

**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PRESIDENT'S CABINET**  
*Minutes*

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**Meeting date: January 8, 2024**

**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), Ms. Haley Rooks (by phone), Ms. Ashley Tanksley, and Mr. Larry Wakefield (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. David Gladden

**Guests:** Ms. Emily Dabney, Registrar, Office of the Registrar  
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 January 8, 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 Mr. Wakefield, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on December 18, 2023.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Ennis gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. Dr. Ennis interviewed a candidate for the Internal Auditor position. The verbal offer was made to the candidate last week, and the position will spend 75% of their time at the IHL Board Office and 25% of their time at the University. Dr. Ennis announced Dr. Tim Harvey and Dr. Ned Mitchell will lead the Centennial Campaign.
- Ms. Rooks gave an update on student activities. Students are gearing up for the beginning of classes next week.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The swimming and diving teams competed at University of Montevallo over the weekend, and their next meet is at Emory University. The basketball teams competed against Shorter University and Lee University over the holidays, and they host Mississippi College tonight. Student-athletes competing in spring sports return on Wednesday for practice. The softball has their first game on January 31, and the baseball team has their first game on February 1.
- Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Dr. Ennis travels to Phoenix, AZ tomorrow for the NCAA Annual Convention. The university will be closed on Monday, January 15 for Martin Luther King Day.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Quality Enhancement Plan..... Dr. Griffin**

Dr. Griffin invited Dr. Josie Welsh to Cabinet to discuss the revised Quality Enhancement Plan. The plan will focus on a university concierge and centralizing communications for the campus community. The overall goal of the QEP, aligned with the university’s mission statement, is self-determined motivation of our students to ask for and receive resources they need to succeed at Delta State via academic competency, realized autonomy, and meaningful engagement with the university’s community of scholars. To attain this goal, Delta State will create, implement, and promulgate a single -source campus concierge that will connect students with resources they need to thrive at Delta State University and graduate on time. The single source campus concierge will be Ask Okra. At this time, the staff and graduate assistants will manage the campus concierge system. Prior to launching the system, the university’s student support areas will develop a list of the top issues and how to solve them for the Ask Okra system. The budget for the Quality Enhancement Plan will pay for the software, marketing, and training.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the revised Quality Enhancement Plan and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Regalia Changes ..... Dr. Griffin**

Dr. Griffin invited Ms. Emily Dabney to Cabinet to share potential regalia changes through a new supplier, Grad Supply. The undergraduate regalia has a panel of green in the sleeve; the master’s and specialist degree regalia are black with a green panel on the front with a green trimmed hood; and, the doctorate regalia is a green gown with a black panel and a green trimmed hood. Each gown will have a custom zipper fob. Ms. Holly Ray in Communications and Marketing will work with the Office of the Registrar on a design.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the regalia changes and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability Recommendations ..... Dr. Ennis**

Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members the revised and approved Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability recommendations for a final approval by Cabinet members prior to disseminating information to vice presidents for initiation.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Jurgenson to approve the Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Sustainability recommendations revised by Cabinet members and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Hiring Requests .....DR. Griffin**

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. Wakefield will meet with Dr. Ennis and 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 Assistant for Destination Graduation. The position is a new position, and it will be grant funded. Also, Dr. Griffin requested to hire the Assistant Registrar. This is a replacement position, and the position will be filled until March.

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

Ms. Tanksley provided an update on recruitment efforts. 722 first-time, full-time freshmen have been admitted for Fall 2024. At this time last year, 581 first-time, full-time freshmen had been admitted. Transfer admissions are down by 18 from this time last year. Ms. Tanksley has reached out to the University’s largest transfer pipelines to begin discussions of an event to garner interest. Also, 18 graduate students have been admitted for Fall 2024. Students from Central High School in Arkansas will visit campus on Friday, and several additional visits from other schools are in the planning stages. In the interim, Ms. Tanksley has appointed Ms. Sydney Pittman as Director of Admissions.

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

Mr. Wakefield shared the budget versus actual for Fall 2023. The tuition for FY24 is budgeted for \$19,957,856; however, the university has received \$17,346,586.84 in tuition for Fall 2023 and year-to-date for Spring 2024. Summer school revenue is budgeted at \$2,300,000 for FY24, and the remainder of the Spring semester will be closely monitored. The budgeted funds from State appropriations are received on a monthly basis and all are expected to be realized by June 30, 2024. Federal grants and contracts are below the budgeted amount; however, federal grant activity picks up as students return to campus for spring terms. Grants are most active during summer, resulting in higher indirect revenue for the May/June/July months. Private grants and contracts revenue are estimated to be about \$749,600 from Foundation's reimbursement of salaries, expected in June 2024. Sales and services revenue represent year-to-date activity. It is estimated to be fully realized by June 30, 2024. Other sources revenue represents administrative fee from designated funds, investment income from bank accounts, and payments from leased University property and equipment. Instructional expenses are lower compared to prior fiscal years resulting in savings for the University. This is normal due to academic vacancies. Institutional support expenses are lower than prior years; however, the expenses are higher compared to budgeted amounts. University Accounting is researching the cause of increase in expenditures. Operation and maintenance expenses are about equal in the same period as last fiscal year. The cost is higher than budgeted due to increases in utility cost. Scholarships and fellowship costs are higher this fiscal year compared to last fiscal year, and University Accounting is researching the cause of the increase. Mr. Wakefield will bring the budget versus actual for auxiliary funds for Fall 2023 at the next Cabinet meeting.

**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 22, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.