

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT'S CABINET
Minutes

Meeting date: March 16, 2020

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett-Fairs (by phone), Ms. Tricia Killebrew, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Beverly Moon, Mr. Rick Munroe, Mr. Cetin Oguz (by phone), Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, and Ms. Elizabeth Swindle (by phone) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Chief Jeffrey Johns, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council
Dr. Jonathan Westfall, President-Elect, Faculty Senate

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 16, 2020. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Ms. Killebrew and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on March 4, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The Annual Juried Student Exhibition Opening Reception took place prior to Spring Break. The President's Art Award winner was Mr. Adam King, and the Cabinet Art Award winner was Mr. John Cassibry. The BPAC hosted an Acoustic Evening with Mark Chestnutt and Joe Diffie.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Lady Statesmen basketball player, Ms. Quantesha Patterson, was a finalist for the C-Spire Gillom Trophy. For the second year in a row, Delta State boasts an Elite 90 athlete in swimming—Mr. Michael Maly. Mr. Emanuel Fava claimed the 200 individual medley National Title during the NCAA DII National Championships. He is the second Delta State national champion joining Justin Whitaker who won the 100-Backstroke at the 2002 NCAA Championships. The Gulf South Conference has suspended all athletic activities indefinitely.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The roofing project for Walter Sillers Coliseum has stalled due to the lack of good weather. The HVAC project for Walter Sillers Coliseum is complete. The roofing project for the Facilities Management Building is behind schedule, and the architect continues to pay liquidated damages. The repairs being made on Fielding Wright Art Center and Holcombe-Norwood Hall, as a result of the leaking roof, have not been completed. Repairs on the areas that sustained storm damage recently have begun, but several projects require an architect and will be put out for bid. The roofing projects for the residence halls will be awarded on March 26, and the HVAC project for the Mayers Aquatics Center will be awarded on March 19. The residence hall renovations project has stalled, and the renovations may not be completed during the summer.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members some of the meetings and events planned for the week. He had a department meeting this morning with Dr. Eric Blackwell with the Center for Science and Environmental Education. On Thursday, the IHL Board of Trustees will meet via conference call, and President LaForge will participate by phone.

CABINET TOPIC

Coronavirus Action Plan..... President LaForge

President LaForge shared Delta State’s current COVID-19 Action Plan with Cabinet members. He informed Cabinet members this is an ever-changing document, and it will be updated as new information is released by IHL and the State. All eight public universities are trying to be consistent with their action plans, but each university has the authority to respond to unique requests and concerns.

The university extended spring break by one week (through March 22) for students. Classes resume on Monday, March 23, and all classes will be taught in an online format until further notice. The residence halls are open, but students are encouraged to stay at home. Meals will be provided on a limited basis to students in residence halls and employees with a meal plan. At the advisement of IHL, all public universities are not committing to prorated room and meal plan refunds due to potential challenges with federal financial aid. IHL awaits guidance from the U.S. Department of Education on how to address the issue. All games and recruiting for the Gulf South Conference are cancelled, and all NCAA post season tournaments are cancelled. The NCAA will allow an extra year of eligibility for senior athletes (for spring sports) whose season were abruptly cut short by concerns of the coronavirus. All campus events are cancelled through the end of April, including the BPAC. At this time, a decision has not been made on the commencement ceremony.

All students and employees who traveled to domestic hot spots during spring break are required to self-quarantine for three to five days to evaluate symptoms. All students and employees who traveled internationally during spring break are required to self-quarantine for 14 days. All travel for employees will halted until June 1. The university strongly discourages professional or personal travel outside of the area.

The following campus services are closed: Food Court, Fitness Center, Wyatt Gym, Mayers Aquatics Center, Hamilton-White Child Development Center, and the Reily Health Center. Students will have access to the Roberts-LaForge Library electronically and by appointment, but the library is closed to the public. Young-Mauldin Cafeteria is closed to the public. The Police Department will provide transportation to students without vehicles to the Cleveland Medical Clinic. The Williams Bookstore, Post Office, and Campus Counseling Center will be open with limited hours.

Faculty can work/train/teach from their home or campus. Staff are to work their regular schedules. Staff caring for children must take personal leave. If an employee has insufficient leave time available, a request for emergency approval can be made with their supervisor for the opportunity to work from home. For the safety of everyone, children should not be brought to the workplace.

Hourly employees who are sent home due to closures (i.e. Child Development Center) will be compensated. Federal Work Study students will continue to be paid. Legislation to allow universities to be able to pay Regular Student Employment students has been requested.

Facilities Management is increasing their efforts to sanitize all campus facilities.

Lieutenant Governor Hosemann requested from the IHL office a list of 1) legislative needs to help deal with the virus, and 2) projected loss in revenue. Delta State's response: 1) funds for additional laptops and equipment for staff and faculty to work remotely; 2) funds for reimbursements to students for unused room and board; 3) funds for additional cleaning supplies, masks/shields, and gloves for general premises and quarantined areas; 4) legislative authorization to pay RSE students; 5) funds to pay for contracted professional cleaning/sanitizing for all buildings/offices/dorm rooms, etc.; 6) funds to mitigate forgone revenue from vending machine and bookstore retail sale commissions, athletic ticket sales, facility rentals, Bologna Performing Arts Center ticket sales, and hosted conference expenses; and, 7) funds for reimbursement for canceled travel and conference registration expenses.

Under consideration is the possibility of additional scaling back of services or closure. The Executive Committee will work with their direct reports to deem which positions are essential vs. non-essential and which employees who can work from home vs. employees who cannot work from home.

Cabinet members discussed additional items including internships for students, the need for head coaches to monitor the grades of their student-athletes, and the protocol for supervisors to inform their employees to return to work or not based on their travel or symptoms.

