

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: June 1, 2021

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Dr. Vicki Bingham (via Zoom), Dr. Kurt Keppler (via Zoom), Mr. Mike Kinnison (via Zoom), Dr. Michelle Roberts (via Zoom), Mr. Jamie Rutledge (via Zoom), Ms. Nakikke Wallace (via Zoom), Dr. Andrew Wegmann (via Zoom), and Mr. William Young (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: Dr. Charles McAdams and Mr. Rick Munroe

Guests: Ms. Camesha Benson, Cohort Member, DSU LEADS
Ms. Diane McCall, Cohort Member, DSU LEADS
Ms. Darla Poole, Cohort Member, DSU LEADS
Dr. Christy Riddle, Coordinator, DSU LEADS
Ms. Katie Stroup, Cohort Member, DSU LEADS
Ms. Phyllis Thornton, Cohort Member, DSU LEADS

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on June 1, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Wegmann and seconded by Dr. Bingham, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on May 24, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last week. President LaForge filmed a video with the Office of Admissions for prospective students. Dr. Keppler invited President LaForge to visit with the Student Affairs staff members during their planning session. President LaForge had an interview with Delta News regarding the College of Business and Aviation's Master of Business Administration ranking in *Fortune* magazine. The Bolivar County Alumni Crawfish Boil was held on the Quadrangle, and approximately 120 alumni and friends attended. The first Visioning event for the Capital Campaign was held at President LaForge's home for staunch supporters of the BPAC, followed by Martha Reeves performing at the BPAC. President LaForge traveled to Pensacola for the NCAA DII South Region baseball tournament to see the Statesmen compete against the University of West Florida.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The baseball team competed in two games of the NCAA DII South Region tournament, and they fell to University of Tampa and University of West Florida. The baseball team had a good season overall. Even though competition is over for the year, Athletics staff continue to stay busy with recruiting and summer workouts.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The remainder of the roofing project

materials will not be delivered until August 1. The contractor for the roofing project plans to hire additional crew members in order to finish the project as quickly as possible. The contractors are temporarily patching the roofs to avoid leaks, which would destroy the recent renovations made within the residence halls. The renovation projects in the residence halls are ahead of schedule, and new flooring is being installed this week. The campus-wide elevator project begins next Monday, and the contractor plans to work on three elevators at one time. Sod is being installed today around the sidewalks. The air conditioner for the first floor of the H. L. Nowell Student Union is down, and the estimated repair date is in three to four weeks. Mr. Rutledge plans to meet with the architects for the School of Nursing expansion project within the next few weeks to turn their plans into construction documents. Facilities Management staff are working on renovating the previous residences of the President and Provost for use by the new vice presidents. Mr. Rutledge will meet with Dr. Jana Donahoe soon to discuss the Children’s Advocacy Center project in further detail in order to begin the project.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met this morning. President LaForge will film a Statesmen Insider with the S.E. Kossman Outstanding Faculty Award and H.L. Nowell Outstanding Staff Award winners on Tuesday. The winners of the awards are Dr. Joseph Bentley and Ms. Lee Aylward, respectively. Dr. Eddie Lovin is on campus this week to begin the transition process with Dr. Keppler. The Gulf South Conference annual meeting is Friday and will be held virtually this year. Delta Council hosts their annual meeting on campus on Friday, and President LaForge is providing the welcome on behalf of the university.

CABINET TOPIC

None

BUSINESS

Action

Annual Operating Budget Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge presented to Cabinet members the proposed E&G operating budget for FY22 in the format requested by the Institutions of Higher Learning. The proposed budget was approved by Cabinet members on April 12, 2021. The FY22 budget totals \$50,071,960 in proposed revenue, which includes a decrease of \$4,864,141 from the FY21 budget in the following areas: CARES funding; Delta State University Foundation contributions; scholarship funds; tuition revenue (based on FY21 actual numbers); and, projected loss of other revenues (sales, services, commissions, etc.). The budget proposal was adjusted to include increases in the following areas: \$818,085 from State appropriations; \$810,000 in additional revenue from the 3% tuition increase; and, the use of \$1,206,361 from the Higher Education Emergency Relief funds to cover lost revenue. The proposed FY22 budget has several reductions in expenses from FY21: insurance costs; removal of the cash contingency; computer equipment; technology equipment; vehicle replacements; payments to the Department of Education; and, Admissions scholarships. The budget reductions total \$3,712,816. Additional expenses for FY22 include: scholarship budget adjustment for the tuition increase; Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion salary; new Scholarship Coordinator salary; scholarship software; Student Health Services budget; Department of Athletics Strength and Conditioning staff; additional monies for the contingency fund; capital expenditures (Repair and Renovation funds); a 2.5% salary increase for full-time employees; and, additional salary increases to adjust for market, equity, or compression disparities. The additional expenses for FY22 total \$2,137,188. The university budget for FY22 will be \$50,071,960. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the additional salary increase to adjust for market, equity, or compression disparities was adjusted from Cabinet

approval last week due to some salaries being funded by designated funds or auxiliary funds, instead of from E&G funds.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the annual operating budget for FY22 as presented and seconded by Dr. Keppler. The motion was approved.

