

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: October 4, 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 4, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Dr. Novobilski, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on September 27, 2021.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- On behalf of Cabinet members, President LaForge wished Dr. Wegmann an early happy birthday.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge had a lunch meeting with Ms. Anita Bologna. Mr. Munroe and Mr. James Forte met with President LaForge to give him an update on Homecoming plans. President LaForge began his departmental visits with a visit to Athletics and the Jimmy R. Williams Bookstore. Ms. Michelle Johansen, Dr. Natasha Barnes, and Ms. Faderricka Harvey met with President LaForge to provide him an update on the plan for the 2022 Winning the Race Conference. The BPAC performance of Shake and Holla was last week in conjunction with the International Conference of the Blues, which was held in-person and virtually on Friday.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The residence hall roofing project will be finished in mid-December, and the residence hall renovations will be completed in January. The elevator project remains on schedule; however, there is a problem with receiving some parts and equipment. The estimated completion date for the roofing project is February. Bids for the School of Nursing project will be released in December, and the construction should begin in the spring. Mr. Rutledge announced the university is going to use insurance funds from winter storm damage to replace the roof on the Delta Music Institute. Mr. Rutledge is getting quotes for the project this week. Mr. Rutledge submitted paperwork for another grant from MDOT to replace additional sections of the university's sidewalks. One of the Dectron units in the Mayers' Aquatics Center is not working properly; however, the issue should be fixed by the swim meet this weekend. On October 1, the university transferred its information technology services from an outsourced entity to in-house, and the unit is now fully staffed. Mr. Rutledge announced all food vendors and the Jimmy R. Williams Bookstore will be open on Homecoming.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The Biennial Baseball Reunion went very well, and more than 100 baseball alumni were in attendance throughout the weekend. The football team lost their game to the University of West Florida over the weekend, but the team played an excellent game. The women’s soccer team won both matches over the weekend against University of West Alabama and University of Alabama-Huntsville. They will host the University of West Georgia and Valdosta State University this weekend. The men’s soccer team won their match against University of West Alabama and lost their match against University of Alabama-Huntsville over the weekend. Their next game is October 22. The men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams have their first meet this weekend at home against Rhodes College. The cross country team competes at the University of Alabama-Huntsville on Saturday. The Athletic Hall of Fame Committee met last week to select the 2022 Athletic Hall of Fame induction class. The 2022 induction class will be announced during Homecoming weekend. The induction ceremony for the 2022 class, as well as the 2020 class (which was not inducted due to COVID-19 restrictions) will be held Friday, April 8, 2022. An induction class was not selected for 2021 due to COVID-19.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge visited with DMI students in the “Meet the Beatles” class this morning. The “Voices from the Sit-In” screening occurs tonight in the BPAC at 6:00 p.m. A pre-reception will be held at 5:00 p.m. at the President’s home. President LaForge will participate in a conference call on Tuesday with Commissioner Al Rankins and the Institutional Executive Officers to discuss COVID-19 related issues. The Foundation Capital Campaign Steering Committee meets on Tuesday. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meet on Tuesday. President LaForge will participate in a segment of the Statesmen Insider on Wednesday. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce’s Octoberfest will be held on Friday and Saturday. Fall Break for students and faculty is scheduled for Monday, October 11 and Tuesday, October 12. Cabinet will not meet on Monday, October 11. The next Cabinet meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 18.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Naming Campus Facilities policy (revised – first reading).....Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe brought to Cabinet the revised Naming of Campus Facilities policy for a first 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 revised 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 revised Naming of Campus Facilities policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Mask Requirement ..... President LaForge**

President LaForge asked IHL Commissioner Al Ranks to discuss the mask mandate during their weekly teleconference on COVID-19 issues on Tuesday. President LaForge will provide an update on the mask mandate soon.

**Use of O.W. Reily Health Center ..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin announced the objective of the O.W. Reily Health Center will be to pilot it for student usage initially. This pilot was suggested by the university physician, Dr. Steven Clark, and was agreed upon by the Executive Committee. Ms. LaJoyce Stewart, the Nurse Practitioner for the O.W. Reily Health Center, will provide basic care to students and will purchase supplies as needed. The O.W. Reily Health Center will be able to test for flu, COVID-19, and strep; and, Ms. Stewart will be able to order certain labs/x-rays to be completed at Bolivar Medical Center. Ms. Stewart will meet with Dr. Clark on a quarterly base for collaboration. The future plans of the O.W. Reily Health Center are: to offer services to faculty and staff and to have a health care policy for students and/or a health services fee to help sustain health services. Mr. Rutledge and Dr. Lovin will work together to send out a memo to faculty and staff about the health center changes.

