

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: November 15, 2016**

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

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Keith Fulcher and Ms. Christie Rocconi

**Guests:** Mr. Jeffrey Johns, Interim Chief, Police Department  
Ms. Tricia Killebrew, Coordinator, Academic Support  
Dr. Christy Riddle, Director, Student Success Center

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on November 15, 2016. The meeting convened at 2:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Jurgenson, seconded by Mr. Mayers, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on November 8, 2016.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. McAdams invited Dr. Christy Riddle and Ms. Tricia Killebrew to Cabinet to make an exciting announcement. Dr. Riddle stated the Student Success Center submitted a proposal to the Department of Human Services for a grant to help with the retention of student athletes. Ms. Killebrew received an email this morning stating the proposal was accepted and that no changes to the proposal are needed. The Student Success center will receive up to \$1.5 million to create a Student Success Center for Athletes. All services offered will be tailored to athletes' needs such as disabilities, healthy lifestyle choices, and monitoring progress towards degree. The advisors or "academic coaches" will be grouped into three segments: fall and spring sports, football, and year-long sports. Dr. McAdams stated the money received from the grant will fund 10 new positions. The grant began November 1 and will end October 2017. Dr. McAdams hopes to create a five year plan for additional funding.
- Dr. Bennett updated Cabinet Members on the Peace Panel hosted by Student Affairs last week. During the panel, students spoke on being more engaged with campus life, additional ways to communicate events to students, additional programming on campus, and making Greek programming more interesting. Dr. Bennett said a couple hundred students attended, and they also participated in the Mannequin Challenge.
- President LaForge said the Colloquia Lecture was great and was well-attended. Congressman Thompson committed a full day to speak to classes, have lunch with President LaForge's Leadership class, speak to the Okra Scholars, and give his reflection on the National Election.
- Last Thursday, President and Mrs. LaForge traveled to Oxford for the Investiture of Chancellor Jeffrey

Vitter. During the Investiture luncheon, President LaForge sat with Board members of the Gertrude Ford Foundation. Also, President and Mrs. LaForge attended the BPAC performance of the Parsons Dance Company last week and had an outstanding group of student leaders as their guests.

- President LaForge continued his annual visits of the residence halls and Greek chapters. He met with residents in Lawler-Harkins Hall and members of Phi Mu Fraternity and Kappa Sigma Fraternity, and will continue his visits later this week with residents in Brumby-Castle and Blansett Halls and with members of Tri Delta Sorority.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members the updated binder of emails regarding the removal of the Mississippi flag, which now contains additional emails from alumni.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. The football team had a great weekend in Florida. They lost the game, but Mr. Mayers stated the team played very well. The men’s and women’s basketball teams are off to a great start. The men’s team won two of their games. The first home basketball games are November 22. The swimming and diving teams are doing well, and two swimmers are top in the country. Mr. Mayers informed Cabinet Members that the press release regarding the secondary violation will be released on Thursday.
- President LaForge met with Ms. Laura Howell, Executive Director of the Bologna Performing Arts Center, and a strategic planning consultant for the BPAC on Monday. He stated it was a good visit.
- President and Mrs. LaForge attended an event at GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi event on Tuesday night featuring Marc Ford and the Neptune Blues Club.
- President LaForge attended the Hearin Foundation Beneficiaries meeting today. President LaForge informed Cabinet that the Hearin Foundation is considering a pre-proposal from Delta State regarding the local government training academy. While at the meeting, President LaForge was able to visit with Mr. Matt Holleman, with the Hearin Foundation, and Mr. Alan Perry, IHL Board member and Hearin Foundation Board member.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the week’s events. On Wednesday, he and a few of the Executive Committee members will travel to Jackson for the IHL Board meeting. On Friday, President and Mrs. LaForge will travel to Northern Virginia to attend the Washington Redskins football game on Sunday as the guests of FedEx CEO Fred Smith.
- President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members of the Thanksgiving holidays on Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25. Also, he announced the Cabinet Christmas party will take place on Monday, December 12.
- Mr. Mayers announced the Athletics’ Christmas party is Tuesday, December 13 at 6:00 p.m. at The Warehouse.
- Dr. Bennett announced Student Affairs will host “DSU Dancing with the Stars” in April. She confirmed President LaForge, Coach Todd Cooley, Dr. Temika Simmons, and Dr. Roberts will participate.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Retention and Graduation Rates Report .....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams shared with Cabinet members information distributed at IHL’s Institutional Executive Officers’ meeting. The report includes information on the five-year average of full-time entering freshmen by ACT composite score and the percentage receiving Pell, one-year retention rates of full time entering freshmen by ACT score, and six-year graduation rates of full time entering freshmen by ACT score. The data shows that students with higher ACT composite scores are retained at a higher percentage and graduate earlier than those with lower composite scores. Delta State faces the challenge of providing a robust academic experience because students are coming to Delta State unprepared for college level courses. Dr. McAdams brought additional information showcasing the National, Mississippi, and Delta State average of first-time, full-time freshmen fall-to-fall retention

