

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: February 26, 2024

Members in attendance: Dr. Dan Ennis, Dr. Edwin Craft, Mr. David Gladden, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Christopher Jurgenson, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Ms. Holly Ray, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Ms. Haley Rooks, Ms. Ashley Tanksley, and Mr. Larry Wakefield (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: None

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 26, 2024. 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 February 5, 2024.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Ennis gave an overview of the activities and events from the last few weeks. Dr. Ennis visited with the faculty of the Social Work Department, participated in an orientation session for new presidents and chancellors hosted by the NCAA, and attended the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting and Junior Auxiliary's Charity Ball. Alumni Affairs hosted their second annual Statesmen Sweetheart Social. The Music Department hosted the Honor Choir weekend. The IHL Board of Trustees had their monthly meeting. The Office of Admissions hosted Transfer Day. KC and the Sunshine Band performed to a sold-out crowd at the BPAC. Last week, Dr. Ennis was formally inaugurated as the ninth president of Delta State.
- Dr. Craft and Mr. Wakefield gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The State Room was revitalized for Inauguration week, and it is ready to be utilized for more events. Facilities Management will be releasing a new software system to submit work orders. With the new software, anyone can submit work orders, and it will be sent to the building managers for approval. A leak has sprung outside of Caylor Hall. The bricks on the exterior of the School of Nursing are being laid this week. As a reminder, Dr. Craft told Cabinet members to be cautious and vigilant with emails and phishing.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Athletics hosted the 50th Anniversary for women's basketball. The swimming and diving teams held their conference tournament over the weekend. Both teams finished in second place. The swimmers and divers qualified for the NCAA DII Swimming and Diving Championship will compete March 12-16 in Ohio. Also, the women have the second highest team GPA in DII. The men's and women's basketball teams compete in their final regular season games on Saturday against University of West Georgia. The baseball and softball teams compete against University of Montevallo this weekend at home. The tennis team competes at home this weekend, and

the golf team hosts a tournament beginning next Monday. Athletics will host a blood drive on Tuesday, March 5 from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in front of the H. L. Nowell Union.

- Ms. Rooks gave an update on student activities. Finished legislative day interviews, 35 to the capitol. Online forum to run for SGA Cabinet, opening tomorrow.
- Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Jim Gregory. Staff Employee of the Month luncheon. Town Hall, academic productivity review. Just got the IHL review, as well. Search firm on campus tomorrow. Meeting with several people, in different ways. They will provide information to the search committees. Going to a conference this week.

CABINET TOPIC

None

BUSINESS

Action

Mississippi Deferred Compensation Program policy (revised)..... Mr. Wakefield

Upon the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield brought the revised Mississippi Deferred Compensation Program policy to Cabinet for approval. The Mississippi Deferred Compensation Program is a plan authorized under Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code through the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS.) This plan is a voluntary, supplemental, tax-deferred retirement savings plan offered through PERS to all PERS and Optional Retirement Plan state employees. This plan provides supplemental income upon retirement, a withdrawal for unforeseeable emergencies, and a withdrawal settlement upon termination of employment. The policy was revised to clarify the program and update regulations.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Wakefield to approve the revised Mississippi Deferred Compensation Program policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

State Retirement – Public Employees' Retirement System policy (revised)..... Mr. Wakefield

Upon the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield brought the revised State Retirement – Public Employees' Retirement system policy to Cabinet for approval. All employees except those eligible for the Optional Retirement Plan, who are employed half time or more with Delta State are required to become members of the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi. The policy was revised to update definitions and links to the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi website.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Wakefield to approve the revised State Retirement – Public Employees' Retirement System policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Unemployment Insurance policy (revised) Mr. Wakefield

Upon the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield brought the revised Unemployment Insurance policy to Cabinet for approval. All employees are provided unemployment insurance coverage as required by Mississippi Employment Security Law. The University pays the premium for the coverage that provides unemployment compensation for individuals during periods of time when they are out of work through no fault of their own. Benefits are payable up to 26 weeks to unemployed workers.

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

Worker’s Compensation policy (revised) Mr. Wakefield

Upon the recommendation of the University Leadership Council, Mr. Wakefield brought the revised Worker’s Compensation policy to Cabinet for approval. All Delta State University employees are covered by Worker’s Compensation provisions for the State of Mississippi. The policy definitions were updated, and the policy was revised to correspond with practice. Also, the practice of filing claims is completed electronically.

