

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: December 7, 2021**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vicki Bingham, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Dr. Andy Novobilski, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, Ms. Nakikke Wallace, and Mr. William Young (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Mike Kinnison, Mr. Rick Munroe, and Dr. Andrew Wegmann

**Guests:** Ms. Brittany Davis, Director, Communications and Marketing  
Ms. Caroline Fletcher, Digital Media Coordinator, Communications and Marketing

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on December 7, 2021. The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Dr. Novobilski, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on November 29, 2021.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. In lieu of a student forum, Dr. Lovin and Mr. Young hosted two Coffee Q&A in the Nowell Union for students to have open conversations with President LaForge, Dr. Lovin, and Mr. Young. Delta State's chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa inducted nineteen new members followed by a reception at the President's home last week. President LaForge was the guest speaker for the National Society for Leadership and Success. The game room in the Nowell Union opened last week. President LaForge filmed another segment of his Statesmen Insider with Ms. Jasmine Evans and Mr. Daniel Black regarding Commencement. President LaForge thanked Cabinet members for participating in the Christmas Tree Lighting in the Leroy E. Morganti Atrium. President LaForge attended the Delta Council Mid-Year Board Meeting. The Major Foundations Task Force met, and university representatives attended the virtual SACSCOC Annual Meeting as part of our upcoming reaffirmation process.
- In the absence of Mr. Kinnison, President LaForge gave an update on Athletics. The men's and women's basketball teams hosted the University of Alabama-Huntsville and University of West Alabama last week, and both teams won each game. The men's and women's teams will travel to Auburn University-Montgomery and University of Montevallo on December 12 and December 14, respectively. The DSU Christmas Invitational for the men's and women's swimming and diving teams begins on Saturday and will continue through Tuesday.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on facilities management projects. The campus wide roofing project is on schedule, and roofs of Ward Hall, Scott Hall, and the Morgan Laundry are under construction now. The

punch list for the campus wide elevator project is being completed. The bids for the School of Nursing project were received. The bids for the School of Nursing project were received; however, the bids were shy approximately \$400,000 due to a lack of fees the Bureau of Buildings didn't add. The sound system in Walter Sillers Coliseum will be completed by Friday for Commencement. Due to the impending deadline for use of HEERF II funds, Mr. Rutledge plans to rearrange some projects to be completed with HEERF III funds to HEERF II funds. Any projects transferred to the HEERF III allocation can be completed in 2022. Mr. Rutledge reported changes to the American Recovery Act funds, and he will discuss this with the Executive Committee.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Mountain Holiday with Chole Agnew, John Driskell, Balsam Range, and Atlanta Pops Orchestra performs at the BPAC tonight. President LaForge will perform with members of the DMI faculty tonight at the Hey Joe's Graduation Jam. President LaForge will continue his departmental visits with Food Services tomorrow. On Thursday, the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing has the White Coat Ceremony and Pinning Ceremony. The Office of Academic Affairs hosts Commencement on Friday. All graduate degrees will be awarded during the first ceremony at 10:00 a.m., and all undergraduate degrees will be awarded at the second ceremony at 2:00 p.m. The Office of Academic Affairs will host a luncheon in between ceremonies for all faculty and volunteers in the Simmons Room. The Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department Fireman's Ball is on Friday. The next Cabinet meeting will be January 10, 2022.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Marketing Initiatives and Analytics.....Mr. Munroe**

