

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: March 7, 2022**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vicki Bingham, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Mr. Rick Munroe, Dr. Andy Novobilski, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, Ms. Nakikke Wallace, Dr. Andrew Wegmann, and Mr. William Young (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** None

**Guests:** Dr. Josh Armstrong, President-Elect, Faculty Senate  
Ms. Caroline Fletcher, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council  
Dr. Leslie Griffin, Representative-Elect, Academic Council

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 7, 2022. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 28, 2022.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge introduced the incoming Cabinet members for FY23, who will shadow their counterparts from now until they transition into voting members on May 9, 2022: Academic Council Representative Leslie Griffin; Administrative Staff Council Chair-Elect Caroline Fletcher; and, Faculty Senate President-Elect Josh Armstrong. The incoming SGA President will be Ms. Lucia Chacon Habis.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The Ten Tenors: Love is in the Air performance was at the BPAC. The Delta Music Institute hosted the Thacker Mountain Radio Show. Mr. Young announced the SGA election results will be published on Tuesday. He stated a greater number of students voted in the election this year than in years past, and students thoroughly enjoyed voting via the Canvas system.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The university received the official award letter for the Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project. The project requires a 20% match of funds by the university, and Mr. Rutledge stated plant funds and insurance funds will be used to match the funds. The campus-wide roofing project is scheduled to be finished by the end of March. Facilities Management staff are replacing flooring in several of the elevators across campus. The bids for the Delta Music Institute roof and Broom Hall water damage projects are due on March 15. The parking lot behind Cain-Tatum Hall and Fugler-Hammett Hall needs repair, and a project will be bid out soon. The IHL system received the extension for unused FY22 Repair and Renovation funds.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The women's basketball team finished their season with a loss during their second game in the GSC Tournament. Members of the swimming and diving teams are

at the NCAA DII Swimming and Diving Championships in North Carolina. Competition begins on Wednesday. The softball team competed in a series with the University of Alabama-Huntsville over the weekend, and they won one game of the series. They will host Lee University this weekend. The baseball team hosted the University of Alabama-Huntsville over the weekend, and they won all games of the series. They travel to Southern Arkansas University on Wednesday, and they host a series with Lee University this weekend. The men’s tennis team will travel to Florida to compete against Saint Leo University and Florida Southern College. The golf team is competing in a tournament at Christian Brothers University today and tomorrow.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge continued his departmental visits with a visit to Dean Billy Moore in the College of Business and Aviation this morning. Beautiful: The Carole King Musical takes place at the BPAC this evening. President LaForge will participate in a conference call with Commissioner Al Rankins and the IEOs to discuss COVID-19 related issues on Tuesday. The NCAA Implementation Committee will meet tomorrow and the Budget Subcommittee of the NCAA Implementation Committee will meet on Friday. The Colloquia Speaker Series featuring Congressman David Bowen will take place on Tuesday. A VIP reception in his honor begins at 5:00 p.m. in Jobe Hall, followed by the lecture at 6:00 p.m. President LaForge is hosting a luncheon for Congressman Bowen and student leaders on Wednesday. The Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition opens on Thursday. President LaForge thanked those Cabinet members who contributed to the Cabinet Art Award. President LaForge, Dr. Novobilski, and Dr. Roberts will meet with Dr. Beverly Moon on Friday to discuss the university’s strategic plan. Spring Break for faculty and students is next week, and Cabinet will not meet on Monday, March 14.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Commencement Location and Time ..... Dr. Novobilski**

Dr. Novobilski recommended to Cabinet members an adjusted time for Spring 2022 Commencement. Based on the number of students scheduled to graduate, he recommended having just one ceremony instead of two. The one ceremony would take place at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, May 6, 2022 in Walter Sillers Coliseum.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Novobilski to adjust the Spring 2022 Commencement time and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Enrollment Update/Overview ..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin reviewed with Cabinet members the enrollment update and overview from Thursday, March 3: 56 confirmed students; 841 admitted students; 1,994 incomplete applications (missing documents); 323 online applications started; and, 4,982 prospects — for a total of 8,196 students being targeted for undergraduate admissions. As of today, 91 students have signed up for new student registration. We need 461 students to reach Dr. Lovin’s goal. The names of students who declined admission to the university are being sent to the Office of Financial Aid. Staff are calling the students to see if additional funding could change their mind about attending Delta State.

