

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: February 5, 2018**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. George Beals, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Dave Breaux, Ms. Ashley Griffin, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Ms. Christie Rocconi, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Patrick Hundley and Dr. Charles McAdams

**Guests:** Ms. Deborah Cox, Chief Financial Officer, University Advancement

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 5, 2018. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Mr. Rutledge, seconded by Mr. Mayers, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on January 29, 2018.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Bennett announced Ms. Griffin was named Miss Black Mississippi and will represent Mississippi in Washington, D.C. in August.
- President LaForge visited with Kappa Delta Sorority last week as part of his outreach to various student organizations.
- President LaForge welcomed the Casey Family Programs delegation to campus last week. Casey Family Programs and Delta State have a strong partnership, and this meeting served as a strategy meeting to discuss our initiatives.
- President LaForge continued his recruiting efforts last week with a visit to Bayou Academy to speak to their juniors and seniors.
- President LaForge had the opportunity to meet with KUL's Erasmus Coordinator, Ms. Magdalena Kizcuk, last week. Ms. Kizcuk was on campus to learn more about the structure and initiatives of the Student Success Center and International Student Services in preparation for the upcoming Erasmus<sup>+</sup> student and staff mobilities.
- President LaForge continued his efforts with the Capital Campaign last week with a visit to Dr. and Mrs. Bennie Wright.
- President LaForge was the guest speaker at the Greenville Rotary Club last week.
- President LaForge traveled to Florida over the weekend to support the Statesmen baseball team. The baseball team won two of three games.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. The men and women's basketball teams won at home on Saturday. Both games were highly attended. Mr. Mayers stated five basketball games remain, two at home and three on the road. Mr. Mayers hopes to host Super Tuesday for the men's basketball team.

The softball team has started their season with a 3-3 record. The swimming and diving teams will host the NSISC Conference Swimming and Diving Championship for the 17<sup>th</sup> year, beginning on February 21. Mr. Mayers congratulated two of his coaches on their milestone wins. Coach Craig Roden won his 400 NCAA game on Saturday, and Coach Mike Kinnison won his 899 NCAA game yesterday.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The paving of Statesmen Boulevard will be complete once the rain ceases and the ground dries. Mr. Rutledge has been given completion dates for Zeigel Hall and Young Mauldin Cafeteria — mid-March and mid-July, respectively.
- President LaForge had lunch today with Dr. Chip Morgan, IHL Board member and Executive Director of Delta Council. President LaForge gave Dr. Morgan an update on the university. Dr. Morgan is very supportive of Delta State and the Delta region.
- President LaForge gave an overview for the week ahead. He will meet with Ms. Arlene Sanders on Tuesday afternoon for an update on the Diversity Committee. He continues his Greek visits on Tuesday with a visit to Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. President and Mrs. LaForge will attend the BPAC performance of Hamlet on Tuesday evening. President LaForge and members of the Executive Committee will meet with Mr. Charles Harris, Senior Vice President at Trinitas on Wednesday to discuss campus housing. President LaForge believes Mr. Harris’ expertise will assist with our campus master plan efforts. On Wednesday evening, President LaForge will speak to the Wesley Foundation. On Thursday, President LaForge will travel to Brookhaven for the South Central Alumni meeting. President LaForge travels to Las Vegas on Friday for a fraternity board meeting.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Naming Committee Recommendation ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts presented to Cabinet a recommendation from the Naming Committee to name the Center for Teaching and Learning the Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning. The Naming Committee feels this is an appropriate opportunity to honor the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation based on their generous gift in support of the Center for Teaching and Learning. President LaForge informed Cabinet Members the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation loves Delta State and the way we utilize their gifts. He believes this gift will lead to other significant gifts from the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Roberts to approve the recommendation of the Naming Committee and seconded by Mr. Mayers. **The motion was approved.**

