

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: March 23, 2020

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

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Chief Jeffrey Johns, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council (via Zoom)
Dr. Jonathan Westfall, President-Elect, Faculty Senate (via Zoom)
Mr. Jeff Slagell, Representative, Academic Council (via Zoom)

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room and via Zoom conference call on March 23, 2020. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Ms. Killebrew and seconded by Ms. Swindle to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on March 16, 2020. Dr. Moon requested the following changes: on page 3 under Summer Building Closures, remove the sentence "All summer school will be held in Ewing Hall and Caylor-White/Walters Hall" as the decision to move all summer school courses online was already decided. All Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes as amended.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge welcomed Mr. Jeff Slagell, incoming Academic Council representative to Cabinet as he begins the process for shadowing his outgoing counterpart on the President's Cabinet.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members the notes from the winners of the President's Art Award and Cabinet Art Award winners. He stated the notes would be in the President's Office if anyone wanted to read them.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge continued his campus outreach last week with a visit with Dr. Eric Blackwell, the Director of the Center for Science and Environmental Education. The IHL Board of Trustees met via conference call last Thursday. The modifications to Delta State's Social Science Education degree were approved, as well as Delta State's Foundation Affiliation Agreement with the Delta State University Foundation. President LaForge spoke with Mr. Curt McCain, Headmaster of Bayou Academy, last week to discuss Delta State's and Bayou Academy's collective responses to COVID-19, as well as Mr. McCain's recent trip to Cuba. Mr. McCain is interested in partnering with Delta State to bring a Cuban speaker to campus.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Mr. Kinnison informed Cabinet members the Athletics Department is operating at a different pace right now, and minimal staff is in the office. Presidents and Athletic Directors in the GSC were notified this morning via conference call that the GSC Executive Committee and Commissioner voted to cancel the remaining athletic events until June 1 including athletic practices and competition. After June 1, the topic will be revisited. The NCAA has issued new recruiting regulations during this time—all recruiting must be conducted by phone or email. President LaForge wrote a letter to top officials at NCAA requesting their consideration of an additional year of eligibility for student athletes who compete in winter sports i.e. basketball (men’s and women’s) and swimming and diving.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The roofing projects for Walter Sillers Coliseum, Holcombe-Norwood Hall, and the Facilities Management building are not complete due to weather delays. Mr. Rutledge stated the recent storm damage was split into three packages: stadium lights, press box, and the roof. All of these projects have an architect, and the architect should have quotes for each project by the end of day. Bids for the Mayers Aquatics Center were opened last Thursday and awarded. We have 20 days to get the contract to the contractor, and then in 45 days the university will have a notice to proceed. The roofing project for the residence halls opens on Thursday. The residence hall renovations project has an architect assigned. The Bureau of Buildings has our elevator project, and Mr. Rutledge hopes to get all needed persons assigned in order to begin as soon as possible. The lighting project continues on campus with Gibson-Gunn Hall.

CABINET TOPIC

Coronavirus Action Plan..... President LaForge

President LaForge shared with Cabinet members recent updates to Delta State’s COVID-19 Action Plan. 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. President LaForge informed Cabinet members Mississippi has 240 cases statewide with four in Bolivar County. One Delta State student has the virus, but the student never returned to campus after contracting the virus on Spring Break. Other universities produced a campus update when a student contracted the virus. The question was raised if Delta State should do the same. President LaForge requested IHL be consulted prior to an update being released.

Classes resumed today, March 23, and all classes will be taught in an online format through the end of the semester. Internships/Field Experiences/Clinicals will continue, contingent on the host organization. Students in Commercial Aviation, Nursing, and Music continue with some in-person instruction for those needing specific courses for graduation. Textbooks and library resources are available online for student use. Faculty members can arrange for students without computer/internet access to do a “Correspondence Course.” Student support efforts are enhanced, including the Student Success Center being all virtual. All summer school courses will be exclusively online. OIT created a list of special internet programs, offered by popular providers, for students. OIT set up computer labs in three locations: 1) Foundation Hall, 2) Library, and 3) Dorgan Center. The labs will be limited to five users at a time, will have a staff member on site to assist, and the equipment will be cleaned after each use. OIT continues to work with vendors to obtain laptops and hot spot devices to loan to students in need.

The residence halls are open on a limited basis, and students are encouraged to stay at home. Check out days and times have been scheduled. Approximately 300 students have moved out already, with 360 students remaining. All remaining residents on campus will be consolidated to Foundation Hall. There are

currently 23 students and 16 residence hall assistants living on campus. Meals will be provided on a limited basis, via takeout, to students in residence halls and employees with a meal plan. All campus events are cancelled through the end of May, including the BPAC. At this time, Spring Commencement exercises are postponed indefinitely.

The Williams Bookstore and Post Office will be open with limited hours. The Williams Bookstore received notice from the Barnes and Noble executive office not to allow customers inside the store anymore after Monday, March 23. Orders can be made by phone or online. The Post Office will be open from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Monday – Saturday. The Counseling Center remains open with regular hours. Staff are available to assist remotely and support students.

Faculty can work/train/teach from their home or campus. All staff positions are designated as essential vs. non-essential, with a work routine established as: 1) report to campus for work, 2) work from home, and 3) rotational routine. The university implemented on March 23 the four-day work week, which will operate through August 6.

The university is waiting on guidance from the Department of Education regarding Federal Work Study students being paid. Legislation to allow universities to be able to pay Regular Student Employment students has been requested. All eight public universities will not decide on refunding a student's room and board until further guidance is given by IHL.

Facilities Management is increasing their efforts to sanitize all campus facilities. Hand sanitizing stations are being installed in high-touch areas on campus. Mandatory training regarding sanitation and social distancing was made available for all employees and residence hall students.