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

Program Closure policy (new) Dr. Griffin

On the recommendation of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the new Program Closure policy to Cabinet for approval. A program closure is defined as a program closed to admission or entry. Delta State University has the responsibility to guide students to graduation if the University deems it necessary to close an academic degree or certificate program due to problems with enrollment, finances, program quality, or alignment with the institution’s mission or strategic plan. At the charge of Dr. Ennis, Dr. Griffin and other members of the academy created the Program Closure and Teach Out policies.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the new Program Closure policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. The motion was approved.

Teach Out policy (new) Dr. Griffin

On the recommendation of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the new Teach Out policy to Cabinet for approval. Delta State University has the responsibility to create a teach-out plan in the event of a program or institutional closure. This policy outlines the elements required in a teach-out plan, which may include a teach-out agreement.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the new Teach Out policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. The motion was approved.

Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability recommendations Dr. Ennis

Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members a recommendation made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability. Cabinet members discussed and approved the recommendation.

The committee recommends implementing an academic review each semester utilizing the following academic health metrics to assess viability and sustainability: iFTE below 1 for an individual faculty member; class size of less than 10; University student to faculty ratio of less than 15 to 1; credit hour production of less than 120 for an individual faculty member; negative budget and credit hour production by Organization calculation per program; and enrollment of less than 30 students in a program. Each semester, the academic administration is required to report on each metric to the campus community by program, for transparency, and to provide evidence for continued operations outside minimums to the Cabinet. The committee recognizes that not any one metric tells the whole story, thus a holistic view must be taken, open to adding or amending metrics in the future.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the recommendation made by the Ad Hoc Committee on

Budget Sustainability and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Hiring Requests Cabinet members

In following the hiring guidance set forth by Dr. Ennis, Cabinet members presented their requests for review. After review by Cabinet members, Dr. Griffin and Mr. Kinnison will meet with Dr. Ennis and Mr. Wakefield to provide additional context as to the need for the given position or positions prior to Dr. Ennis granting or denying hiring approval.

Academic Affairs requests

Dr. Griffin requested to hire an Administrative Specialist in the Office of Academic Affairs, Program Coordinator for Gear UP grant, Assistant/Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Assistant Professor of Teacher Education, Assistant/Associate Professor of Counselor Education, Assistant/Associate Professor and Coordinator and Assessment Director of Counselor Education, Chair of HPER Department, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Acquisitions and Technology Services Coordinator in the Roberts-LaForge Library, Instructional Designer in the Center for Teaching and Learning, Learning Specialist in the Student Success Center, and two Instructors in Nursing. All positions will be funded out of E&G funds except the Gear UP Coordinator. The Administrative Specialist, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Program Coordinator of Gear UP, and the Instructional Designer are all replacement positions. The remaining positions are from the Vacant Position list.

Athletics requests

Mr. Kinnison requested to hire an Assistant Coordinator of Media Relations. The position was vacated, and it is paid from E&G funds. This position is responsible for sports broadcasts, working with FloSports, the press box operations, and digital/social media.

SACSCOC Update..... Dr. Griffin

Dr. Griffin shared with Cabinet members the Focus Report is available in Microsoft Teams for review by the vice presidents. She requested each vice president review the report for any needed changes. Dr. Welsh will upload the report on Wednesday. The next steps are organizing the on-site visit for April.

Recruitment Update/Overview.....Ms. Tanksley

Ms. Tanksley provided an update on recruitment efforts. 917 first-time freshmen and 95 transfer students are admitted for Fall 2024. 27 graduate students are admitted for Fall 2024. Ms. Tanksley shared upcoming recruitment events: Mini Okra Talks on February 27, February 29, March 9, March 21, and April 4; Admit Social on April 5; and, the Presidential Tour on April 8 though 11. Takin’ Care of Business Days begin in April and conclude in July.

Budget Update Mr. Wakefield

Mr. Wakefield shared with Cabinet members the cut-off for university spending is March 1. Exceptions on spending can be made; however, it has to be approved by the departments respective vice president.

Legislative Update..... Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts provided an update on the legislative session. Dr. Ennis and Dr. Roberts have met with several key legislators over the last two weeks. Delta State was represented at Cleveland Day at the Capitol last week along with the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, Port of Rosedale, and GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi. Student Legislative Day is March 21. The deadline for filing bills was last week.

Currently, 279 bills could affect the IHL system.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Town Hall Meeting, February 27, 3:00 p.m., Jacob Conference Center
- Listening Sessions with Search Firm, February 27-28,
- F.E. Woodall Conference, March 1, 9:00 a.m., Jacob Conference Center
- Thacker Mountain Radio Show, March 2, 3:00 p.m., DMI Studio A
- Foreigner, March 5, 7:30 p.m. BPAC

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 18, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.