In the absence of Mr. Munroe, Dr. Roberts introduced Ms. Brittany Davis-Green and Ms. Caroline Fletcher and asked them to provide an update on marketing initiatives and their respective analytics. Ms. Davis-Green provided Cabinet members with the university's digital marketing campaign with MediaCross. Overall, display ads for the university have served a total of 191,713 impressions, garnered 331 clicks for an average CTR (click-through rate) of 0.17%. The higher education industry benchmark for display is a CTR of 0.08%. Through social media marketing on Facebook and Instagram, the university served 142,176 impressions, garnered 1,371 clicks and have an average engagement rate of 7.77% The ads in the campaign focus on visiting Delta State, the Digital Media Arts program, and the College of Business and Aviation. The conversion actions for the digital marketing campaign combined are: apply clicks – 217; visit clicks – 6; and, RFI form fill – 2. 211 of the 217 apply clicks came from the Facebook/Instagram ads specifically. Along with the MediaCross campaign, the Communications and Marketing Department works with Flight Path Agency on display ads on Snapchat, pre-mid roll ads on TikTok, and ads on Spotify. These ads are seen in targeted counties and by targeted age demographics. Television commercial were another portion of the university's marketing initiative. The television commercial was placed on WLBT and Premion TV. Delta State's commercial ran on WLBT from October 19 to October 31, and it was put before 211,937 viewers to be viewed 687,000 times. Delta State's commercial ran on Premion TV from October 19 to November 17, and it was seen 62,473 times and resulted in 98.62% of people watching the commercial in full. A final piece of the marketing initiatives is search engine marketing. From October 19 to November 17, the university's Google ad was seen 9,497 times and resulted in 513 prospective students clicking on the ad for additional information. These marketing initiatives will continue through April 2022.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Social Media policy (new – final reading) ..... Mr. Munroe**

In the absence of Mr. Munroe, Dr. Lovin presented to Cabinet the Social Media policy for a final reading. This policy defines the rules and procedures for the use of University Social Media accounts. All Official University Social Media accounts must respect intellectual property rights; local, state, and federal laws; and, related University policies. All University Social Media Accounts must comply with the Delta State University Identity Standards Guide. University Social Media Account Administrators are responsible for ensuring that content does not infringe on the intellectual property rights of others, which are governed by federal copyright law, the terms of service of the social media provider, and/or University policies. All Delta State University employees must comply with University policies governing the use of technology when using social media as part of their official duties or when representing Delta State University in an official capacity on any social media platform. University Social Media Accounts must have a minimum of two administrators to ensure that the account is consistently managed. Only public information may be disseminated via University Social Media Accounts. Delta State University is committed to fostering an environment that allows for freedoms of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; however, Delta State University reserves the right to remove without notice any activity or posting on a University Social Media Site that is not protected under the First Amendment—such as any unlawful, defamatory, or obscene activity or posting. The following edits were made to the policy prior to the final reading: the Delta State University Identity Standards Guide was hyperlinked to the policy, and a statement was added about registered student organizations and employee’s personal social media sites not being subject to the policy.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to approve the final reading of the Social Media policy and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Academic Calendar for FY23 ..... Dr. Novobilski**

On the recommendation of Academic Council, Dr. Novobilski presented to Cabinet members the 2022-23 Academic Calendar. The residence hall openings were removed from the Academic Calendar. Cabinet members discussed other possibilities for Fall Break and Thanksgiving Break. Additional discussions will take place in the new year to see what works best for students and faculty members.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Novobilski to approve the Academic Calendar for FY23 and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved with one abstention.

**Discussion**

**FY23 Budget Timeline ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the revised FY23 timeline for a review of all areas of campus to identify budget savings. The Vice Presidents will use this timeline to create their own timelines in reviewing each area of their units with the help of their deans, chairs, directors, staff, faculty, etc. The identified budget savings proposal will be announced at the Faculty and Staff Forum on Tuesday, April 26.

**Sidewalk Project – Phase II ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members he had a meeting last week with representatives from Mississippi Department of Transportation to help finalize the university’s application for phase II of our sidewalk project. The final budget on the application was approximately \$1,000,000, and it will replace and/or fix 90% of the university’s sidewalks.

### **Additional Information**

- Mr. Young informed Cabinet members the Roberts-LaForge Library was closed on Saturday. This is a hindrance to students wanting to study for their final exams occurring yesterday and today.
- Dr. Lovin announced students utilizing the Statesmen Shelf received notice from the Office of Financial Aid about applying for additional HEERF funds.
- Dr. Lovin announced he met with a representative for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi to discuss our grant proposal, and the proposal was accepted. The university's grant funds will be transferred to the student outdoor recreation fund to finalize the project.
- Dr. Lovin announced the Nowell Student Union will have a grand re-opening in the Spring to showcase changes made throughout the building.
- Mr. Rutledge announced Mr. Kelvin Davis graduates Leadership Mississippi on Friday, and he will attend on behalf of the university.

### **INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Mountain Holiday performance, December 7, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Fall Commencement, December 10, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Walter Sillers Coliseum
- Winter Holidays, December 22 – December 31
- Classes begin, January 10, 2022

### **NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, January 10, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – None

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.