

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT'S CABINET
Minutes

Meeting date: November 8, 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. Jennifer Farish, Director, Communications and Marketing

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on November 8, 2016. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Jurgenson, seconded by Ms. Parker, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on November 1, 2016.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Last week, President LaForge had several great recruiting and donor relations visits. He spoke to seniors at Senatobia High School; met with Representative Trey Lamar, Vice Chair of the Ways and Means Committee; had lunch with Mr. Charlie McGuffee and other alumni; met with representatives from Guaranty Bank and Trust and Planters Bank; and, attended a College Fair with 15-20 other Delta State faculty and staff.
- President LaForge met with Mr. Rutledge and Ms. Laura Howell, Director of the Bologna Performing Arts Center, to discuss diversity initiatives and ways to engage more community members.
- President LaForge attended First Baptist Church on Sunday as a part of his outreach efforts in the Cleveland community.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. Men's and women's basketball teams and the football team will be in Florida over the weekend. There are no athletic events next week. Several members of the Athletics staff will travel to Birmingham soon for a Compliance meeting. Mr. Mayers gave an update on the secondary violation Delta State received from the NCAA regarding two ineligible football players. The school has paid a fine, and two of the football games will be changed to a loss for Delta State. Delta State and the Gulf South Conference plan to release a statement next week.
- President LaForge began his annual visits of the residence halls. He met with residents in Foundation Hall and Court of Governors recently, and will continue his visits later this week with residents in Lawler-Harkins Hall.
- President LaForge spoke to the Jackson Rotary Club yesterday and was hosted by Mr. Neddie Winters, President of Mission Mississippi. This club is the largest civic club in the state. President LaForge gave an update on Delta State, GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi, and the Winning the Race Conference.

- President LaForge spoke at the Omicron Delta Kappa Initiation banquet last night. The Circle inducted sixteen new members.
- President LaForge was a “celebrity server” at the Habitat for Humanity Soup luncheon today.
- Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members the first diversity and inclusion panel will occur tonight and is called Peace Panel. The panel is comprised of Greeks, Student Government Association members, International students, and African American Student Council members. During the panel, Dr. Bennett wants students to discuss improvements to campus environment. Following the panel, students can participate in an election results viewing party and the mannequin challenge.
- President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to help build a crowd at Wednesday night’s Colloquia featuring Congressman Bennie Thompson. President LaForge said Congressman Thompson will speak to classes, meet with the Race Conference Advisory Board, eat lunch with the President’s Leadership Class, and speak to the Okra Scholars prior to his remarks at 6:00 pm. A pre-event reception is scheduled for 5:00 pm in the President’s Conference Room, and a post-event reception will take place in the lobby of Jobe Hall.
- On Thursday, President LaForge will travel to Oxford for University of Mississippi’s Inauguration of Chancellor Jeff Vitter.
- The BPAC’s performance of Parsons Dance Company is Thursday evening. President and Mrs. LaForge have invited the Presidents of various student organizations to be their guests.
- President and Mrs. LaForge are traveling to Melbourne, FL on Friday with the football team to support them for their game against Florida Institute of Technology.

CABINET TOPIC

Fear the Okra website Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts introduced and welcomed Ms. Jennifer Farish, Director of Communications and Marketing. Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet Members the Fear the Okra website was created five to six years ago as a landing page for visitors to view the Fear the Okra campaign commercials and to learn more about Delta State. Since the completion of the campaign, the website has not been used. The decision was made to re-launch the website as an e-commerce site that advertises Delta State merchandise and links customers to the vendors. Currently, the website has approximately 200 products. Ms. Farish stated Communications and Marketing will include merchandise from downtown merchants if they send in pictures and information. Dr. Roberts and Ms. Farish see this as a huge opportunity for promoting Delta State logo items and to help people find the merchandise they are looking for. Learfield Licensing Partners manages and protects our license and trademark, engages new vendors, and distributes royalties based off the sale of Delta State merchandise. Dr. Roberts and Ms. Farish have been working with IHL to create a Memorandum of Understanding for downtown merchants in order for them to be approved to sell Delta State merchandise. Ms. Farish is also working with the new manager at Wal-Mart to create a Delta State store inside of Wal-Mart.

BUSINESS

Action

2017-18 Academic Calendar.....Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet a recommendation from Academic Council for the 2017-18 Academic Calendar. Due to IHL regulations, each three-hour credit class must meet for a total of 2,250 minutes of instruction during the semester. Holidays create a shortage of time available for certain class meetings. During the Fall semester, the “Monday/Wednesday/Friday” classes will need an additional

twenty minutes of instruction time to meet the required time, and the “Monday/Wednesday” classes will need an additional forty-five minutes to meet the requirement. Academic Council has suggested professors provide an additional academic experience (i.e. quiz, assignment, etc.) to account for the shortage. Department heads will be responsible for making sure their faculty follow these guidelines. In order to meet the required amount of instruction time needed, students will receive a full week at Thanksgiving but will not get a Fall Break. Dr. McAdams informed Cabinet Members that no other state university has both a Fall Break and a full week at Thanksgiving. Once approved, Dr. McAdams will forward the Academic Calendar to areas schools for their planning purposes with regards to Spring Break and Christmas holidays.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the 2017-18 Academic Calendar recommended by Academic Council and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. **The motion was approved.**

Discussion

Mississippi Flag..... President LaForge

President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members feedback he received in response to the statement sent out last Thursday regarding taking down the state flag. He received approximately fifty responses with 73% agreeing with the action of taking down the flag and 27% against the action of taking down the flag. Sixteen of the positive responses had direct ties to Delta State. Three of the negative responses had Delta State ties. President LaForge received positive affirmations from three of Delta State’s past presidents, two IHL Board Members, former Mississippi governor, Delta-area mayors, SACSCOC president, community influencers, GSC officials, NCAA officials, IHL university presidents, and legislators. President LaForge was given two of Mississippi’s new bicentennial banners by the Mississippi Economic Council, and the 6’x10’ banner has been ordered. Next week, President LaForge will share with Cabinet Members feedback he received from alumni.

Other Discussion

- Dr. McAdams announced that Fall Commencement is scheduled for Saturday, December 10 at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm in the BPAC. The first ceremony is for graduate students and Bachelor of Science in Nursing students. The second ceremony is for the remaining undergraduate students.
- Dr. Roberts announced that the three new legends—James W. Broom, William M. Kethley, and James M. Ewing—will be recognized during Fall Commencement. Ms. Ann Giger is working to locate family members of these three deceased past presidents in order for them to accept the award on the family’s behalf.
- Ms. Rocconi announced Administrative Staff Council is sponsoring Feed-A-Family again this year. If anyone knows of a Delta State family in need, please let Mr. Jeff Slagell know.
- President LaForge’s final Leadership class meets tonight. He invited Cabinet Members to stop by to hear student presentations and enjoy pizza.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Colloquia Lecture Series, Congressman Bennie Thompson, November 9, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium
- Parsons Dance Company, BPAC, November 10, 7:30 pm
- 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 – Tuesday, November 15 at 2:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Retention and Graduation Rates Report (Dr. McAdams)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.