

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: February 5, 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:** Ms. Lisa Giger

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 5, 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 January 23, 2024.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Ennis gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. Dr. Ennis met with a representative from Academic Partnerships to discuss a partnership for online programming for our graduate degrees. Dr. Ennis provided the information to Dr. Griffin and Mr. Wakefield. Dr. Ennis visited with the baseball and softball teams and the swimming and diving teams. Also, he visited with the presidents of Northwest Mississippi Community College and Mississippi College. The Office of Alumni Affairs hosted an Alumni Night at the Memphis Grizzlies game. Dr. Ennis and Dr. Roberts had several legislative visits. Dr. Ennis hosted the January Town Hall Meeting. Athletics and the Foundation hosted a Vision Event in Oxford, MS. Dr. Merideth Van Namen agreed to chair the Strategic Planning Committee. Dr. Ennis, Dr. Roberts, and the chairs of the six search committees met to finalize their committees.
- Dr. Craft and Mr. Wakefield gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The final walk through of the Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project was completed. The next sidewalk project is for the City of Cleveland, and it will connect the sidewalks of downtown Cleveland to Shumate Park. A pipe burst in Cleveland Hall, and the basement flooded.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The baseball, softball, and tennis seasons opened over the weekend. The baseball team travels to Spring Hill College this week, and the softball team travels to Arkansas to compete against Ouachita Baptist University and Henderson State University. The tennis teams compete against Meridian Community College on Tuesday. The women's team travels to Arkansas this weekend, and the men's team travels to Texas this weekend. The basketball teams host on Thursday and Saturday the University of Alabama-Huntsville and University of West Alabama, respectively. The swimming and diving teams hosted Ouachita Baptist University over the weekend.

- Ms. Rooks gave an update on student activities. SGA will host tonight its final interest meeting for 2024-25 SGA positions. Two activities are being planned for Black History Month. SGA’s Athletics Director is working with Athletics to increase student attendance at games. Student Legislative Day will be held March 21.
- Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Dr. Ennis continued his external outreach with a lunch with a Delta State alumnus. He will visit the Social Work Department and attend the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday. He will participate in a webinar hosted by the NCAA for new presidents and chancellors. In support of his upcoming Inauguration, Dr. Ennis will be interviewed on SuperTalk Radio on Wednesday, and he will travel to Greenville, MS and Jackson, MS on Wednesday and Thursday for alumni visits. The Statesmen Sweetheart Social is scheduled for Friday in the Leroy E. Morganti Atrium. Athletics hosts the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women’s Basketball this weekend with events on Friday and Saturday.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Mission Statement review ..... Dr. Ennis**

Cabinet members reviewed and affirmed the current mission statement. Dr. Ennis informed Cabinet members that he has charged the Strategic Planning Committee with reviewing the University mission statement while developing the new strategic plan. The Committee will be given the information about the mission statement that was provided at the fall Town Hall meeting to utilize in their discussions.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to affirm the current mission statement 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 by the Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability.

The Committee recommends that the President consider restructuring the Academy, a suggested outline of which will be presented to the President by the chair of the Committee and Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration. Dr. Ennis requested review of the recommendation with the Interim Provost. The chair of the Committee met with Dr. Griffin on December 11, 2023, and the proposal was discussed in Academic Council on January 11, 2024. No restructuring of the Academy will occur at this time.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to consider the Academy Structure recommendation and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

The Committee recommends that Athletics adjust their budget by \$350,000 either through reducing E&G expenses and/or increasing E&G revenues. Mr. Kinnison informed Cabinet members Athletics utilized the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning to conduct a profit/loss study of each student

athlete. The profit margin for each student athlete is \$10,000 to \$12,000. Athletics looked at their resources to see what additional enrollment they could handle, and they believe an additional 35 student-athletes would be sustainable for the current staff and resources. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee unanimously approved the addition of 35 student athletes to increase Athletics E&G revenues by \$350,000.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to consider the Athletics budget recommendation and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

The Committee recommends Housing and Residence Life investigate alternative and creative methods of generating additional revenue; reduce housing options, such that a building is at 90% capacity for either gender before opening additional buildings; conduct a comprehensive survey of current, former, and prospective future residents to better understanding the housing preferences, perceptions of campus culture and community, and roadblocks that deter them from living on campus. The committee would like to see a draft survey by January 30, 2024, to ensure it captures all of the essential information the Committee discussed. Dr. Ennis forwarded the Housing and Residence Life recommendations to Dr. Lovin for review and response. Dr. Lovin provided a response to the chair of the Committee on January 29, 2024. Dr. Lovin stated that a current residents survey is underway for SACSCOC purposes.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to consider three recommendations about Housing and Residence Life and seconded by Ms. Ray. The motion was approved.

The committee recommends Student Affairs reorganize and/or combine units to reduce staffing by combining redundant functions (such as programming), optimally utilizing graduate assistants, particularly in the role of assistant director. The Committee requests that this reorganization result in approximately \$230,000 in savings. The Committee also requests that Student Affairs begin collecting robust attendance and utilization data from all offices to provide evidence of student impact. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the Vice Presidents and Cabinet discuss creative ways to reduce costs by combining, reorganizing, or re-assessing service delivery in the following areas: Career Services, Health and Counseling Services, and Collegiate Recreation and Wellness, potentially tapping into expertise outside of Student Affairs or even the University. The Committee identified possible service overlap or support in the units of Student Success, School of Nursing, and Athletics.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Gladden to consider the recommendations for Students Affairs and seconded by Ms. Rooks.

Dr. Lovin requested a change to the language in the first recommendation to read, "The Committee recommends that Student Affairs consider reorganizing..."

