

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: August 29, 2016

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Mr. Keith Fulcher, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Chris Jurgenson, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Ms. Allie Rose Parker, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Ms. Christie Rocconi, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Ms. Arlene Sanders, Chair, Diversity Committee

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on August 29, 2016. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Jurgenson, seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on August 22, 2016.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Last week, President LaForge attended "Women in the Round," a fundraiser for Delta Music Institute, hosted by Tricia Walker and her friends from Nashville. President LaForge stated it was a great event.
- President LaForge asked Mr. Fulcher to discuss the luncheon meeting with the Casey Family Programs, which was held on campus last week. Mr. Fulcher said they gathered a better understanding of the Casey Family Programs' mission, and said this knowledge will help build relationships. The four members of the Casey Family Programs group who attended the luncheon were very impressed with Delta State and the commitment our employees have to the region.
- President LaForge, Dr. McAdams, and Dr. Rolando Herts will meet with a representative from the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Services on Tuesday. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the possibility of hosting an "Engage Mississippi President's Summit on Community Engagement" at Delta State.
- President LaForge stated *Mississippi Today* is promoting their online publication to the Delta with events on Tuesday and Wednesday. The first event is a launch party at GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi on Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. hosted by *Mississippi Today*. All faculty and staff are invited to attend this event. On Wednesday morning, Delta State is hosting a lecture featuring Andrew Lack, Walter Issacson, and Jim Barksdale. The event begins at 9:00 a.m. in Jobe Hall Auditorium with coffee and pastries served at 8:30 a.m. President LaForge urged Cabinet Members to spread the word to their constituencies in order to gather a large crowd for the event. *Mississippi Today* hopes to create a relationship with Delta State by having interns from our Languages and Literature program.
- President LaForge will give the welcome to the First Year Seminar Okra Rally on Wednesday evening at Parker Field-McCool Stadium.

- The Levitt AMP Music Series kicks off for the second year on Wednesday night on the green space on the Crosstie Walking Trail in downtown Cleveland with the Southern Komfort Brass Band. This concert series is a program the Delta Music Institute and the City of Cleveland bid on each year to bring free concerts to the Cleveland community. President LaForge stated this is a great way to bring the community together.
- Delta State’s football season opens on Thursday night against Kentucky Wesleyan College. Mr. Mayers said the game starts at 6:00 p.m. with game day operations beginning early afternoon. Prior to kickoff, the Okra Patch group will gather at Statesmen Park. Dr. Roberts shared with Cabinet Members the new format for the President’s Reception. She stated the Reception is for invited guests only. The “All-Access” athletic passes do not include the Reception, and the Reception area should not be used as a seating area for those with accessibility issues. Also, the reception is for adults only. The “Kids Zone” is available for guests with children. She asked Cabinet members to assist in making sure everyone is aware of these changes.

CABINET TOPIC

Diversity Committee Annual Report..... President LaForge

President LaForge introduced Ms. Arlene Sanders, Chair of the Diversity Committee. Ms. Sanders stated the main goals of the Diversity Committee are to launch a campus wide “Diversity Awareness Campaign” to promote multicultural awareness and sensitivity, encourage the university to create a Chief Diversity Officer, offer more opportunities for campus constituencies to discuss diversity issues, provide ongoing opportunities for employees and students to enhance their understanding of diversity issues, and provide additional programming that focuses on diversity issues. This past year, the Diversity Committee presented more than twelve programs and pledged financial support to university activities that coincided with revised programmatic goals. Programs afford students, faculty, staff, and the community opportunities to engage in discussions about diversity issues, and they promote the importance of understanding the impact of diversity in our schools and communities. The Diversity Committee promoted Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, LGBTQ, etc. through panel discussions, movies, performances, and trainings. The “Georgene Clark Diversity Champion Award” was created by the Diversity Committee to recognize the efforts of one faculty, staff, division, student, or organization that is committed to ensuring Delta State is a welcoming place for all. Ms. Sanders informed Cabinet Members of a few upcoming events in September, including a Panel Discussion on Voting Rights. Dr. McAdams thanked Ms. Sanders for her and the committee’s work on helping create a welcoming environment in the classroom for all students. A suggestion from Dr. McAdams was to align the Georgene Clark Diversity Champion award with the IHL Diversity Award of Excellence in order for the university to have one “champion.” Dr. McAdams and Ms. Sanders will work together to explore this option. President LaForge announced that he is going to appoint a Diversity Task Force to catalog various campus diversity initiatives and recommend to him a comprehensive and unified system for managing/coordinating all diversity activities with the goal of enhancing Delta State’s diversity efforts. The task force will be made up of eleven members.