**Pets in the Workplace policy – new (final reading) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the new Pets in the Workplace policy for a final reading. The proposed policy states employees are not permitted to bring pets to work. Pets are allowed on campus if it is outdoors, on a leash, and accompanied by the pet’s owner. An employee and/or student who requires the help of a service animal will be permitted to bring a service animal to campus if the animal’s presence does not create a danger to others and does not impose an undue hardship upon the University. Mr. Rutledge added students to the “Procedures and Responsibilities” section of the policy and expanded the verbiage as it relates to them. Under the definition of service animals, “emotional support animals” was deleted from the definition since they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Under the “procedures and

responsibilities” section, Mr. Rutledge added how a service animal can be registered with the university. Dr. Roberts suggested Mr. Rutledge delete “household” from the second line in the “policies and procedures” section.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the Pets in the Workplace policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Breaux. **The motion was approved.**

**Termination/Dismissal policy - revised (final reading) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Termination/Dismissal policy for a final reading. The policy contains three major changes, including the definition of an at-will employee and grievance procedures for verbal and formal warnings. At-Will Employees do not receive an employment contract and may be dismissed from employment for any reason. The policy also revises the hearing procedure for Non-Tenure Track Faculty and Non Instructional Personnel. Mr. Rutledge added to items one and two in this section that the information be provided in writing, and restructured the wording in item six to clarify when the decision will be made. Mr. Rutledge added to the “procedures and responsibilities” section, with regards to documented oral warnings, that a recipient of such a warning may write a rebuttal to the warning to be included with the file.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the Termination/Dismissal policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Breaux. **This motion was approved.**

**Work Performance and Code of Conduct policy - revised (final reading) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Work Performance and Code of Conduct policy for a final reading. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet Members identical changes were made to the Work Performance and Code of Conduct policy as in the Termination/Dismissal policy.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the Work Performance and Code of Conduct policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Breaux. **This motion was approved.**

**Discussion**

**Student Art Award ..... President LaForge**

President LaForge informed Cabinet Members that a letter was received from Mr. Michael Stanley about the student art exhibition and sponsorship opportunities. He stated Cabinet Members have sponsored a “Cabinet Award” totaling \$500 in the past; however, Cabinet Members are not required to give. If anyone would like to contribute to this award, they can give their contribution to Ms. Cole or give online through a link to be provided by Ms. Cox. The deadline for donations is February 23.

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

Dr. Roberts presented to Cabinet Members the IHL Legislative Update from Thursday, February 1. The legislative update contains a list of bills the Institutions of Higher Learning staff monitors as each one affects an individual university or the IHL system. Tuesday, January 30 was the deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments that originated in their own chamber. Of the 377 bills the IHL staff were monitoring, 54 survived this deadline. Dr. Roberts pointed out a few bills of interest to Cabinet Members: 1) HB 700, Delta State’s House bill to transfer ownership of the Coahoma County Higher Education Center to Coahoma Community College; 2) SB 6898, Delta State’s Senate bill to transfer ownership of the Coahoma County Higher Education Center to Coahoma Community College; 3) HB 748, IHL’s two-year bond plan; and, 4) HB 1083, Firearms bill allowing individuals with enhanced carry permits

to carry a firearm on all state property. Dr. Roberts joined a conference call with the university presidents earlier today for a discussion on HB 1083. Commissioner Boyce and the university presidents are very concerned over this bill, as it will nullify all policies and legislation currently in place with regards to firearms on university campuses. Dr. Roberts stated IHL staff and the legislative liaisons are working to remove athletic events, academic buildings, and residence halls from this bill.

**Additional information:**

- Ms. Cox announced the South Central Alumni meeting is Thursday at Mitchell’s Steak and Seafood Restaurant in Brookhaven.
- Ms. Griffin announced the African-American Student Council will host a Black History Month program tonight in the Baioni Conference Center. The Student Government Association will host a town hall meeting on Thursday to discuss commencement with regards to tickets and location.
- President LaForge announced that Cabinet Members will revisit their respective goals for the Visioning Principles in two weeks. This process will allow Cabinet Members to report on the progression of their goals and to determine if changes should be made.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Hamlet, February 6, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Academic Day for College of Business and Aviation, February 12
- Academic Day for Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, February 19
- Colloquia Series with Mr. Fred Smith, CEO of FedEx, March 21, 6:00 p.m., Jobe Hall

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, February 12 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.