

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: December 18, 2023

Members in attendance: Dr. Dan Ennis, Dr. Edwin Craft, Mr. David Gladden, Dr. Ellen Green, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Christopher Jurgenson, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Dr. Michelle Roberts (by phone), and Mr. Larry Wakefield (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: Ms. Holly Ray and Ms. Haley Rooks

Guests: Dr. Caroline Fletcher, Past Chair, Administrative Staff Council
Dr. Tanya McKinney, Chair, Quality Enhancement Plan Committee
Dr. Josie Welsh, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on December 18, 2023. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Ennis presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on December 5, 2023.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Ennis gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. Delta State University received a donation from Tri State Educational Foundation. Dr. Ennis traveled to Atlanta, GA for cultivation visits.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The men's and women's basketball teams competed in Alabama over the weekend, and they will continue their season on January 2 at home. Swim and diving last week. They will work two more days, off from 20-26. January 2 games. The swimming and diving teams hosted their Christmas Invitational last week, and they return to campus on December 27. Their first 2024 meet is on January 6. The football coaches are intensely recruiting, and the mid-year transfers' signing date is this week.
- Mr. Wakefield gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The contractor for the hail damage project is replacing ceiling tiles in the Natatorium. A final walk through of the remaining roofs on campus is underway to provide a final estimate to the insurance company. A seismic study is scheduled to begin on Tuesday for the IRS project in the CCED building. The Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project is mostly complete. The contractor has some additional clean up to finalize and some crosswalks to be installed. Trees are being trimmed around campus, and the next area on the list is the walkway between Kethley Hall and Wright Art Building. The tulips for spring are being planted.
- Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. On Wednesday, Dr. Ennis will interview a potential candidate for the Internal Auditor position. The winter holidays begin on Friday, December 22. The University will reopen on Tuesday, January 2.

CABINET TOPIC

Quality Enhancement Plan Update Dr. Griffin

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for 2024-2029 was developed according to Delta State’s guiding principles of respect for people and ideas, promotion of a student-centric campus, and commitment to institutional effectiveness. *Intentioned Connection* seeks to improve retention of first-time, full-time first-year students and first-time, full-time, transfer students through the university’s promulgation of student services and determined matching of students with services they need to thrive at Delta State. The theoretical framework for the QEP is self-determination and student autonomy. The *topic* was identified through a two-year, iterative process that involved a representative campus team of faculty, staff, and students, all of whom received survey data and focus-group findings from the *broader campus community*. The *focus* of the QEP is a streamlined process for identifying students in need, connecting them via soft transfer to services specific to their individual needs, and offering students every opportunity to engage with campus resources prior to processing a student’s withdrawal from the university.

The *timeline* for the QEP consists of three phases including tool development, implementation, and assessment. *Assessment* consists of formative assessment of implementation fidelity along with summative assessment of key performance indicators. The Cabinet-approved *budget* of \$50,000 for each of five years includes QEP staff, materials, training, and reporting.

The overall goal of the QEP is self-determined motivation of our students to succeed at Delta State via attainment of academic competency, realized autonomy, and meaningful engagement with the university’s community of scholars.

Institutional Goals:

- Increase the Fall to the Fall retention rate of first-time, full-time freshmen and transfer students.
- Increase the Fall to Spring retention rate of first-time full-time freshmen and transfer students.

From Fall 2018 to Spring 2023, 874 students withdrew from Delta State, and 151 of those students were first-time, full-time freshmen and first-time, full-time transfers. The largest number of students within the 874 were unofficial withdraws due to no-shows, cutouts, and didn’t attend class enough. Of those that withdrew, an alert was only submitted on 20% of them. In an effort to understand the needs of students on the brink of withdrawing, the QEP considered all services available to students on campus. Are the services known about? Are they easy to find? Should all student services be located in one place online for students to find answers easily? Through their questions, the QEP Committee developed the idea of Ask Okra – a live chat to help students with their needs. The live chat would be available past the university’s open hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The live chat would be run by a generalist cross trained on all support services provided on campus. Each support service unit would provide a list of their most common questions with the answers. If the question is more specialized, the generalist would transfer the student to the specific unit. With each transfer, a ticket would be generated and would require an answer to students within 48 hours. Through the ticketing system, the university can track those students who were helped and how quickly. The QEP Committee is trying to breakdown the silos of student services and provide easier access for students which may lead to students being more successful at Delta State. Dr. Ennis encouraged the QEP Committee to study High Point University’s concierge model and allow for all questions, not simply academic or student-service related, to be answered by Ask Okra. Cabinet members will revisit the QEP again on January 8.