Cabinet members were given a listing of campus events affected by COVID-19 through August 2020. President LaForge asked Cabinet members to review the list to see if any important events were missing and to see if the action taken (continue via Zoom, cancel, or reschedule) is correct. Dr. McAdams informed Cabinet members Pre-Registration Week was not included on the list as the week will continue as planned, but advisors will speak with their advisees through Zoom conference calls or by phone. Ms. Swindle stated SGA elections would occur online from April 20-24, and SGA Inauguration would take place in June, July, or early in the Fall semester depending on schedules. Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet members the Campus Budget Review would continue as planned, but it would be through Zoom or live-streamed. President LaForge asked Mr. Oguz and Ms. Killebrew to work with Dr. Edwin Craft to see which medium worked best for this platform. Mr. Oguz informed Cabinet members the 2020 Senior Thesis Exhibition would be available online.

Cabinet members discussed additional items including summer camps; how to fully document the university's losses during this time; developing a time sheet for all employees to document administrative leave time taken; ACT waivers; and, the need for additional campus updates.

President LaForge informed Cabinet members it is required of them and all other employees, as well as students living on campus, to view the four links, sent by Chief Johns in an email last week, regarding sanitation and social distancing training.

BUSINESS

Action

Search and Hire approvals Cabinet members

In response to the Cabinet’s decision that all requests to search for and fill vacant positions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Cabinet, Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet a position for consideration. The position presented does not impact the salary savings identified previously to address the budget shortfall for this fiscal year.

Academic Affairs Faculty Request

Dr. McAdams presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire an Instructor of English for the Division of Languages and Literature.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of an Instructor of English and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Teach For America 2020 Delta Institute..... Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members Teach For America officials for the Teach For America Delta Institute are seeking affirmation on Delta State hosting the 2020 Institute. If Delta State hosts the Delta Institute, it would begin the last week in May and end July 15. Approximately 130 guests would be on campus using our residence halls and academic classrooms. Cabinet members were not comfortable giving confirmation to Teach For America when university camps weren’t being scheduled as of yet. Mr. Rutledge plans to speak to Mr. Ron Nurnberg and other officials for the Delta Institute to gather additional information prior to the university making a decision.

Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the Executive Committee continues to discuss the FY21 budget, and the need to combine new, enhanced revenue along with substantial reductions to our expenses. Ultimately, Delta State’s budget going forward needs to be sustainable, dependable, and reflect the university’s mission and priorities. The FY21 budget has several inevitable expenses that must be added including: \$500,000 for cash reserves; \$500,000 for a contingency fund; increase of \$90,000 for insurance premiums; and, increase of \$35,000 for workers’ compensation insurance. The total for these inevitable expenses is \$1,125,000. Additionally, Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members there are expenses paid each year that are not in the budget. Going forward the following expenses will be in the budget: GIT Instructor salary, Dissertation Committees fees, Compliance expenses, Radio Station expenses, Athletic Department travel, Student-Athlete meals, Student-Athlete insurance, escalation clauses for long term, travel and moving expenses. These non-budgeted items total \$1,533,000. Last week, Cabinet members discussed several items that could bring in new, enhanced revenue and offset some of our expenses including a \$1,000 per year tuition increase for international students, a four-day work week for the entire year, and a 6% tuition increase. The tuition increase for international students will generate an estimated \$130,000; the four-day work week all year will generate an estimated \$200,000; and, the 6% tuition increase will generate an estimated net of \$825,984. Two more items to offset our expenses is a decrease in Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships by \$117,000 and \$150,000 worth of scholarships rolling off the budget that will not be added back. Mr. Rutledge met with Mr. Charles Lindsey last week, and he is happy to

report our cash position is on schedule. We are slightly behind on our cash due to the Mississippi Financial Aid not being paid out, but we have now received 70% of what we are due.

Legislative UpdateMr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet Members that the Mississippi Legislature has taken a recess until early April, and there is nothing new to report.

Additional information

- Ms. Swindle announced applications for SGA elected positions will be available on April 4 and must be returned by April 20. All campaigning will be done through social media, and the election takes place April 20-24. Any runoffs will occur the next week. The newly elected SGA President will make a decision regarding appointed positions in the fall. SGA meets tonight, and they will continue to discuss the election code to ensure a successful election.
- SGA plans to do a Zoom Conference call next week on April 2 to allow students to voice concerns and ask questions. Ms. Swindle asked for Cabinet members to carve out time to participate. The State of the Student Union Address will take place during the call.
- Dr. Moon announced Delta State was approved as a Japan Outreach Initiative site due to the hard work of Ms. Michelle Johansen, and we will host a Japanese scholar for two years. Delta State is only one of ten sites picked in the United States this year.
- Ms. Killebrew announced the Student Success Center went live with the Academic Support Lab and online tutoring. Dr. Westfall informed Cabinet members the Division of Counseling Education and Psychology continues to work with the Student Success Center on their efforts with online advising as the division has been using this method for some time.
- Mr. Munroe announced the Alumni Association Meeting was cancelled, and Spring for Success Day was successful. All goals were not met, but the donations given will help towards achieving the goals.
- Ms. Swindle alerted Dr. McAdams to the University of Mississippi's student body petitioning for a pass/fail grading system, but Delta State students haven't voiced their interest in this system as of yet. Dr. McAdams informed Cabinet members the pass/fail grading system was discussed in Deans Council, and the system could likely affect a student's GPA.
- President LaForge announced the Diversity Committee has nominated Ms. Michelle Johansen as the next Diversity Committee chair for 2020-21.

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 30 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

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