research assistants should also be given remote work assignments. Faculty members are urged to make wise decisions regarding the health and safety of themselves, the use of laboratories on campus and the research being conducted.

Chairman Mfume called Dr. Young's attention to a story appearing online on the Baltimore Sun website gaining a whole lot of visibility entitled "Most Professors at Maryland Universities Don't Know How to Teach Online." The basic premise of the article is that campus-based higher education in the traditional sense is not completely unprepared for this pandemic since many rely on learning management systems that allow both faculty to post teaching materials and students to submit papers online. The larger premise is that the short turnaround of moving an entire instructional experience online will in fact create problems for professors who are used to instructing in person.

Vacating On-Campus Residence Halls

Dr. Banks stated that since the decision was made to inform students not to return to campus in light of the coronavirus, we have approximately 50+ students on campus to date. We have also received hardship requests from roughly 35 students who reside out-of-state, internationally or just do not have the support infrastructure at home to be able to manage in this new normal.

Dr. Banks stated that his team is working to develop a move-out process that will be extended over several weeks to honor the social distancing measures. Data is being compiled with regard to those visiting the

University Health Center; food service is limited to Rawlings Dining Hall and is strictly grab and go; counseling services will be implemented via telemental health therapy sessions; limited transportation services; resources for virtual worship services underway; and food pantry requests will be prepared and arrangements will be coordinated via email correspondence. He added that we have met with all of our off-campus housing partners to ensure that they are implementing best practices around regular cleaning and disinfecting the buildings and that they are complying with social distancing protocols as mandated by the state and federal governments.

Pro-rated Refunds for Unused Housing and Meal Plan Fees

Dr. Turner stated that a number of our students receive institutional aid that helps them with tuition, fees and room and board. She indicated that the role of Financial Aid will be to review the accounts of those students who would potentially be eligible for any pro-rated refund to ensure that are not receiving a refund of any university funds. Staff will also check federal and state guidelines.

Postponement of Spring Commencement Exercises

President Wilson stated that it was very tough to make the decision to postpone spring commencement exercises. He noted that the decision was made in consultation with our SGA student leaders who were very supportive. Possible alternative dates include early August prior to the start of the fall semester and mid-December for a large winter ceremony.

Suspension of All Public Events at Morgan for the Remainder of the Semester

Dr. Wilson stated that the University made the decision to cancel all public events prior to the restriction of large group gatherings being imposed.

Implementation of Telework Guidelines for Approved Non-Essential Staff

Ms. Grant stated that the temporary telework guidelines for Morgan were sent out on March 15th. All employees who are able to telework were advised to do so, and all Vice Presidents were asked to identify those employees who had positions that would qualify for teleworking. Morgan continues to be open, and essential employees and those who cannot telework are required to report to work. Employees have been advised to stay home if they are sick. We are practicing social distancing and other safety guidelines from the CDC. While open we will continue to provide services to employees, students and other constituents.

Ms. Grant noted that in light of the Governor's Executive Orders, we have needed to continuously revise the temporary telework guidelines in order to accommodate these directions. Additional information has been provided based on the new law, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, enacted by the federal government. This act provides some financial resources to employees. We have also assured employees that they will not miss a paycheck as a result of this emergency.

Cancellation of University Travel

Dr. Wilson stated that the University has cancelled all international and domestic travel.

Financial Impact of COVID-19

Chairman Mfume commented that the Board would be well-served if the University could produce a projected fiscal impact statement for the Board to review in advance of the next full Board meeting.

Impact of Fall Enrollment

Dr. Turner stated that the impact to both new and continuing student enrollment is being monitored. The good news is that we have not received any calls from parents or students expressing concerns or cancelling class for the upcoming fall semester. She indicated that Enrollment Management and Student Success is technologically heavy and well-poised to work with all of our prospective and current students with very few or any lapses in services. We have been able to process applications, financial aid and provide tutoring, advising, etc.

Dr. Turner reported that in terms of new numbers as of March 13th, we were up 25% in confirmed students for the fall. On the admissions side, we have had to cancel open house and campus tours. We are currently working on putting together a virtual open house and a virtual campus tour. We are considering the very real possibility that we may not be able to have CASA Academy this summer and access

orientation, and are working on ways whereby they can be done virtually and still admit CASA students for the fall and conduct access orientation online. She added that all of our messaging, contingency planning, procedures and deadlines are being reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure that we are being as flexible as possible to meet our enrollment and student success goals for the fall.

Chairman Mfume thanked Dr. Wilson and members of his Cabinet for taking time to update the Board and to share information regarding this crisis.

The Chairman stated that the Board would reconvene in Closed Session to consider items specifically exempted from public consideration under § 3-305(b)(7)(10) of the Open Meetings Act. In Closed Session, the Board will discuss the overall effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the University. The Board may reconvene in Public Session at the conclusion of the Closed Session, if necessary.

After reading the citation into the record, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn the PUBLIC SESSION to move into CLOSED SESSION. It was MOVED by Regent Parker-Warren and SECONDED by Regent Taylor to adjourn the PUBLIC SESSION. The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The PUBLIC SESSION adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Approval of Resolution (in Closed Session)

Chairman Mfume called for a motion to approve the special Resolution authorizing the President to make decisions impacting the operations of the University during the declared State of Emergency. There was consensus to add the following language, *“Any such actions as it relates to this Resolution should be immediately communicated to the Board of Regents by the President.”* It was MOVED by Regent Gilliam and SECONDED by Regent Taylor to approve the Resolution as amended. The MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
CITATION OF AUTHORITY FOR CLOSING A MEETING
UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT
EMERGENCY BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING**

Date: Friday, March 20, 2020

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Teleconference

Motion to close meeting made by: Regent Parker-Warren

Seconded by: Regent Taylor

Members voting in favor: All Regents in attendance

Opposed:

Abstaining:

Absent: Regent Draper

THE STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE THIS MEETING CAN BE FOUND AT (check all that apply):

General Provisions Article, § 3-305 (b)(7)(10):

___ (1) (i) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or (ii) any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;

___ (2) To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business;

___ (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto;

___ (4) To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State;

___ (5) To consider the investment of public funds;

___ (6) To consider the marketing of public securities;

X (7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter;

___ (8) To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation;

___ (9) To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations;

X (10) To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans;

___ (11) To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination;

___ (12) To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct;

___ (13) To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter;

___ (14) Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

General Provisions Article, § 3-103 (a):

___ (1) To carry out an administrative function;

___ (2) To carry out a judicial function;

___ (3) To carry out a quasi-judicial function.

FOR EACH CITATION CHECKED ABOVE, THE REASONS FOR CLOSING AND TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

1. To receive an update on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the overall effects on the University.
 - a. Any potential liability resulting from closing residential facilities and the reduction of non-essential employees on campus;
 - b. Possible termination of off campus housing leases; and
 - c. Legal implications of modified telework agreements given the new instructions regarding building access.

THE BOARD MAY RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CLOSED SESSION IF NECESSARY TO TAKE ANY FINAL AND BINDING ACTION.

This statement is made by Kweisi Mfume
Chairman of the Board of Regents

SIGNATURE:



***** FOR USE IN MINUTES OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: *****

TOPICS DISCUSSED AND ACTION(S) TAKEN (IF ANY):