

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: May 17, 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. Charles McAdams (via Zoom), Mr. Rick Munroe (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: None

Guests: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on May 17, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Dr. Wegmann, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on May 10, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last week. The ribbon cutting and official grand opening of the President's new home was splendid, and President LaForge thanked Mr. Rutledge and his staff for their excellent work in planning the event. The GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi Board met for their quarterly business meeting. President LaForge and Mr. Munroe met with Mr. Neal Holcomb to discuss the Mississippi Breast Foundation funding and to reaffirm the university will continue to receive monies from the foundation, despite the recent deaths of Drs. Robert and Mary Elliott. GRAMMY Museum Mississippi opened a new exhibit, MTV Turns Forty: I Still Want My MTV, and President and Mrs. LaForge attended an opening reception for museum patrons.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Women's soccer coach Mr. Mark Hiller and his staff were named 2021 Regional Coaching Staff of the Year by the United Soccer Coaches. The baseball team travels to the University of West Florida today for the Gulf South Conference championship series. The series will be a best of three series with the first two games on Tuesday and Wednesday. The third game will be played on Thursday, if needed.
- President LaForge congratulated Mr. Kinnison on his recognition by Madison-Ridgeland Academy and Jackson Preparatory School for his contributions to high school baseball.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The Mayers' Aquatics Center HVAC project is complete. The campus-wide elevator project will begin on June 1. The contractors estimate a completion date of July 31. The remainder of the roofing project materials will not be delivered until July 1. The contractor for the roofing project plans to hire additional crew members in order to finish

the project by the agreed upon deadline of August 1. The renovation projects in the residence halls are in full force. The demolition within Lawler-Harkins Hall is complete. The contractors are connecting the chilled water loop to Lawler-Harkins Hall this week. The renovations and deep cleaning of Cain-Tatum Hall are underway. The university will work with attorney Mr. Pope Mallette on the Memorandum of Understanding for the golf course development project. The convenience store in the Young-Mauldin Cafeteria will return to the H. L. Nowell Student Union this summer. The convenience store will be located in the northwest corner of the first floor of H.L. Nowell Student Union, and all supplies and materials will be moved from Young-Mauldin Cafeteria. A glass front will be added to the convenience store, and funds from the Young-Mauldin Cafeteria reconstruction project will be used to pay for the glass front.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Institutional Executive Officers meet on Wednesday morning. President LaForge and Dr. McAdams have a meeting with Cleveland School District Superintendent Otha Belcher Wednesday afternoon. The IHL Board of Trustees meet on Thursday. President LaForge called Delta State donors Dr. Percy Malone and Mr. Fred Pittman this morning to give them a university update.

CABINET TOPIC

None

BUSINESS

Action

Administrative Staff Council Staff Appreciation Week Ms. Wallace

Ms. Wallace announced the Administrative Staff Council will sponsor a staff appreciation week July 12-15. The annual staff development day was changed to a staff appreciation week in an effort to practice social distancing and keep staff members safe. Dr. Wayne Blansett will be honored throughout the week in some way. Ms. Wallace stated the agenda for the week is not complete; however, the plan is to have a different activity each day for a couple of hours. Ms. Wallace will present the final agenda to Cabinet members upon completion.

Motion: Moved by Ms. Wallace to grant the Administrative Staff Council permission to proceed with planning the Administrative Staff Council Appreciation Week and seconded by Dr. Wegmann. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Newly revised CDC mask guidelines' impact on campus buildings..... Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams shared with Cabinet members the recent Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recent change to their COVID-19 protocols:

- Fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting; except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local businesses and workplace guidance.

Dr. McAdams led Cabinet members in a discussion as to whether or not the university should continue with its mask mandate for campus buildings. If the university changes its COVID-19 protocols to reflect the

CDC’s recommendations, Ms. Douglas wants to ensure university employees are vaccinated with U.S. recommended vaccinations. Mr. Rutledge requested the opinion of Dr. Steven Clark on wearing masks after one is fully vaccinated, and Dr. Clark stated there is no reason to wear a mask after vaccinating. Several Cabinet members raised the question of the process for verifying an employee’s vaccination status. The topic will be reviewed further by the Executive Committee, and recommendations will be made to the Cabinet prior to any changes being made to the university’s COVID-19 protocols. Also, Ms. Wallace and Dr. Weggman will seek input from their constituency groups, and will provide an update to Cabinet members.

HEERF funds for students – allocation ideas Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members the university will receive another substantial amount of Higher Education Emergency Relief funds for students, and the university may have up to two years to spend the funds. He and Dr. Megan Smith are reviewing the mode of allocation for previous funds to see which student groups have special needs due to COVID-19. With an increase in the spending period, Dr. Keppler shared the idea of splitting the allocation into two gifts instead of one lump sum gift. Cabinet members suggested using the funds to help recruit new students to Delta State. Dr. Keppler will work with Mr. Merritt Dain and Dr. Smith on this idea.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Last year at this time, the university had \$5,063,000 in the bank. Currently, the university has \$7,593,000 million in the bank. If the university continues to meet its targets, the cash goal will be met by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Rutledge reminded Cabinet members the university will receive Higher Education Emergency Relief funds for students and for university use. Once the funds are available for use, the university will have to spend any requested funds within three days of receiving the funds.

Additional information

- Mr. Rutledge will bring the Annual Operating Budget to the June 1st Cabinet meeting for Cabinet members approval. Dr. Keppler announced the first session of orientation occurs in three weeks.
- Dr. Keppler announced that 199 new students pre-registered for the fall semester.
- Mr. Munroe shared with Cabinet members the Alumni Affairs staff hosted Delta State alumnus Pete Golding for lunch over the weekend. Mr. Golding and his family will be the cover story for the next Alumni and Friends magazine.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Bolivar County Alumni Crawfish Boil, May 26, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., Quadrangle
- Martha Reeves performance, May 27, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Delta Council Annual Meeting, June 4
- Orientation Session #1, June 8, in person
- Clay Walker performance, June 10, 7:30 p.m., BPAC

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, May 24 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.