Class Attendance policy (revised – final reading) Dr. Bingham

On the recommendation of the Academic Council, Dr. Bingham brought the revised Class Attendance policy to Cabinet for a final reading. The Class Attendance policy was revised prior to the 2020-21 academic year to include a COVID-19 Pandemic response that allowed the university not to penalize students for staying home if they felt ill. The COVID-19 Pandemic response is to be deleted from the Class Attendance policy for the 2021-22 academic year. The policy was revised to state students should not attend class if they are ill, and students are expected to provide documentation for missing class due to illness. Dr. Wegmann suggested making a grammatical edit to the sentence, “Students are expected to provide documentation for missing class due to illness not to have...” instead of “to not have.”

Motion: Moved by Dr. Bingham to approve the revised Class Attendance policy for a final reading and seconded Mr. Young. The motion was approved.

Freshmen Residency policy (revised – final reading)..... Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler brought the revised Freshmen Residency policy to Cabinet for a final reading. Full-time, Delta State students are required to live on campus for two years or four academic semesters. If a student is under 21 years of age as of August 31 (Fall)/January 31 (Spring) or have completed fewer than 60 earned credit hours by the end of Summer Session II, the student must live on campus. Exceptions are authorized with proper documentation for married students, single parents, recent veterans, and for those students who live with a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and commute from a distance of no more than 30 miles. Exemption requests with proper documentation must be submitted in writing to the Office of Housing and Residence Life. President LaForge requested Dr. Keppler work with Communications and Marketing to communicate the revised Residency policy to campus constituency groups and prospective students.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Keppler to approve the Freshmen Residency policy for a final reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Family Housing policy (revised – final reading) Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler brought the revised Family Housing policy to Cabinet for a final reading. Delta State has 40 apartment units available for use in Hill Apartments. To be eligible for occupancy, the lessee must be an undergraduate student who is married or is a single parent with a minor child in residence; a non-traditional undergraduate student; or, a graduate student. A full-time university employee may be eligible after review of application and availability, and approval by the President’s Cabinet. A student must be enrolled as a full-time student at Delta State University, and must maintain the full-time student status throughout the year, except during the summer. Today’s version of the policy includes changes made at last week’s Cabinet meeting.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Keppler to approve the revised Family Housing policy for final reading, and seconded Dr. Wegmann. The motion was approved.

Summer Housing requirements policy (revised – first reading) Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler brought the Summer Housing requirements policy to Cabinet for a first reading. The proposed

Summer Housing requirements policy is a housing plan option for students with special summer circumstances. Currently, a student must be enrolled in at least six credit hours during a summer term in order to qualify for summer housing. In addition to being enrolled, a student must purchase a \$400 flex buck meal plan per term. Dr. Keppler proposed changing the eligibility to:

- be enrolled in at least six summer credit hours, or
- be employed on campus working at least 20 hours per week, or
- be a student-athlete involved with a supervised vacation workout program, or
- other requests to be considered on a case by case basis

The cost is \$100 per week with no partial weeks (May 23 to August 14). Optional “flex bucks” meal plans are available.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Keppler to approve the Summer Housing requirements and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Keppler to suspend the rules to remove the second reading requirement of the Summer Housing requirements policy and allow for final approval and seconded by Dr. Wegmann. The motion was approved.

Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day.....Ms. Wallace

Ms. Wallace announced the Administrative Staff Council would like to change the previously approved format of a week-long Staff Development Day back to being a one day event. The new proposed schedule is for Staff Council to sponsor the Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day on Thursday, July 15 from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Delta State alumna Ms. Nakimia Agnew will lead the professional development segment with a discussion on mental health awareness. During the morning session, services awards will be presented to staff members achieving their five, ten, or fifteen years of service to the university, and staff members will begin their service project. Staff will have lunch in the cafeteria followed by the annual softball game and other outdoor activities. The final event of the day will be the completion of the service project. Ms. Wallace requested approval to close all offices (with supervisor approval) so that staff members can attend. Staff Council makes it clear to all staff members that the options are to: 1) participate in Staff Development Day, or 2) remain in the office.

