

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: December 10, 2018**

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

**Members not in attendance:** Dr. Michelle Roberts

**Guests:** Mr. Mike Kinnison, Head Baseball Coach  
Dr. Kent Wyatt, President Emeritus

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on December 10, 2018. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Dr. McAdams and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on December 3, 2018.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. University Advancement hosted their annual Retiree Christmas party. Mr. Munroe stated the party was well attended, and the retirees enjoyed their time together. "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer: The Musical" was a great, family-friendly show for the BPAC. President LaForge met with Dr. Chip Morgan and Mr. Frank Howell to discuss Delta State becoming an official partner for the Delta Council Annual meeting. They both thought this would not be a problem, but they wanted to check with their board first. The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing hosted two great ceremonies last Thursday — the White Coat Ceremony for first semester students and the Pinning Ceremony for their graduates. Dr. McAdams stated Commencement went well, including the surprise of conferring an Honorary Doctorate on Dr. Ronnie Mayers.
- Dr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. Twenty-five Statesmen and Lady Statesmen graduated last Friday. The men's basketball team played Selma University over the weekend and secured a win. Tonight, the men's basketball team plays Bethel University, and the women's basketball team will play Lemoyne-Owen College on Wednesday. The women's team stands tied for first place in the conference. Both teams will play Mississippi College in Clinton on Saturday. The Christmas Invitational Swimming and Diving meet begins Saturday and lasts until Tuesday. Preliminary rounds begin at 10:00 a.m. each day and the finals at 5:00 p.m. each day.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on facilities projects. Young-Mauldin Cafeteria has a few minor items remaining to be complete, including furniture for the President's Dining Room. The university plans to run the convenience store within Young-Mauldin for the first six months. The priorities for the bond

funding are HVAC improvements and roofing repairs. Walter Sillers Coliseum will receive an updated HVAC system, new roof, and the repair of the envelope of the building. The plans for the project will be finished by mid-January, with construction beginning in April. The buildings that are part of the campus roofing project include: Fielding L. Wright Art Center, Hugh Cam Smith, Sr. Facilities Management building, Lawler-Harkins Residence Hall, Robert E. Smith School of Nursing building, Scott Hall, Henry L. Whitfield Hall – Delta Music Institute, Cain-Tatum Residence Hall, and Fugler-Hammett Residence Hall. The buildings that are part of the HVAC improvements project include: H. L. Nowell Student Union, Lawler-Harkins Residence Hall, Fielding L. Wright Art Center, Chadwick-Dickson Intercollegiate Athletics building, James E. Ewing Hall, and the installation of new controls for the entire campus. The bank loan for the President’s home received approval, and the house plans are in the final stages. They hope to begin the dirt work before Christmas.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members some of the meetings and events planned for the week. President LaForge will participate in Mr. Steve Azar’s radio show on Tuesday. On Wednesday, President LaForge will host another Faculty and Staff luncheon. The Staff Council Holiday Breakfast takes place Thursday morning in the Leroy E. Morganti Atrium of Kent Wyatt Hall, beginning at 8:30 a.m. President LaForge has two conference calls on Thursday. The first call is with the NCAA DII Planning and Finance Committee and the second call is with the NCAA Ad Hoc Committee on Sports Wagering. The Major Foundations Task Force will meet Thursday afternoon. The Cabinet retirement dinner for Dr. Mayers is Thursday evening at the Sea Level Oyster House at 6:00 p.m.
- Dr. Mayers expressed his appreciation to Cabinet members. He said he feels honored and humbled by all things bestowed to him during his impending retirement. He stated Delta State would be in good hands with our new Athletic Director, Mr. Kinnison, as he is a man of integrity. Dr. Mayers said he believes Mr. Kinnison will continue the ‘Wyatt Rule’ by doing what is best for Delta State in all situations.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Hiring Requests ..... Cabinet Members**

In response to the Cabinet’s decision that all requests to search for and fill vacant positions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Cabinet, Dr. Bennett, Dr. McAdams, and Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet positions for consideration. None of the positions presented impact the salary savings identified previously to address the budget shortfall.

**Student Affairs Request**

Dr. Bennett presented to Cabinet members the request for the ability to search for and hire Admissions Recruiters, as needed. With potential hires occurring during the winter holidays, Enrollment Management would like to be proactive during a potential turnover time. Any hires will be reported to Cabinet.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Bennett to approve the searching and hiring of Admissions Recruiters, as needed, and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

**Academic Affairs Staff Requests**

Dr. McAdams presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Digital Media Liaison for the Departments of Art and DMI, and a Blues Program Project Assistant for the Delta Center for Culture and Learning. Both positions are temporary, part-time positions with no benefits. These positions are paid for out of private funds or funds that are not a part of Fund 10.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of a Digital Media Liaison and a Blues Program Project Assistant and seconded by Dr. Groh. **The motion was approved.**

**Finance and Administration Requests**

Mr. Rutledge presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Mechanic Supervisor and a Grounds Technician for Facilities Management.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the searching and hiring of a Mechanic Supervisor and a Grounds Technician and seconded by Dr. Mayers. **The motion was approved.**

**Discussion**

**Update on the scholarship match campaign.....Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe stated the scholarship match campaign has continued to do well. So far, the total for the campaign is \$147,000, which includes \$122,000 in gifts received and a \$25,000 pledge. He believes a few more people may give. The benefactor for the match is ready to make his gift.

**Additional information**

- President LaForge asked Cabinet members for personnel updates. Dr. Bennett announced Dr. Debbie Heslep will retire, effective January 31. Dr. Bennett doesn't plan to refill the position. Mr. Munroe has one position open in Communications and Marketing — Staff Writer. He asked Cabinet Members to encourage qualified writers to apply for the position. Mr. Mayers shared that Mr. Joel Williams, Assistant Head Coach and Offensive Coordinator for the football team, took a job coaching at the high school level, closer to home. Mr. King appointed Mr. John Walters to serve as the new Treasurer for the Student Government Association. Dr. McAdams announced a few changes in the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Chuck Westmoreland will assume the role of Interim Chair of the Division of Social Sciences and History, and he will serve in this role for a year and a half. Ms. Cora Jackson will retire in January as the Chair of the Social Work Department. Dr. Jana Donahoe will serve as the Interim Chair. Mr. Chip Mitchell will step down as the Chair of the Division of Languages and Literature at the end of the academic year to be a full-time instructor again. Dr. McAdams will search internally for an interim chair for this division. Ms. Cole announced that Ms. Shelby Holcomb accepted the Administrative Secretary position in the Office of the President.
- Dr. McAdams stated all but twelve courses submitted their final grades to the Registrar's Office by noon today. Some of the courses that missed the deadline only had one grade missing, and others couldn't be entered electronically and were hand delivered to the Registrar's Office.
- Mr. Kinnison shared his appreciation for Mr. Mayers' service to Delta State and for his diligence in helping with the transition for his new role. He said that Mr. Mayers has taken the time to make sure he is prepared and does well in the new role.
- Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet members that he and Mr. Pete Szatmary are devising a new plan for the elevator speech and business cards. He will bring the new plan and information to a Cabinet meeting in the New Year.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Winter Holidays, December 21, 2018 – January 1, 2019

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, January 14 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.