**Legislative Update ..... Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe provided Cabinet members with an update on the Mississippi legislative session. March 1 was the deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments that originated in the opposite chamber. March 9 is the deadline for original floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments that originated in the opposite chamber. Mr. Munroe provided an update on Mississippi’s Revenue Report for February 2022 — \$768 million. The Critical Race Theory legislation passed and will be sent to the Governor for signature. Mr. Young announced only six students attended Student Legislative Day due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the State Capitol. The students had great conversations with legislators. President LaForge and Mr. Munroe traveled to Washington, D.C. last week to speak to Mississippi’s Congressional delegation. They requested an increase in PELL grant funding for students and presented three proposals: 1) expansion of the campus radio station, 2) Center for Rural STEM Education (CRSE), and 3) extension of Statesmen Boulevard.

**SACSCOC Update ..... Dr. Novobilski**

Dr. Novobilski shared with Cabinet members an update on the university’s SACSCOC reaffirmation process. The monitoring report is in draft form, and comments and revisions by the Executive Committee are due soon. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee has narrowed down potential topics for the university’s next QEP. The QEP should be university mission-oriented, affordable, and help enhance student experiences and learning outcomes. The potential topics for the QEP are: 1) updating and upgrading the First Year Seminar program, and 2) career and professional preparation. President LaForge, Dr. Novobilski, and Dr. Roberts are scheduled to meet with Dr. Beverly Moon this week to discuss the university’s strategic plan and how to integrate the plan into the university’s long-term goals.

**Commencement Location and Time ..... Dr. Novobilski**

Dr. Novobilski informed Cabinet members he polled Academic Council and the Executive Committee about the location and time of Spring 2022 Commencement. Those polled were asked to choose between the BPAC and Walter Sillers Coliseum for the location, and also to provide input on having one or two ceremonies. The majority of responses favored having one ceremony in Walter Sillers Coliseum. Dr. Novobilski recommended to Cabinet members for Spring 2022 Commencement to begin at 10:00 a.m. in Walter Sillers Coliseum. With COVID-19 restrictions lifted, students will receive seven tickets each.

**Budget Plans for FY23 – update ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members an update on the budget planning process for FY23. The budget worksheets are scheduled to be distributed this week. The Executive Committee is working on the first draft of the FY23 budget. The current enrollment projection for Fall 2022 to be used for budget planning purposes is 2,275, and the total reduction to the university budget based on enrollment is \$3.4 million. With the proposed increase in tuition, as well as projected savings, the remaining reductions needed are \$830,000. If Cabinet approves adding a \$500,000 cash contingency to the budget, \$1.3 million in reductions will be needed. FY23 budget recommendations will be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting.

**Additional Information**

- Mr. Munroe announced that Ms. Jutta Karnstedt Ferretti, Delta State’s oldest graduate, passed away in December 2021. He recently received word that she left for Delta State an estate gift that will put into her endowment fund.

- The Administrative Staff Council meets on Wednesday, and the Administrative Staff Council Executive Committee has to submit by close of business today their votes on staff emeritus nominations. Ms. Wallace will bring recommendations to the next Cabinet meeting for President LaForge's approval.
- Mr. Young announced this week is The Big Green Event Awareness Week. On Tuesday and Thursday, SGA will be on campus giving donuts to students to encourage them to sign up for the Big Green Event. The last day for project idea submissions is March 18.
- Dr. Novobilski plans to participate in a conference call with IHL on Wednesday to discuss mapping credits for students coming out of the military. On Wednesday, the Delta Leadership Academy will be in Cleveland. They will tour areas of campus beginning at 1:00 p.m.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, March 7, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Colloquia Lecture Series with The Honorable David Bowen, March 8, 6:00 p.m., Jobe Auditorium
- Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition Opening, March 10, Fielding Wright Art Museum
- Spring Break week, March 14-18
- Groundbreaking Ceremony, Building Expansion and Renovation Project, Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, March 21, 1:00 p.m.
- Winning the Race Conference, March 27-29
- SGA Cabinet to President's Cabinet, March 28

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 21, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – FY23 Budget Recommendations

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.