

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: September 7, 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, Dr. Andrew Wegmann, and Mr. William Young (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: Ms. Nakikke Wallace

Guests: Mr. James Forte, Director, Alumni Affairs and Annual Fund

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on September 7, 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 Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on August 30, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge met with student Colin Bonds to discuss his training for the Boston Marathon. The next segment of President LaForge's Statesmen Insider was filmed with guest Mr. James Forte to discuss Pig Pickin'. The second session of President LaForge's Leadership class met and Dr. Novobilski was the guest lecturer. Dr. Rolando Herts, Dr. Shelley Collins, and Mr. Don Allan Mitchell provided President LaForge and Dr. Novobilski with an update on the plans for the Blues Conference. President LaForge had lunch with Dr. Chip Morgan and provided him with an update on the university. President LaForge was interviewed by the *Bolivar Bullet* regarding the Golf Course development. He was also interviewed by the *Enterprise-Tocsin* regarding his 9/11 story. President LaForge hosted a small group of community leaders at his home for lunch and provided them with an update on the university.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The materials for the roofing project were delivered, and they will be on site next week. Renovations in Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, and Lawler-Harkins Hall are 95% complete. The remainder of the renovations cannot be completed until the roofing project is complete. The elevator project will be complete by the end of October. The architect for the Foundation Hall renovations project recommended the university paint the entire residence hall, install new carpet and tile, modify the plumbing, install a new hot water system, clean all duct work, and replace lighting with LED lighting. The estimated cost for the project is \$2.3 million. Once initiated by the Bureau of Buildings and IHL, the project will be advertised in December, with a start date in the Spring. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members of water leaks on campus today which are causing road closures and several buildings to be without water while the repairs are made.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The football team defeated Bethel University, and they will compete at home against McKendree University on Saturday. First responders will be recognized during the game in honor of the 20th anniversary of 9/11. The cross-country team competed at Mississippi College and finished in sixth place. Freshmen Anna Clark led the Delta State team and finished 15 out of 76. The women’s soccer team lost both of their matches over the weekend. They will travel to Florida this weekend to play Palm Beach Atlantic University and Lynn University. The men’s soccer team won one game over the weekend. They will host Ouachita Baptist University on Friday and Harding University on Sunday. The searches for Head Coaches of the golf team and tennis teams are still underway. The alcohol sales from last week’s football game were approximately \$2,900.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge participated in a conference call this morning with Dr. Al Rankins and the IEOs to discuss COVID-19 related issues. President LaForge provided a campus update to the Bolivar County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator this morning. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met at noon today, and Dr. Novobilski was their guest speaker. President LaForge will provide a campus update to the City of Cleveland Board of Aldermen and Mayor tonight, and he will visit with Entergy President Haley Fisackerly and other community members later tonight. On Wednesday, President LaForge will travel to Hernando High School for a recruiting visit. The Office of Student Life is hosting a Student Leadership Conference on Thursday.

CABINET TOPIC

Pig Pickin’Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe invited Mr. James Forte, Director of Alumni Affairs and Annual Fund, to the Cabinet meeting to discuss the Pig Pickin’ schedule for the weekend. The Memphis Barbeque Network (MBN) Cooking Competition begins on Friday evening. They currently have 21 barbeque teams registered. On Saturday, the Delta Radio Network live show begins at Statesmen Park at 9:00 a.m., and the MBN Cooking Competition resumes at 9:45 a.m. Statesmen Park opens at 12:00 p.m. with a welcome from Alumni Association Board President John Fletcher. Food vendors will be available this year including Ubon’s BBQ, Levee Break Grill, Dominos, and Mac’s Shaved Ice. The Delta Health Alliance will be in Statesmen Park offering free COVID-19 vaccinations. The Student Alumni Association will host a Family Zone, and live music will be performed by DMI students and professors and the Blue Elephant Club. The Bolivar County Fire Department, Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department, and other regional firemen are going to do a simulated 112 floor walk in McCool Stadium in honor of the 20th anniversary of 9/11. The football team and cheerleaders will do a walkthrough of Statesmen Park prior to the football game. Mr. Forte informed Cabinet members his goal for the 2021 Pig Pickin’ weekend is to increase alumni engagement, especially those in Bolivar County, and to increase revenue. Also, no events were set for Friday evening this year due to feedback received from Pig Pickin’ partners. To provide an event for students, the Office of Student Affairs plans to host a student event in Statesmen Park Friday evening. Any student group setting up in Statesmen Park for Friday evening has strict guidelines to follow. Also, Dr. Lovin has scheduled for trash pick to begin at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday.

BUSINESS

Action

None

Discussion

Enrollment UpdateDr. Lovin and Dr. Novobilski

Dr. Novobilski announced the university 's enrollment is currently down 159 students, not including Dual Credit students, which is a 6% decrease. Graduate students have increased by 10 students, and Dual Enrollment has declined by 85 students. Dr. Lovin and Dr. Novobilski created an Ad Hoc committee on Enrollment Management, and the first meeting of the committee will occur soon. The first meeting will map out the process from the time a student expresses interest in Delta State until the student's first day of class. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members tuition revenue is down \$870,000, and it is trending to be down \$700,000 for the Spring. During the Spring 2021 budget process, contingencies were built into the budget to cover a decrease in enrollment.

Additional Information:

- Dr. Lovin announced the Office of Admissions Preview Day will be related to the Statesmen Kickback Day held in the Spring.
- Dr. Bingham announced the Office of Career Services is hosting a Nursing Recruitment Day on Thursday. There will be 12 vendors in attendance, which is down from the 22-25 vendors that typically attend.
- Mr. Young announced SGA is planning on hosting an event for the first conference football game against University of West Florida on October 2.
- Dr. Wegmann inquired about the COVID-19 Dashboard, and Dr. Lovin announced it is now available on the website. The Dashboard will be updated each Monday.
- Dr. Novobilski is completing his "Get to Know" tour, and he is finishing the tour with Faculty Senate this week.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- DSU Leadership Conference, September 9, 6:00 p.m., via Zoom
- Pig Pickin', September 10-11
- Undergraduate Admissions Preview Day, September 11
- Delta State football vs. McKendree University, September 11, 6:00 p.m., Parker Field
- Constitution Day, September 16, 4:00 p.m., Jobe Hall Auditorium, Speaker – Dr. Ben Wright

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, September 13, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plans for FY22 (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.