BUSINESS

Action

Revised Policy: Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (final reading)Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams presented the revised “Faculty Rights and Responsibilities” policy to Cabinet for a final reading.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the revised “Faculty Rights and Responsibilities” policy for final reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

New policy: Missing Student Notification (final reading)Dr. Bennett
Dr. Bennett presented the “Missing Student Notification” policy to Cabinet for a final reading. Due to concerns from Cabinet Members regarding the process for notifying family members, Dr. Bennett polled her counterparts throughout the state about their protocols on this topic. Students over the age of 18 or emancipated students can opt to choose an emergency contact. The same procedure for notifying parents or guardians for underage students will be followed as for students over the age of 18 or emancipated students, if they opt to provide an emergency contact.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Bennett to approve the new “Missing Student Notification” policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. McAdams. **This motion was approved.**

Walter Sillers Conceptual Design.....Mr. Mayers
Mr. Mayers brought to Cabinet the conceptual design plans for the renovation of Walter Sillers Coliseum. Mr. Mayers, President LaForge, and Mr. Rutledge met with the architects to discuss their designs. A design was chosen that will expand the coliseum on the north and south ends. Mr. Mayers stated the renovation will allow the coliseum to be used as an activity center, not just a basketball arena. Major additions to the coliseum will include elevators, classrooms, practice facilities, and handicap accessible bathrooms. Due to the expansion, the flow of traffic around the coliseum will be big topic for discussion. Mr. Mayers stated the architects will meet with all groups on campus that might use the coliseum in order to determine needs for usage. Mr. Rutledge stated this project will be paid for with bond money from the State, and construction should begin in 2018-19. The approximate cost of the renovation is \$21 million.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Mayers to approve the conceptual design of Walter Sillers Coliseum and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **This motion was approved.**

Discussion

Anniversary of September Tragedy President LaForge
President LaForge asked Cabinet Members their thoughts on observing the anniversary of the September tragedy. He asked Dr. Jurgenson, Ms. Rocconi, and Ms. Parker to poll their constituencies to gather their thoughts on this issue. Dr. Roberts posed the question, “what are we trying to remember: the tragedy or Dr. Schmidt?” The best course of action would be to do something that wouldn’t draw negative media attention to the university. Dr. Bennett suggested honoring the memory of Dr. Schmidt by lowering the Delta State flag and having a moment of silence. This topic was tabled until the next Cabinet meeting.

Reily Health Center.....Dr. Bennett
Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members the Reily Health Center is very close to announcing their collaboration with Bolivar Medical Center. The announcement has been delayed due to the Bolivar Medical Center nurses needing to obtain a certification. Currently, the health center staff is referring students to the Cleveland Medical Clinic. The proposed date for the announcement is Thursday.

Okra Patch ReportDr. Bennett
Dr. Bennett announced the Okra Patch will launch on Thursday evening for the first home football

game. The Patch will tailgate in Statesmen Park from 4:30 – 5:45 p.m. Shuttle services will be available for students to and from the game, and a special location for the Okra Patch has been reserved in the stands, next to the band. A practice session to learn the Okra Patch chants and Patch Pounce is tonight on the Quadrangle at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Bennett has assembled an advisory council of twelve students who have helped her with the planning aspects for the Okra Patch.

Military Friendly School designationDr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams announced Delta State has achieved a Military Friendly School designation, thanks to the hard work of staff in Enrollment Management and the Registrar’s office. We are waiting on the company, Victory Media, to make their announcement in order for our official announcement to be released. This announcement comes at a great time as Delta State is opening a Military Affairs Office under the auspices of the Registrar’s Office. A full time employee paid for by the Mississippi Veterans Administration will be on hand to answer questions from veterans and their dependents regarding their benefits. Also, Delta State will have an employee in this office whose primary responsibility is implementation and recording keeping related to our students receiving veteran’s benefits.

Enrollment ReportDr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams stated enrollment has increased by 205 students or 6.12% from this date last year. These figures are prior to the second purge, and so we will not have a final figure until the purge has been completed. The purge list has 280 students, but this number has greatly improved from last year. Dr. McAdams stated the staff members of Financial Aid, Student Business Services, and Student Success Center have been working hard to get students to re-enroll in their classes after the purge. Dr. McAdams ran an additional report last Friday to show figures for first time students. First time, full time freshmen have increased by 31 students since last year. We have 48 new international students, bringing the total to 136 international students on campus. IHL recognizes dual-credit high school students as part of enrollment figures. Dr. McAdams stated that dual credit enrollment is a volatile figure that fluctuates each year. This year, our dual credit is up over 100 students. Dr. McAdams is confident our final figures will show an increase. He stated an increase occurred due to our hospitable campus, involved alumni, faculty outreach, and pipelines with Delta schools, community colleges, and Desoto County. Retention rates for juniors, seniors, and graduates are also up from last year. President LaForge thanked Dr. McAdams for his efforts in recruitment and retention.

Other Discussion

- President LaForge announced the Ice Cream Social for new students will be held on Wednesday on the Quadrangle. He asked Cabinet Members to assist him in serving the ice cream to students.
- The first Colloquia Lecture Series of the semester is Tuesday, September 20 with Judge Gustavo Gelpi. Judge Gelpi will arrive on Monday and will speak to classes on Tuesday, prior to his lecture.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Mississippi Today Reception, August 30, 6:00-8:00 pm, GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi
- Mississippi Today Lecture, August 31, 9:00 am, Jobe Auditorium
- DSU vs. Kentucky Wesleyan, September 1, 6:00 pm (Wear Green), Reception – 5:30 pm
- President’s Ice Cream Social, September 7, 5:00 pm, Quadrangle
- DSU vs. Texas A&M – Commerce, September 10, 6:00 pm (Wear White) Reception – 5:30 pm
- DSU’s 91st anniversary celebration, September 15, 12:00 noon, Ward Hall, Brick Plaza
- Colloquia Lecture Series, Judge Gustavo Gelpi, September 20, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium

- Colloquia Lecture Series, Congressman Bennie Thompson, November 9, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, September 12 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – SGA Plans for the Year (Ms. Allie Rose Parker)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.