BUSINESS

Action

Employee Background Checks policy (revised) Mr. Wakefield

On the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield presented the revised Employee Background Checks policy for a final reading. Cabinet members suggested an editorial revision of a blank definition.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Wakefield to approve the Employee Background Checks policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) State Retirement System policy (revised) Mr. Wakefield

On the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield presented the revised Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) State Retirement System policy for a final reading.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Wakefield to approve the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) State Retirement System Policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Password policy (revised) Mr. Wakefield

On the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield presented the revised Password policy for a final reading. Editorial deletion.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Wakefield to approve the Password policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Readmission for Military Service Members policy (revised) Dr. Griffin

On the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Griffin presented the revised Readmission for Military Service Members policy for a final reading.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the Readmission for Military Service Members policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability Recommendations Dr. Ennis

Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members a list of recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability. Cabinet members discussed, revised, and approved the recommendations made the by Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability.

IHL Retirement Incentive Rules and Regulations:

- Original recommendation:
 - In considering the IHL Retirement Incentive Rules and Regulations, the Committee recommends pursuing the incentive option at 25% paid over 5 years, assuming that we will not fill more than 50% of those positions at the original salary or less, so as the Institution does not take on additional debt.
- Revised by Cabinet:
 - In considering the IHL Retirement Incentive Rules and Regulations, the Committee recommends pursuing the incentive option at 25% of current Delta State salary paid over 5

years, assuming that we will not fill more than 50% of those positions at the original salary or less, so as the Institution does not take on additional debt.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation to pursue the IHL Retirement Incentive option and seconded by Dr. Lovin.

Cabinet members revised the recommendation to include the statement “of current Delta State salary” after 25%.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Gladden to add the statement “of current Delta State salary” after 25% and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation as amended and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

FY 2024 Monthly Vacant Position Report:

- Original - The Committee recommends deleting all open positions that have an end date prior to July 1, 2022, (saving approximately \$438,000 from seven positions).
- No revisions made by Cabinet

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to approve the recommendation of deleting all open positions with an end date prior to July 1, 2022 and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. The motion was approved.

Seven positions to be deleted:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Position #</u>	<u>Fund</u>	<u>Org</u>	<u>Acct</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Annual Salary</u>
Police Officer	394	10	4145	61700	10/19/2019	\$ 30,750.00
Professor of Commercial Aviation	131	10	0417	61200	1/8/2020	\$ 94,322.00
Associate Professor of Art	5	10	0305	61200	5/31/2020	\$ 57,680.00
Asst Prof of Practice Entertainment	1453	10	0379	61200	8/31/2020	\$ 18,278.50
Instructor in HPER	203	10	05171	61200	6/30/2021	\$ 54,051.62
Assist Prof Counselor Ed	179	10	0515	61200	8/31/2021	\$ 50,469.00
Custodian	1514	10	4163	61700	2/5/2022	\$ 23,670.40

FY 2024 Monthly Vacant Position Report:

- Original - The Committee recommends any open position with end dates after July 1, 2022 must submit a brief (less than 500 words), but detailed statement that includes: the essential functions

of the position; how the unit is currently managing its operations without the open position, including statements of real harm the open position is causing to the operations; and, a contingency plan for continuing operations should this position be permanently eliminated. This statement must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15, 2023.

