

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: September 19, 2016

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Chris Jurgenson, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Ms. Allie Rose Parker, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Ms. Christie Rocconi (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

Members not in attendance: Mr. Keith Fulcher and Mr. Jamie Rutledge

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on September 19, 2016. The meeting convened at 2:15 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Dr. Jurgenson and seconded by Mr. Mayers to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on September 12, 2016. Dr. Jurgenson requested the following change: on page three, under the "Mississippi Flag" Cabinet Topic, update the Faculty Senate vote from "a vote of ten to four with two abstentions" to "a vote of eighteen to one with one abstention." All Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes as amended.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge thanked Cabinet Members for starting the Cabinet meeting later so that he could escort our Colloquia speaker, Judge Gustavo Gelpi, to Cleveland from Memphis.
- President LaForge attended the BPAC performance of Travis Tritt and Luke Combs last week. He stated it was a great performance and was able to give Luke Combs a Delta State guitar pick after his set.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics for the week. The women's soccer team won against Auburn University – Montgomery on Friday, but both soccer teams lost to Mississippi College on Sunday. Mr. Mayers stated this is a big week for Athletics. The Statesmen Radio show is tonight at its new location, No Way Jose, which Mr. Mayers said is a great location. Pig Pickin' weekend is a big weekend for sports: both soccer teams play on Friday, the first swim meet is on Friday against Rhodes College, and the football team plays Shorter College on Saturday.
- President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members of the Colloquia lecture with Judge Gustavo Gelpi on Tuesday evening. Judge Gelpi has a full schedule with a tour of campus, tour of GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi, a dinner with the Executive Committee, breakfast with student leaders, luncheon with President LaForge's Leadership class, and a visit to the Boo Ferriss Museum. President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to help him host Judge Gelpi and community members during the pre-Colloquia reception at 5:00 pm in the President's conference room. The lecture begins at 6:00 pm in Jobe Auditorium with a reception to follow.
- President LaForge and other campus officials will meet with a representative from Mississippi State University on Tuesday to discuss a possible collaborative venture for creating a Local Government Leadership Academy to assist local leaders in being effective managers/administrators by providing education/training in relevant areas (e.g. budget, personnel, compliance, and other areas).

- Dr. Roberts announced that the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Operating Officer from Teach For America will be on campus this week to discuss the Delta Region, Delta State’s summer institute, and the change from a national to regional model. Delta State will host a breakfast on Wednesday for them, and will convey to them the university’s support for continuing the partnership.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the week’s activities. On Wednesday, President LaForge will travel to Jackson for a recruiting visit to Jackson Academy. The “Meet and Greet” for Dr. Bennett, hosted by the Student Government Association, was rescheduled for Thursday from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. in the Union. A Mississippi Blues Trail Marker will be unveiled at GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi on Thursday at 4:00 pm. The Levitt AMP Music Series will continue Thursday evening with “Future Thieves” beginning at 7:30 p.m. on the green space in downtown Cleveland. Pig Pickin’ begins on Friday with the cooking competition and Young Alumni Tailgating activities. Mr. Mayers stated the weather looks great for the weekend, and the football team will play at 6:00 pm. President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members of his reception, which begins at 5:30 pm in the Dorgan Center. Dr. McAdams announced DSU Day is Saturday, beginning at 10:00 am in Kent Wyatt Hall. He asked Cabinet Members to attend as they are able. This is a great recruitment tool, and we want to provide a welcoming environment for our guests.

CABINET TOPIC

SGA Plans for the Year Ms. Parker

Ms. Parker said the Student Government Association has three key goals for the year: (1) be transparent, (2) be available, and (3) be reliable. SGA is working diligently to let students know what they are doing, on being available for students’ needs, and on following through on actions. A new initiative for SGA this year is adopting the Delta Arts Alliance as their philanthropy in an effort to help the children involved with DAA and to get Delta State students to interact and become more involved in the arts. Another goal for the year is to hold more campus clean up events to help students appreciate the campus grounds. The first cleanup is scheduled for Thursday at 4:00 pm. The biggest project SGA is focusing on this semester is Homecoming. Mr. Michael Lipford is serving as the new SGA advisor, and he has been working with Ms. Parker to see what events best serve Delta State’s students. Some plans for this year include: a silent disco on the Quadrangle, Statesmen Stroll around campus, lip sync, and the pep rally. Ms. Parker stated SGA is working hard to get events publicized in a way to reach all students, and she asked for Cabinet Members’ help in garnering attention for Homecoming events. To better utilize Student Court, Ms. Parker would like to have students’ appeals addressed in a timely fashion by having a set court date each month. Earlier this year, SGA presidents from all eight public universities met with IHL Commissioner Glenn Boyce to discuss student opinions concerning weapons on campus. Ms. Parker and her Cabinet are working on a poll to distribute to students to gather their opinions on this issue. Other initiatives the group is looking into include: green initiatives, textbook affordability, and raising of student activity fees for better entertainment/activities. Ms. Parker would like to create a mental health task force to show students why mental health is important for a healthy lifestyle, what services are offered on campus, and to host a mental health awareness week. Also, Ms. Parker has started a new chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions.

