

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: October 26, 2021

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: None

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on October 26, 2021. The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Munroe and seconded by Dr. Novobilski, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on October 18, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- On behalf of Cabinet members, President LaForge wished Mr. Munroe an early happy birthday.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The College of Business and Aviation hosted their lecture series featuring Major General Leon Collins. The Office of Admissions hosted a High School Preview Day and a visit for Copiah-Lincoln Community College. The Institutional Executive Officers met last week. Three main topics of the meeting were: continuing with the mask mandate throughout the IHL system; University of Mississippi's Commission on the Status of Women's enhancement to donor leave benefit protocol; and, President Joe Biden's Executive Order for all employees to be vaccinated. The IHL Board of Trustees held their monthly meeting. President LaForge continued his departmental visits with visits to the Division of Counselor Education and Psychology and Institutional Grants. He participated in a fundraising meeting for the Winning the Race Conference. Okra OUT hosted the Rainbow Run and Drag Show. President LaForge met with former Congressional Fellow Synethia Mathews to discuss his time as Chief of Staff for Senator Thad Cochran. President LaForge attended the Mississippi Department of Archives and History Board of Trustees Reception, and he met with Ms. Pam Chatman to discuss community outreach and partnering with the Social Work Department. The Delta State Foundation hosted a bench dedication ceremony by the entrance to Caylor-White Hall for Ms. Brenda King Holcombe. President and Mrs. LaForge hosted two events at their home this week: the Great Pumpkin #PartywiththePrez on Monday for students and the rescheduled luncheon for employees on Tuesday. Both events went very well.
- The IHL Board of Trustees called a special meeting yesterday to discuss President Biden's Executive Order requiring agencies with federal contracts to require all employees be vaccinated. The Board of Trustees voted to uphold the Executive Order, and all public universities engaged with federal

contracts must require that all employees be vaccinated against COVID-19 by December 8. Delta State is potentially among that group. We are currently evaluating our status regarding federal contracts, and will issue further guidance once the review and consultations are complete.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The campus-wide roofing project has a new contract manager. The campus-wide elevator project is on schedule, and the needed equipment and parts are arriving. A substantial-completion walkthrough for the elevator project occurs next week. Facilities Management is working on projects funded by Renovation and Repair funds, as well as projects funded by Higher Education Emergency Relief funds.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The football team defeated the University of West Alabama over the weekend, and they will host Shorter University for the Homecoming game on Saturday. The cross country team competed in the GSC Championship meet at Mississippi College last week. This meet marks the end of their season. Both tennis teams competed at University of Alabama-Montgomery over the weekend. This match marks their last exhibition until spring play begins. The golf team is competing in the Rogers Cup at Rogers State University today and tomorrow. The men’s and women’s soccer teams competed against Union University and Christian Brothers University over the weekend. Each team won one game and tied for the other. Both teams compete this weekend against University of West Florida and Spring Hill College. The women’s basketball team has an exhibition game against Mississippi Valley State University on Sunday, and the men’s basketball team has an exhibition game against University of Southern Mississippi next week. The swimming and diving teams competed against Missouri S&T University and McKendree University, and they will travel to Ouachita Baptist University next week. The yearly Athletic Alumni meeting is scheduled for Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in the Miller and Rebekah Arant Family Meeting Room. Athletics will host Bolivar County athletic alumni and Statesmen Club members for a tailgate prior to the game at Statesmen Park on Saturday. During the football game, the 2022 Athletic Hall of Fame class will be announced. The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Trunk or Treat event will be held on Monday, November 1.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Delta State Foundation, in conjunction with Dr. and Mrs. Ned Mitchell, will host a Vision event for Athletics on Thursday night at the President’s home. The BPAC has a performance by Don Felder on Thursday evening. President LaForge is hosting the Alumni Association Board of Directors and Foundation Board of Directors for lunch at his home on Friday. The Amanda and Joe Baker Laboratory Dedication is scheduled for Friday at 2:00 p.m. in Caylor-White Hall. The Golden Circle Reception will take place on Friday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the Simmons Room, followed by the Alumni Awards Gala and Golden Circle Induction Ceremony at 6:00 p.m. in the Leroy E. Morganti Atrium in Kent Wyatt Hall. Homecoming activities continue on Saturday with a Golden Circle and Veterans Breakfast and Veterans Ceremony beginning at 8:30 a.m. in Jobe Hall. The Homecoming Parade begins at 10:30 a.m., and the Homecoming tailgate begins at 12:00 p.m. in Statesmen Park.