Motion: Moved by Ms. Wallace to allow offices to close on Thursday, July 15 (with supervisor approval) for staff to participate in the Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Discussion

OKRALinks program Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler invited team members from the DSU LEADS program to Cabinet to present their project, OKRALinks. The DSU LEADS program and projects were postponed in March 2020 due to COVID-19; however, Dr. Keppler learned about OKRALinks and thought it would be a great tool for the Office of Admissions and new students. OKRALinks aims to simplify the new student enrollment process and improve the academic experience by: 1) providing new students with the steps needed to complete the enrollment process with one, easy to navigate landing page; and, 2) to use simple “call to action” verbiage and icons to help new students navigate through the process. Through the OKRALinks webpage, a student can find essential campus resources and tools in two to three clicks of a mouse. The OKRALinks webpage link will be located on the Delta State website homepage, the Admissions hub, and the MyDSU webpage, and it will be live by the first orientation session on June 8.

Orientation Update Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler provided Cabinet members with an update on Orientation. The first Orientation session is June 8, and 112 students have registered to attend. The second Orientation session on June 15 is virtual, and 103 students have registered. The third Orientation session is June 22, and 78 students have registered. Students are allowed to bring up to three guests to Orientation, and 200 to 240 guests will be on campus for the first Orientation session next week. The Orientation session begins at 9:15 a.m. with registration and concludes by 4:00 p.m. Dr. Keppler thanked his Orientation committee for all their efforts in putting together plans so quickly for the in-person Orientation sessions.

Use of University HEERF III funds Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the university’s plan for the Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEERF) III funds allocated to the university, totaling \$3,739,177. The Department of Education is loosening up the restrictions on how the HEERF II and III funds can be spent. Mr. Rutledge participated in a teleconference with chief financial officers within the IHL system and the Department of Education. The Department of Education presented a model of how to compute loss revenues in order for universities to determine the amount of HEERF III funds to allocate to loss revenue. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the information he received regarding this process. The operating revenue loss is a combination of tuition and sales and services. The university received \$26,170,443 in tuition and sales and services revenue in FY20, and \$22,650,759 in tuition and sales and services revenue in FY21. The total operating loss for FY21 is \$3,519,684, less the HEERF II designation of \$1,505,247 for a net operating revenue loss of \$2,014,437. The university received \$6,985,023 in auxiliary revenue in FY20 and \$4,692,712 in FY21 for a total auxiliary revenue loss of \$2,292,311. The net loss of revenue is \$4,306,748. For loss revenues, the university plans to use the following: \$1,232,624 for loss revenue for FY22; \$1,000,000 for loss auxiliary revenue in FY21; and, \$1,000,000 for a possible enrollment decline in FY22. This leaves a balance of \$506,553 in unallocated HEERF III funds, and \$262,850 in unallocated HEERF II funds for a total of \$769,403 HEERF funds available. Mr. Rutledge’s proposal for the HEERF funds includes: purchase of additional computers for faculty and staff; generator for the water tower; marketing; scholarship software training; H.L. Nowell Student Union renovations; BIT training; an admissions consultant; new Okra Card system; cameras for athletic facilities; conversion of a weight room to a film room in Walter Sillers Coliseum; a commercial washer and dryer for Athletics; sideline score tables for Walter Sillers Coliseum; and, Academic Affairs requests. Mr. Rutledge will email to Cabinet members the list items included in the Academic Affairs request. This leaves a balance of \$10,000 in available HEERF funds.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget and shared with Cabinet members the Cash Flow projections for April 2021. This report compares the current cash flows to the cash flows from April 2020. The university’s bank receipts from April 2020 to April 2021 have increased. The university has not received payment from IHL for April and May Education Enhancement funds. Federal funds increased from last year to this year due to CARES and Higher Education Emergency Relief funds. Student Financial Aid and Sales and Services increased, as well. Employee payroll increased due to additional employees hired to assist with the university’s COVID-19 response, as well as the Bolivar County drive-through COVID-19 vaccine distribution site. Vendor and student disbursements increased, as well as university travel. The April 2021 ending cash balance was \$7,593,945, which is higher than this time last year. The university continues to increase its cash balance.

Additional information

- Dr. Bingham shared with Cabinet members the NCLEX pass rate for December 2020 was 97%. The certification pass rate for masters-level graduate students in May 2021 was 100%. School of Nursing

faculty member Ms. Debra Allen passed national certification as a certified nurse educator. School of Nursing faculty member Ms. Stephanie Hodnett passed a national certification as an emergency Nurse Practitioner. School of Nursing faculty member Ms. Teresa Haynes was one of ten accepted into the 2021 Community Engagement Research Institute to be held at the University of Southern Mississippi in June. Lastly, School of Nursing staff member Ms. Holly Haney has a poem being published in the *Journal of Pediatric Surgical Nursing*.

- Dr. Keppler announced that 366 summer school students have applied for HEERF II funds.
- Mr. Kinnison informed Cabinet members of the death of a former Delta State athlete, Mr. Stan Horton.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Delta Council Annual Meeting, June 4
- Orientation Session #1, June 8, in-person
- Clay Walker performance, June 10, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Orientation Session #2, June 15, virtual
- Orientation Session #3, June 22, in-person

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, June 21 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.