

**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PRESIDENT'S CABINET**  
*Minutes*

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**Meeting date: August 27, 2018**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Severine Groh, Mr. Charlie King, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Billy Moore, Mr. Rick Munroe, Dr. Christy Riddle, and Dr. Michelle Roberts (recorder – Dr. Roberts)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Jamie Rutledge

**Guest:** Dr. Debbie Heslep, Dean, Enrollment Management

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on August 27, 2018. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Mayers and seconded by Dr. Groh, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on August 20, 2018.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Bennett reported on Welcome Week, which took place last week. She said the week of events went well, and it concluded with the Leadership Retreat and campus service project, which involved landscaping Zeigel Hall.
- President LaForge had lunch with Mr. Bill West, Vice President for Supplemental Air Operations at FedEx, on Tuesday. He is a Delta State alumnus and was a student Hall of Fame member at Delta State. Mr. West visited the campus with Mr. Fred Smith last Spring. President LaForge and Mr. West discussed relationship opportunities with other FedEx officials.
- President LaForge gave a welcome at the First Year Seminar's Okra Rally on Wednesday. He said it was a great program.
- President LaForge attended a reception on Friday for Dr. Jeff Vitter, Chancellor at the University of Mississippi, at the home of Mr. Scott Coopwood. Mr. Coopwood also escorted Dr. Vitter around the Delta during the weekend.
- President LaForge visited with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority on Sunday as part of his initiative to visit with all Greek groups during the year. He said it went well.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. College football begins on Thursday. The team will leave on Wednesday and return on Friday. The men's soccer team will play against Berry College in Florida on September 1. Women's soccer will host their first match on September 1 against Mississippi University for Women. Athletic Department staff are working on squad lists for the fall sports.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the week. He will meet with Ms. Emily Havens and Mr. Chace Holland with GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi on Tuesday regarding a possible partnership on another large outdoor concert. His first faculty/staff lunch of the semester will take place on Tuesday. The Boz

Scaggs performance will take place on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at the BPAC. The Okra Works Job Fair is scheduled for Wednesday. Dr. Bennet stated that 27 employers have signed up. The annual Legislative Facilities Tour meeting and dinner will take place on Wednesday.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Everyone’s Role in Recruitment .....Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennet distributed a document of talking points for ways everyone can contribute to student recruitment: know our message; be open to new ideas; faculty, staff, and administration can use their expertise and participate in campus recruitment projects; students can interact with prospects during visit days and use social media; and, develop partnerships and focus on needs of the region.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Sophomore Residency .....Dr. Bennett**

Last Spring, Dr. Bennett chaired a task force to discuss the idea of requiring sophomores to live on campus. The task force surveyed twice the current students who live on campus. For the first survey, the participation rate was 42%, but the task force wanted at least a 50% response rate. For the second survey, the response rate was even less. However, of those students who responded, 91% indicated that if the sophomore requirement was in place when they were deciding which school to attend, they would have chosen to attend Delta State any way. The task force voted five to two to require sophomores to live on campus with the caveat that we improve the residence halls and that sophomores have a flexible meal plan. The residence halls we currently have online will hold the increased number of sophomores. Advantages of requiring sophomores to live on campus include: 1) increased revenue, 2) more student engagement on campus, 3) increased retention, and 4) wise use of space. Mr. King stated that students are concerned with the lack of freedom they have in the residence halls and with the meal plan. Mr. Mayers stated the coaches are concerned that the new requirement may negatively impact their recruiting efforts. Dr. Roberts requested additional information to aid in the decision making process, such as number of sophomores currently living on campus (compared to total number of sophomores), projected revenue, and estimated cost of repairs. Dr. Bennett will talk with Mr. Rutledge about the requested changes to the meal plan, as well as the estimated cost of repairs.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Bennett to require sophomores to live on campus with the caveats of improved housing and a flexible meal plan for sophomores and seconded by Dr. Groh. The motion was approved.

A friendly amendment to the motion was offered by President LaForge to table the item, and he asked Cabinet Members if was there was any objection to accepting this amendment. Hearing none, the friendly amendment was accepted.

**Discussion**

**Pittman Educational Trust.....President LaForge**

President LaForge received a letter from Mr. Fred Pittman, Founder Trustee of the Pittman Educational Trust, regarding changes to the trust. The Pittman Educational Trust started with \$50,000 in 1993, and has grown considerably over the years. Mr. Pittman took only one class at Delta State, but the class and his instructor helped him to be successful in medical school. Mr. Pittman also credits Hill Demonstration School for having a positive impact on his early education. The Pittman Educational Trust has been very

generous to Delta State by providing funding for student scholarships.

**Campus Visit from IHL Commissioner ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Al Rankins visited the Delta State campus on Thursday, August 23, as part of his Listening Tour initiative to visit all IHL universities during his first 100 days in office. During his visit, Dr. Rankins met with Cabinet Members, Academic Council, Staff Council, student leaders, Faculty Senate, and local media, and there was an open forum for the campus community. His campus tour ended with a reception in his honor with community members and alumni. President LaForge stated this was a chance for all campus constituencies to have a face-to-face meeting with the Commissioner. The sessions were well-attended and there was good conversation among the various groups.

**Enrollment Update ..... Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett distributed to Cabinet Members an enrollment report, as of Saturday. Enrollment will likely be about the same as it was last fall. The media report will be based on enrollment as of the tenth day of classes. Transfer numbers are up, and dual credit numbers will likely be up again this year.

**CART Restructuring ..... Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennet has reorganized the C.A.R.T. (Confidential Assessment Response Team) program to the C.A.R.E.S (Campus Action Referral and Evaluation System) program to place a greater focus on identifying students in crisis instead of simply reporting bad behavior. Dr. Bennett distributed a document that describes the new program. Dr. Riddle said she had provided a few changes to Dr. Richard Houston, such as changing the description of the S.O.S program from “Academic Distress” to another term. Also, she suggested changing the page photo to something more positive, and inquired about having only one form that distributes, on the backend, the information to the appropriate person. Dr. Bennett will revise the document and bring it back to Cabinet for review.

**Additional information**

- President LaForge announced that Dr. Mark Emmert, President of the NCAA, will serve as the Fall 2018 Colloquia Series speaker. The lecture is scheduled for Tuesday, October 9 at 6:00 p.m. in Jobe Hall.
- Dr. Riddle announced that Staff Council and Faculty Senate are partnering on a blood drive for Mississippi Blood Services. It will include a competition between faculty and staff, and will take place on September 11 and 12.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Boz Scaggs Performance, August 28, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Legislative Facilities Tour – meeting, August 29, 3:30 p.m., President’s Conf. Room
- Legislative Facilities Tour – dinner, August 29, 6:00 p.m., TBD
- Labor Day Holiday, September 3

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Tuesday, September 4 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Protocol for Lowering the Flags (Dr. Bennett and Mr. Munroe)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.