BUSINESS

Action

Revised Policy: Undergraduate Admission Requirements (final reading) Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet the revised “Undergraduate Admission Requirements” policy for a

final reading. Dr. McAdams reminded Cabinet Members that the changes to the first four pages are changes established by the Board of Trustees of Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning for all public universities. The last paragraph on page five states formally the application fee as part of the admissions process, which has been in place for several years.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the revised "Undergraduate Admission Requirements" policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. **The motion was approved.**

Discussion

Mississippi Flag..... President LaForge

President LaForge referenced the discussion on this topic at last week's Cabinet meeting, which included reports from the Administrative Staff Council and Faculty Senate. President LaForge asked Dr. Jurgenson to reiterate the updated vote count from Faculty Senate. Dr. Jurgenson stated the Faculty Senate voted in favor of taking down the Mississippi flag with a vote of eighteen to one, and one abstention. President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members the nine responses he received from the Alumni and Foundation Office: three support Delta State in whatever decision is made, four believe the flag should be flown because Delta State is a state funded institution, and two are in favor of taking down the flag. President LaForge stated that the student newspaper, *The Delta Statement*, released a report last week with a headline which read "Delta State votes to take down the flag." Later, they changed the headline to read "Faculty Senate votes to take down the flag," but the original tagline remained, which led people to believe the university had made a decision. President LaForge asked Ms. Parker to give an update on the student survey. Ms. Parker feels the survey is not an accurate representation of the student body's opinion because the survey was available to the public, and therefore the results likely include votes from those who are not students. The results revealed that 75% of the people who responded were in favor of flying the state flag. Overall, she believes the students are split. To get an accurate student vote, Ms. Parker is going to add a referendum to the homecoming ballot to ask students their opinion on the flag. The homecoming elections will end on September 28, and Ms. Parker will bring the results regarding the flag to the Cabinet meeting on October 3. President LaForge stated the discussion will resume once we have the results from the students.

Enrollment Report.....Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams distributed reports on retention and enrollment. The university is required to report to the Department of Education and the Institutions of Higher Learning the retention rates of first-time, full-time freshmen and first-time, full-time transfer students. This is a uniform data point that shows us and others how well the university is retaining students. The ultimate retention rate is the graduation rate, which at Delta State is 15% for four years and 35% for six years. By retaining more first-time, full-time freshmen and transfer students, the graduation rate will continue to increase. Dr. McAdams reported that the first-time, full-time freshmen retention rate from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 is up by 5.2% and retention for first-time, full-time transfer students from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 is up by 7.8%. This is a significant achievement and many areas of campus are responsible for this increase. Dr. McAdams stated that our retention strategies are focused on all students, and not just these two cohorts, and he hopes this increase will lead to more success and ways to retain additional students. President LaForge asked Dr. McAdams to give context to our enrollment increase. The enrollment report that Dr. McAdams distributed showed an enrollment increase of 128 students from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016. An increase of 22 additional students occurred in the number of first-time, full-time freshmen. In the category of first-time, full time transfer students, we experienced a decline of 12 students. Enrollment

Management will focus on community college and transfer students more this fall. The number of returning/readmitted students is lower for Fall 2016 due to the fact that this group includes cohorts other than just our first-time, full-time freshmen and transfers. Another reason this figure is lower is due to a decrease in first-time, full-time freshmen in Fall 2015. An increased emphasis was placed on recruiting graduate students this past year, and as a result, we show an increase of 20 students in this category. For our non-degree seeking students, dual enrollment showed exponential growth. Dr. McAdams stated this area is volatile and not an area our recruiters push. President LaForge stated that the university still has work to do in our recruiting efforts.

Other Discussion

- President LaForge will perform with the Delta Music Institute group on Saturday at Pig Pickin'. Their performance will feature music from Chicago.
- President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to come out to DSU Day to help recruit new students.
- Delta State football plays Mississippi College on Thursday, September 29. We have invited the President's Cabinet from Mississippi College, as well as local MC alumni, to attend the President's reception.
- The International Conference on the Blues is scheduled for October 2-4.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Colloquia Lecture Series, Judge Gustavo Gelpi, September 20, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium
- SGA's Meet and Greet for Dr. Vernell Bennett, September 22, 2:00 pm, H.L. Nowell Student Union, Second Floor Lobby
- Pig Pickin', September 23-24
- DSU Day, September 24
- DSU vs. Shorter University, September 24, 6:00 pm (Wear Green), Reception – 5:30 pm
- DSU vs. Mississippi College, September 29, 6:00 pm (Wear White), Reception – 5:30 pm
- The Avett Brothers, BPAC, 7:30 pm
- Homecoming, October 14-15
- Colloquia Lecture Series, Congressman Bennie Thompson, November 9, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, September 26 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Hotel proposal (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.