- Revised by Cabinet – The committee recommends any open position with end dates after July 1, 2022 must submit a brief (less than 500 words), but detailed statement that includes: the essential functions of the position; how the unit is currently managing its operations without the open position, including statements of real harm the open position is causing to the operations; and, a contingency plan for continuing operations should this position be permanently eliminated. This statement must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on January 18, 2024 to Cabinet.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation for all open positions with end dates after July 1, 2022 submit a brief statement on why the position should not be eliminated and seconded by Dr. Lovin.

Cabinet members changed the due date of the statement from December 15, 2023 to January 18, 2024, and added the statements are due to be submitted to the Cabinet.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to change the submission date to January 18, 2024 and add the submission be made to Cabinet members and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. The motion was approved.

Cabinet members suggested all positions not providing a statement by the deadline are forfeited.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to forfeit all positions not providing a statement by the deadline and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation as amended and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Executive Administrative and Managerial Salaries and Professional Non-Faculty Salaries

- Original - The Committee recommends reducing \$250k from Executive Admin and Managerial (61100) salaries or Professional Non-Faculty (61300) salaries, along with corresponding fringe benefits from the adjusted FY24 Budget. Rationale is same as previous recommendation.
- Revised by Cabinet– The Committee recommends reducing \$250k from Executive Admin and Managerial (61100) salaries and/or Professional Non-Faculty (61300) salaries, along with corresponding fringe benefits from the adjusted FY24 Budget.

Cabinet members discussed deleting the sentence beginning “Rationale is same as...”.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation to reduce \$250k from the Executive Admin and Managerial salaries or Professional Non-Faculty salaries along with corresponding fringe benefits from the adjusted FY24 budget and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Gladden to reconsider the recommendation and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Gladden to add “and” prior to or and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to approve the recommendation as amended and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. The motion was approved.

Executive Administrative and Managerial Salaries and Professional Non-Faculty Salaries

- Original - The Committee recommends reducing \$500k from Executive Admin and Managerial (61100) salaries and Professional Non-Faculty (61300) salaries each, along with corresponding fringe benefits from the FY25 Budget. This offsets budget cuts starting in 2019 that have been made from reducing faculty positions. This brings parity to a situation that has seen increases since 2019 in 61100 and 61300. This also acknowledges that these increases in 61100 and 61300 occurred during a time where enrollment decreased by approximately 20%, making it difficult to justify maintaining these increased salaries and positions.
- Revised by Cabinet - The Committee recommends reducing \$1 million from Executive Admin and Managerial (61100) salaries and/or Professional Non-Faculty (61300) salaries, along with corresponding fringe benefits from the FY25 Budget.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation to reduce \$500k from Executive Admin and Managerial salaries and Professional Non-Faculty salaries each along with corresponding fringe benefits from the FY25 budget and seconded by Dr. Lovin.

Cabinet members discussed revising the recommendation to read “reducing \$1 million from Executive Admin and Managerial (61100) salaries and/or Professional Non-Faculty (61300) salaries, along with fringe benefits.”

Motion: Moved by Dr. Craft to revise the recommendation to \$1 million from Executive Admin and Managerial salaries and/or Professional Non-Faculty salaries and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to strike the justification of the recommendation and seconded by Mr. Wakefield. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation as amended and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Recruitment Update/Overview..... Dr. Lovin

Dr. Lovin shared individual tours on campus and visits by recruiters are slowing down for the holiday season. Currently, an uptick on admissions for Fall 2024 is occurring. A new communications plan for admitted students is being created. The Office of Admissions is planning a Presidential Recruiting Tour for Dr. Ennis, and it will be April 8 through April 11. Other important dates in the spring semester are a counselor luncheon in February and a Visit Day in March.

Budget Update..... Mr. Wakefield

Mr. Wakefield shared with Cabinet members he will bring the financial report for the first half of the fiscal year to a meeting for review in January. This report will allow for a look at trends and a look at how the fiscal year may end.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Winter Holidays, December 22 – January 1
- Martin Luther King Holiday, January 15
- Spring Semester 2024 begins, January 16

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, January 8, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.