rates and six year graduation rates. Delta State is behind the National and Mississippi average in both, which confirms Delta State has more work to do in this area. The initiatives put forth to help with retention rates—such as increasing full-time status to fifteen credit hours, use of supplemental instructors, and use of academic maps—are generating progress. Dr. McAdams stated Delta State had an increase in retention rates of first-time, full-time freshmen and transfers from the Fall 2014-Fall 2015 cohort to Fall 2015-Fall 2016 cohort. Dr. McAdams stated everyone on campus has to be engaged in these efforts to continue seeing improvement.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Mississippi Municipal League Youth Summit request..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts stated that the Mississippi Municipal League is hosting their 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Summit on Delta State’s campus on March 3-4, 2017, and Delta State will be listed as a sponsor. Delta State previously hosted this summit in 2011. The Summit will host 400 students, elected officials, and parents from the across the state. Dr. Roberts stated this will be a great recruiting opportunity for Delta State. The Summit will use the BPAC for opening and closing sessions and several rooms in the Union for breakout sessions. MML has requested Delta State waive the facility fees of \$1,900 associated with the rental of the rooms as part of our sponsorship of the event. Along with being a sponsor of the Summit, President LaForge will give the welcome remarks during the Opening Session, President LaForge and the Student Government Association will conduct breakout sessions, Delta State will host a college fair after the concluding session, and Delta State will offer campus tours on Friday. Cabinet Members decided the college fair should occur during the event rather than at the conclusion in order to attract more students. Dr. Roberts suggested offering a scholarship to an attending student to encourage students to attend Delta State.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Roberts to approve the waiver of facility fees for the Mississippi Municipal League Youth Summit if the contingencies are met and seconded by Mr. Mayers. **The motion was approved.**

**Discussion**

**Visioning Process ..... President LaForge**

President LaForge stated this discussion is a continuation from the October Visioning discussion. He explained Dr. Roberts created a user-friendly form for the owners of the visioning principles to use when developing their goals. The template includes the owner and responsible area, a start and target completion date, visioning principle, goal, stakeholders, current status, desired outcome, resources, and strategies/steps to accomplish the goal. President LaForge explained the goals will be part of his monthly meetings with his direct reports to monitor progress. President LaForge shared a few hypothetical examples with Cabinet Members to articulate his idea for the template. Cabinet Members discussed adding an additional field for Delta State’s strategic goals to be used for SACS applications. Once the form has been refined, it will be sent to Cabinet Members and the dates for when goals are due will be discussed.

**Introduction of Interim Chief of Police ..... Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett introduced Mr. Jeffrey Johns as the Interim Chief of Police. Mr. Johns comes to Delta State with more than 25 years of law enforcement experience and came highly recommended by Commissioner Glenn Boyce. He spent the last decade at Holmes Community College and took their

college from five officers on three campuses to twenty five officers on four campuses. Mr. Johns expressed it is a pleasure to be at Delta State, and he has enjoyed getting to know the people and the campus. During his time at Delta State, he hopes to prepare a foundation for the next Chief of Police and make the campus as safe as possible. He stated Delta State is a shining example of a successful university and the police department should reflect that example.

**Student Life Reorganization.....Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members she is dissolving the Union Program Council. Currently, the Union Program Council is made up of a select group of students who choose programming for the entire student body. Dr. Bennett expressed she cannot reach her goals with student programming if the students are the ones managing it. The Director of Student Life, Ms. Jeanna Wilkes, and the Office of Student Life have been tasked with creating all student programming. Ms. Wilkes will have an advisory committee of students to help with planning and these students will split the scholarship money, which was set aside for the Student Director of UPC. All programming for the year is due by August 1, and it will be released to the public. Dr. Bennett spoke with the current Union Program Council Director, and he believes this is the best option for student programming.

**Other Discussion**

- Dr. Bennett spoke with the Vice President at Mississippi College to discuss the current Heritage Bell trophy and the need to change it to reflect their new mascot. The MC official said they would like to keep the Heritage Bell unchanged for now.
- President LaForge asked Mr. Rutledge to give an update on construction projects across campus. Mr. Rutledge said the old President’s home will be demolished in approximately two weeks. A few asbestos issues came up that were unexpected and it delayed the demolition. On December 2, construction will start on the addition to Zeigel Hall. Once the academic year is complete in May, the building will be shut down for full repair. The classrooms and offices will move to Ward Hall, and the band will meet in Jobe Auditorium. The final design for Young-Mauldin Cafeteria will be submitted by December 15, and construction will begin in May. Food services will move to the State Room in the Union during construction, and the State Room will be unavailable for rental beginning the first week of March. The paving project on campus is almost complete. MDOT wants to postpone the bid process on Statesmen Boulevard until April, but Mr. Rutledge is working to have the bids opened before Christmas. Mr. Rutledge is also working to have the crosswalk light fixed at the intersection of Highway 8 and Fifth Avenue, as it is a danger for the campus community.
- President LaForge invited Mr. Mayers to be the official Mace Bearer for Commencement, and Mr. Mayers accepted.
- Dr. Roberts announced the annual Kent Wyatt Hall Christmas Tree Lighting event will take place on Thursday, December 1 at 3:00 p.m.
- President LaForge asked Dr. Roberts to inform Cabinet Members of the Christmas message Communications and Marketing is developing. Dr. Roberts shared the ESPNU Twelve Days of Christmas video with Cabinet Members to give them an idea of what Communications and Marketing is developing. She stated different departments and programs on campus will be featured, and the video will be used to promote the university to prospective students and others.
- President LaForge announced that the Cabinet will not meet on Monday, November 21. The next Cabinet meeting will be held on Monday, November 28.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Thanksgiving Holidays, November 24-25
- Elf the Musical, BPAC, December 2, 8:00 pm
- Fall Commencement, Graduate students, BPAC, December 10, 10:00 am
- Fall Commencement, Undergraduate students, BPAC, December 10, 2:00 pm

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, November 28 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.