BUSINESS

Action

Search and Hire approvals Cabinet members

Cabinet members did not have any requests to search for and fill vacant positions.

Discussion

Summer Work Schedule Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge announced that official summer office hours will be from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm, Monday – Thursday, with a 30-minute lunch. The summer work schedule will start on Monday, May 18 and end on Thursday, August 6. Kent Wyatt Hall will remain open on Fridays during the summer work schedule.

Summer Building Closures Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the proposed buildings to be closed during the summer months. Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, and Lawler-Harkins Hall will be closed for renovations. Zeigel Hall, Kethley Hall, Jobe Hall, Gibson-Gunn Hall, Broom Hall, Fielding Wright Art Center, Holcombe-Norwood Hall, Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, and Caylor-White/Walters Hall will be closed for cost savings. Temperatures for buildings that will be closed for cost savings will be set at 80°. Buildings that have section controls will allow certain areas to be set at 80° and other areas with lower temperatures. Buildings with a partial closer and section control for temperatures are Zeigel Hall, Gibson-Gunn Hall, Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, and Caylor-White/Walters Hall. All summer school will be held in Ewing Hall and Caylor-White/Walters Hall. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the university saves an average of \$230,000 - \$250,000 from summer building closures and the summer work schedule.

Faculty/Staff Housing Rates Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the rent of the Faculty and Staff Apartments will increase by \$50, or 6%, to \$800, beginning July 1, 2020. This is the first increase in four years.

Budget Review Process Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the budget discussion continues next week with a discussion on scholarships followed by revenues and Phase III budget priorities the week following. The Executive Committee continues to discuss the need for new, enhanced revenue along with substantial reductions to our expenses for the FY21 budget. An estimate of the reductions to be made is from \$1.7 million to \$2.4 million. Mr. Rutledge will bring several suggestions on increasing the university’s revenue to Cabinet during the coming weeks. Also, the analytical 360° review process of all university programs and activities will be discussed in Cabinet by the third week in April.

Tuition Rate for International Students Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members a tuition increase for international students is one suggestion for increasing the university’s revenue. The suggestion is to increase tuition for international students by \$1,000 per year. From this increase, the university would generate \$130,000 per year in additional revenues. Comparisons on tuition for international students at surrounding institutions were made, and Delta State remains a bargain for international students.

Four-Day work week proposal Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members a suggestion for a year-round four-day work week was made as another means of increasing the university’s revenue. Dr. McAdams received positive feedback on the proposal from the dean and the chairs from one of his units, and President LaForge received a greenlight from Commissioner Rankins to move forward with the proposal. Mr. Rutledge estimates an additional \$200,000 of savings can be reached by having a year-round four-day work week. President LaForge asked Cabinet members to consider with each of their constituency groups any interruptions that may arise.

Tuition Increase for FY21 Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members another means of revenue for the university would be a tuition increase for all students. Proposed increases are 5%, 6%, or 7%. A 5% increase would generate net revenue of \$688,320; a 6% increase would generate net revenue of \$825,984; and, a 7% increase would generate net revenue of \$963,648. Dr. John Pearce, IHL Chief Financial Officer, recommended to all universities to plan for a 5% decrease in appropriations from the State due to a decline in revenue. For Delta State, a 5% decrease equals \$900,000. Cabinet members were in agreement to move forward with a proposed 6% increase in tuition for FY21.

Legislative Update Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet Members that Thursday, March 12 was the deadline for original floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments in the originating chamber. Friday, March 13 was the deadline for reconsideration and passage of general bills and constitutional amendments in the original chamber. Today is the deadline to dispose of motions to reconsider general bills and constitutional amendments in the original chamber. Bills for State appropriations and bond will be introduced in each chamber this week. Mr. Munroe reminded Cabinet members of HB 1343 which would amend Section 37-7-13, Mississippi Code of 1972 to provide that the procurement of aircraft equipment by State Institutions of Higher Learning for degree programs in aviation would be exempt from the public purchase law requirements. This bill has not been referred yet. Mr. Munroe announced Student Legislative Day was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional information

- Mr. Munroe announced the Foundation Board and Alumni Association Board meetings will continue via Zoom conference calls.

- Ms. Swindle plans to continue with her SGA meetings, and she is working with her Cabinet and OIT to determine the best way to conduct the SGA elections.
- Mr. Oguz announced the Faculty Senate elections are complete, and the remaining Faculty Senate meetings for the semester will be held via Zoom conference calls.
- Mr. Rutledge announced Mr. Charles Lindsey from Matthews, Curter, and Lindsey, P.A. visited campus last week to review Delta State’s cash flow numbers for the month of February. Mr. Rutledge proudly announced the university met every goal and expenditure. The university’s revenues met all goals, except in one area—Mississippi Financial Aid. The State has not reimbursed the university for the aid, but the legislature is working on providing the university’s with emergency funding in March or April.
- Mr. Munroe reminded Cabinet members that the “Spring for Success Online Giving Day” is scheduled for Thursday.
- President LaForge informed Cabinet members that the topic for the next meeting will be the Coronavirus Action Plan again, and Cabinet members have the option of meeting in the President’s Conference Room or via a Zoom conference call.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- ~~DSU Legislative Day, march 18, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., Mississippi State Capitol, Jackson~~
- ~~Winning the Race Conference, March 22-24~~
- ~~Athletics Hall of Fame Induction, March 27, 7:00 p.m., GRAMMY Museum Mississippi~~
- Alumni Board Meeting, March 27
- ~~Beautiful, March 28, 7:30 p.m., BPAC~~

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 23 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Coronavirus Action Plan (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.