CABINET TOPIC

Enrollment and Budget Outlook..... President LaForge

President LaForge and the Executive Committee shared with Cabinet members the current outlook of the university’s enrollment and how it will affect our budget. The Executive Committee has analyzed the university’s enrollment in the interest of making better and informed decisions during the budget planning process in early Spring, as well as with university-wide recruitment efforts. Delta State experienced a decrease in enrollment the last several years. A large portion of the decrease in 2019 was related to the implementation of a cap on Phi Theta Kappa scholarships. The drop in enrollment for Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 is attributed primarily to COVID-19 challenges. Dr. Lovin plans to work with the Office of Admissions on ways to enhance our recruiting approach and be more intentional. Some of Dr. Lovin’s ideas to

revitalize recruitment efforts are: looking for new recruitment areas; greater outreach to community colleges; recruit harder in the Memphis area; ensure all scholarship funds are used to recruit potential students; increase application waiver days; and, use EAB data to increase our prospective student pool. Dr. Lovin and Dr. Novobilski created an ad hoc enrollment committee that diagrammed the entire recruitment process from the initial point of contact with a potential student until the student's first day of classes. The committee determined the university has a hole in its process from the time a student registers until the time they begin classes. The university needs to continually recruit students until their arrival on campus. To continually recruit students, efforts will be needed from all faculty and staff. Through the Executive Committee's analysis of enrollment data, they determined the data used for budget planning and the data used for retention/recruitment efforts is not the same data. The Executive Committee is working with the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning and OIT to clean up the university's data, as well as to create a dashboard of data available for making informed decisions regarding recruitment and retention. Dr. Novobilski shared strategies the university can use for recruitment and retention: recruit our former students who left due to difficult situations; faculty engaging students to help with retention; and, International Services recruiting. Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning created a report that shows the changes in enrollment from Fall 2000 to Fall 2021. The report does not include Dual Credit students or Teach For America students. Fall 2006 boasts the highest enrollment in the 21-year span with more than 4,000 students. Since that time, the university has experienced a 38% decline in enrollment. Some of the issues leading to this drastic decline are: changes in Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships; having a larger number of students graduate/leave Delta State than the number of new students we are bringing in/enrolling; and, COVID-19 challenges. With the university's continued battle in decreased enrollment, the Foundation has pledged to enhance their fundraising efforts. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members that the bulk of the university's operating budget comes from tuition funds. With a decrease in enrollment, the university's available operating funds decrease, as well. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members a report of possible budget scenarios for FY23. He shared a side by side comparison of a realistic projected enrollment for the 2022-23 academic year, as well as enrollment for 2022-23 based on 2021-22 enrollment. Through his comparison, he detailed the estimated tuition and the potential deficit the university could face. Mr. Rutledge and the Executive Committee are reviewing various options to address the projected budget deficit, including reviewing contracts and programs, considering outsourcing capabilities, and possibly postponing projects. Additional discussions on how the university can remedy any deficit will occur throughout the budget planning process.

BUSINESS

Action

Naming of Campus Facilities policy (revised – final reading)Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe brought to Cabinet the revised Naming of Campus Facilities policy for a final reading. The naming of buildings, programs, and other facilities at Delta State University, such as laboratories, classrooms, auditoriums, offices and common areas, is one manner in which the university can honor an individual's contributions to the institution. Any recommendation for the naming of buildings, parts of buildings, or outdoor areas of the campus shall be based on what is in the best interest of the university. Mr. Munroe suggested revising the title of the policy to Naming Opportunities, and he suggested the owner of the policy change from Human Resources to University Advancement. In the revised policy, requests to name a building, facility, program, or other space on campus in recognition of a financial gift, recognition of service, or achievement must be approved by the President of the university, in conjunction with the President's Executive Committee, and a majority vote of the President's Cabinet. With the revisions of the policy, the current Naming Advisory Committee will cease and all naming opportunities will be brought to the President's Cabinet.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Munroe to approve the final reading of the Naming Opportunities policy and seconded by Dr. Novobilski. The motion was approved.

Discussion

None

Additional Information

- Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet members the next Cabinet meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 2 at 1:30 p.m. If there are any conflicts, please let her know.
- Dr. Roberts discussed with Cabinet members the rescheduling of the Welcome Back Reception hosted by the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce. Cabinet members agreed to proceed with rescheduling the event.
- Dr. Roberts, along with Dr. Vicki Bingham, shared with Cabinet members the recent announcement that Bolivar Medical Center had been purchased by Kindred Healthcare.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Homecoming Week, October 25-30
- Don Felder performance, October 28, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Alumni Gala, October 29, 6:00 p.m., Leroy E. Morganti Atrium, Kent Wyatt Hall
- Homecoming Parade, October 30, 2021, 10:30 a.m.
- Homecoming game vs. Shorter University, October 30, 2:00 p.m., Travis E. Parker Field
- Campus Forum, November 11, 2021, 3:00 p.m., Union 302A

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Campus Forum (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.