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to adjust the language of the recommendation and seconded by Ms. Ray. The motion was approved.

Dr. Lovin requested a change to the language in the second recommendation to read, "The Committee recommends that the vice presidents and Cabinet consider..."

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to adjust the language of the recommendation and seconded by Ms. Tanksley. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Gladden to consider the revised recommendations for Student Affairs and seconded by Ms. Rooks. The motion was approved.

**Road Closure request.....Ms. Tanksley**  
Ms. Tanksley requested the road in front of the H. L. Nowell Union be blocked off/closed on Friday, March 1 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for the Admit Social hosted by the Office of Admissions.

**Motion:** Moved by Ms. Tanksley to approve a road closure on March 1 and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Vacant Position Justifications..... Cabinet members**  
Dr. Ennis stated any vacant position, on the listing provided by Mr. Wakefield and Human Resources, must be presented before Cabinet at the next meeting. Any position previously approved by Dr. Ennis does not need to be justified. Final approvals will be made by Dr. Ennis.

No action was taken on this agenda item.

**Discussion**

**Hiring Requests Approval Overview..... Dr. Roberts**  
Dr. Roberts shared with Cabinet members an overview of hiring request approvals made by Dr. Ennis. In Academic Affairs, the positions of Assistant Registrar, Assistant Chief Flight Instructor (2 positions), and Destination Graduation Administrative Assistant were approved for a search.

**Inauguration Week Schedule..... Dr. Roberts**  
Dr. Roberts asked Ms. Cole to share with Cabinet members the Inauguration Week schedule. Inauguration Week begins on Monday, February 19 with the Centennial Lecture at 3:00 p.m. in Jobe Hall. A Faculty and Staff Breakfast and Student Luncheon will be held on Thursday, February 22. A community service project in Rolling Fork, MS will be held on Friday, February 23, followed by A Delta Celebration at GRAMMY Museum Mississippi Friday evening. The Inauguration ceremony is Saturday, February 24 at 10:30 a.m. in the Bologna Performing Arts Center followed by the Inauguration Luncheon in the State Room of the H. L. Nowell Union.

**SACSCOC Update..... Dr. Griffin**  
Dr. Griffin shared with Cabinet members a list of outstanding items needed for the upcoming SACS COC site visit in April.

**Recruitment Update/Overview.....Ms. Tanksley**  
Ms. Tanksley provided an update on recruitment efforts. Enrollment for Spring 2024 has increased 1.9% in undergraduate and 11.4% in graduate from 2023. For Fall 2024, the amount of admitted students is up 9.8% in first-time freshmen and 340% in graduate students. The number of admitted transfer students is down 12.6%. The upcoming recruitment events are Transfer Day on February 16, Admit Social on March 1, and the Presidential Tour on April 8 through April 11. Takin’ Care of Business Days will be April 19 (transfer only), June 12, June 19, June 26, and July 31. Additionally, one more Takin’ Care of Business Day may occur on August 16.

**Retirement and Service Awards Ceremony..... Mr. Wakefield**  
Mr. Wakefield invited Ms. Lisa Giger to Cabinet to discuss the Retirement and Service Awards Ceremony. Currently, the Retirement and Service Awards Ceremony is April 19, 2024. The Retirement Incentive open

enrollment concludes on April 18, and Ms. Giger requested feedback on keeping the date or moving the date to account for any additional retirees. Cabinet members discussed the date, and suggested leave the date on April 19. Employees who decide to retire after the cutoff date for the Retirement Ceremony can participate in next year’s ceremony.

**Retirement Incentive Plan ..... Mr. Wakefield**

The Retirement Incentive Plan will be voted on by the Board of Trustees at the February IHL Board meeting. The open enrollment for the Retirement Incentive Plan is March 4, 2024, through April 18, 2024. Supervisors are discouraged from talking to their employees about the Retirement Incentive Plan, and they are encouraged to send employees to Human Resources for questions. PERS will be on campus March 21-22, 2024, in the Capps Archives to discuss the Retirement Incentive Plan. Employees participating in the Retirement Incentive Plan must sign a waiver and release form, and it must be turned in to Human Resources by June 28, 2024. Employees may revoke their release within seven days of June 28. Cabinet members discussed the overlap of rehiring retirees and paying the early-retirement incentive, and decided to allow this if it is in the best interest of the university to rehire the retiree in a part-time role.

**Reduction in Work Force policy..... Mr. Wakefield**

Mr. Wakefield shared the Reduction in Work Force policy with Cabinet members. During the FY2025 budget planning process, Cabinet members must follow the Reduction in Work Force policy. Ms. Giger stated staff employees must be informed by May 31 if they are being eliminated due to staff reductions, and faculty must be informed by April 12 if they are being eliminated due to faculty reductions.

**Budget Update ..... Mr. Wakefield**

Mr. Wakefield announced the zero-based budget process will be rolled out on February 19. The budget process will be different this year and will be a collaboration with the budget authority (vice presidents/direct reports of the President) and their own direct reports. Training will be available. Positions and expenses will need to be justified and tied to the strategic plan.

**Legislative Update ..... Dr. Roberts**

Next week is the last week for introducing new bills. The Governor’s proposed budget includes a 6.8% decrease to IHL. The House and Senate Budget Hearings for IHL are scheduled for Wednesday, February 14.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Statesmen Sweetheart Social, February 9, 6:00 p.m., Leroy E. Morganti Atrium
- Women’s Basketball 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, February 9, 6:30 p.m.
- KC and the Sunshine Band, February 22, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Investiture Ceremony, February 24, 10:30 a.m., BPAC

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, February 19, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.