**Appendix 9c: Modifications to Existing Degree Program Proposal (Deletion of Master of Education in Health, Physical Education, Recreation) ..... Dr. Novobilski**

On the recommendation and approval of Academic Council, Dr. Novobilski shared with Cabinet members “Appendix 9c: Modifications to Existing Degree Program Proposal: Deletion of Master of Education in Health, Physical Education, Recreation.” In 2016, and again in 2019, the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning approved “to continue with stipulation” the Master of Education in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (MEd in HPER) degree to allow the program to grow in viability. The current Institutions of Higher Learning Academic Guidelines define academic productivity at the graduate level as the graduation of 12 students over a three-year period. The total number of graduates from the MEd in HPER at Delta State University over the past three years was two. Trends over the past five years indicated fewer students enrolled and fewer graduates in the MEd in HPER, while there was an increase in enrollment and graduates in the Master's in Sport and Human Performance. The HPER Graduate Curriculum Committee recommends that the MEd in HPER be deleted and proposes to follow appropriate guidelines for this approval and the development of a timeline to provide a teach-out for candidates currently in the pipeline.

**Appendix 9c: Modifications to Existing Degree Program Proposal (Deletion of Master of Special Education) ..... Dr. Novobilski**

On the recommendation and approval of Academic Council, Dr. Novobilski shared with Cabinet members “Appendix 9c: Modifications to Existing Degree Program Proposal: Deletion of Master of Special Education.” Though there remains a teacher shortage in this area, the pathways for meeting the special education requirements have changed and will continue to change, which will, in effect, reduce the demand for the Master of Special Education. With the reinstatement of the endorsement and minor in special education for undergraduate students, along with the ability to add a SPED license to an existing teaching license through the Praxis II examination, there is not a demand for a separate Master’s degree in Special Education. Furthermore, upon the final recommendations for alternate route programming from the Mississippi Department of Education, the unit will begin implementing a Special Education track for

those seeking an initial teaching license in SPED through Delta State's Master of Arts in Teaching program. Despite the deletion of the Master of Special Education, the institution will still be able to meet its mission of meeting the demands of the profession. The Master of Education in Special Education is currently being reviewed by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation as an advanced program, and removing it will not negatively impact accreditation. No other academic programs will be affected until a separate special education track for the Master of Arts in Teaching is developed, approved, and implemented in the future. The deletion will affect one faculty member, and there 18 students presently enrolled in the program.

**Octoberfest Sponsorship ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet members the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce's Octoberfest event is scheduled for Friday, October 8 and Saturday, October 9. Delta State is an in-kind "Boss Hog" sponsor for the event through the usage of our tables, chairs, and Facilities Management staff for setup. Through our sponsorship, the university has the opportunity to set up a 10'x10' tent at the event. Dr. Roberts asked Cabinet members contact her as soon as possible if any their departments would want to set up an informational area at the event.

**Additional Information**

- Dr. Novobilski thanked President LaForge for his letter of support for the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area.
- The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Board is on campus this week. Dr. Novobilski met with the group this morning, and the exit interview will take place on Tuesday.
- Dr. Wegmann announced that his book French Connections, won the Wilson Award, and he can attend the award ceremony in Canada in January.
- The Student Government Association is going to provide Chick-fil-a gift cards to the first 50 students at the "Voices from the Sit-in" screening.
- Ms. Wallace announced the Office of Career Services held their last career fair, and she is gearing up to for the Miss Delta State University pageant. The Administrative Staff Council meets on Wednesday.
- Dr. Lovin will attend the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Institute for New Vice Presidents next week.
- Mr. Rutledge announced the Grants Accountant has resigned, and the position will be posted soon.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- "Voices from the Sit-In" screening, October 4, 6:00 p.m., BPAC
- Fall Break, October 11-12
- Martina McBride, October 14, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Delta State football vs. North Greenville University, October 16, 2:00 p.m., Parker Field
- Okra Out Rainbow Run, October 21, 5:30 p.m., Quadrangle
- Okra Out Drag Show, October 21, 7:00 p.m., Jobe Hall – Auditorium

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, October 18, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.