

Voting members present:

Charly Abraham
Leslie Fadiga-Stewart
Christopher Jurgenson
Gwendolyn Meador
Temika Simmons
Timothy Watkins

Lacey Blessit
Severine Groh
Jesse Kelley
Michaela Merryday
Jeff Smithpeters
Virginia Webb

Jana Donahue
David Hebert
Eckward McKnight
Bret Pimentel
Sam Washington
Guozhen Zhao

01) Meeting called to order @ 3:38pm by President Fadiga-Stewart

02) Agenda: Approved

Minutes: 9/10/15 approved with corrections. Motion by Senators Pimentel and Smithpeters.

03) Guest Speakers: President William LaForge

Delta State University President William LaForge was invited 1) to address the event of September 14th, 2) to talk about the initiatives 42 and 42A, and 3) to go over items that were addressed during the Presidential Forum of October 13th.

Mississippi State Senator (D) Derrick T. Simmons (District 12, Bolivar, Washington) was invited to talk about Initiatives 42 and 42A.

1. **Event of September 14th – President LaForge** - While the campus community is healing well, President LaForge recognized that the process may not go as fast in the divisions directly affected by the loss of Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Lamb. Counsellors are still available and anyone interested is encouraged to contact Dr. Houston. Talking with a counselor should not be stigmatized. President LaForge indicated that DSU will honor the work of the 35 law enforcement agencies with their 200 to 250 officials who came on campus on September 14th. The three persons who responded in less than 3 minutes to the emergency situation on Jobe will too be recognized. This will take place just before the half-time show of Saturday 10/24/15 football game and law enforcement officials will be the special guests of President Laforge on 10/24/15; the reception will start at 5:50pm.

The IHL commissioner came to campus on September 15th. As of today, no motive was identified. Captain of Investigations Mark Kimbell from the campus police department is in charge of the investigation.

While President LaForge acknowledges that communication may have to be improved during emergency situations on campus, the situation of September 14th was a unique one since the campus was on lockdown. Allowing inquiry and maintaining safety on campus are the only priorities during a lockdown.

Many senators asked questions to President LaForge. Answers and comments of President LaForge are summarized below.

- An investigation report should be issued after the investigation is over; this should be good for closure for the campus and the families that were directly affected.
- No students left DSU as a result of the event.

- DSU does not want to affiliate with any anti-gun control group and does not want to be used by any groups. Ruling from IHL already makes carrying a weapon illegal on campus, even with a license.
- A review of the DSU emergency process has started immediately after the event of September 14th. One of the questions is to identify the best place to set up an operating center on campus, given that computer capabilities and radiofrequency similar to the ones used by the city and the state, are needed. Training and drills will be set up campus-wide.
- President LaForge does not anticipate that the events of September 14th will affect student recruitment or student retention.
- DSU response benefited from the campus-wide tornado drill of 2014-2015.
- President LaForge encourages anyone who has witnessed acts of bravery during the event to let him know about so he can thank these persons.
- President LaForge does not want his cabinet to work on a DSU policy regarding cell phone use during class. However, he is open to examine faculty recommendations about it, should the recommendations arise from FS.
- The 10-minutes delay that some people had noticed between the alert status relayed by social media and the official emergency alert sent by DSU message corresponds to the time it took to check the validity of the emergency.
- The absence of updates through the DSU alert system throughout the day is because DSU had no further control over what and when messages could be issued after DSU turned the alert system to the police.
- Even though the emergency system may deserve to be updated, there is no plan to use sirens or other sound effects. A special banner could be used on the DSU website.
- Higher Education State Schools are not provided with specific funding to review and improve their emergency systems. The budget line dedicated for safety and emergency responses is at the discretion of each higher education institution.

2. ***Ballot Initiative 42 and Alternative Initiative 42a – MS State Senator Simmons and President LaForge*** – MS State Senator Simmons came as a supporter of Initiative 42 to explain it better. Senator Simmons explained that it is the first time that the MS legislature came with an alternative to an initiative; it is Initiative 42a. Initiative 42 is the result of the people of Mississippi being upset by the funding situation for public schools. The state legislature passed the Mississippi Adequate Education Program in 1997. The MAEP provided a formula 1) to reduce the funding differences among MS school districts and 2) to provide the monies to adequately fund MS childrens' education. However, there were only two increases in funding for MS school districts since 1997. As of today, school districts are underfunded by \$1.7 billion and the funding shortfall has been about 17 million since 2009. The goal of initiative 42, a citizen-led initiative, is to amend the Mississippi Constitution so the state would be able to require the legislature to adequately fund school districts.

While DSU President LaForge recognized the merit of adequate funding of MS school districts, he stressed two major problems with Initiative 42. The first issue lies in the method used, a ballot initiative that essentially takes over the job of the legislature. The second issue is that DSU would face a \$1.8 million decrease in its \$47 million annual budget if Initiative 42 passes. Such a budget reduction would be accompanied by a series of program cuts and the loss of faculty positions.

Senator Hebert commented that, in Louisiana, many state agencies are protected from budget cuts, leaving higher education and healthcare the most affected by budget cuts. Senator Simmons answered that should Initiative 42 pass (which would require 360 000 votes), no reductions in Higher Education allocation should occur since Initiative 42 specifically requests that the funding for the MAEP would come from the state new monies. Specifically, Initiative 42 asks for 25% of state new growth.

3. ***DSU Presidential Forum of October 13th – President LaForge***

- 1) To be respectful for the funding needs of other Mississippi state-funded systems, DSU, along with all 7 other higher education state schools, is asking for a 3% budget increase only for 2016-2017. This funding increases, along with a 4.7% projected tuition increase for 2016-2017, would specifically serve in covering salary increase for DSU employees. No tuition increase is planned for 2017/2018 but a slight increase may be scheduled again for 2018/2019. The total anticipated tuition increases will not affect the Mississippi ranking of DSU based on tuition costs.
- 2) Following the new purge system implemented for fall 2015, numbers show a net enrollment increase of 17 students as compared to 2014-2015. Efforts are now put on rejuvenating the enrollment management. It is expected that the future VP for student affairs (for whom the search is in progress) to play a major role in it.
- 3) Pavement construction: should be done by the end of the calendar year. Takes long because all is done in 2 steps. Ultimately all the campus routes will be repaved.
- 4) Caylor-White building should be completed next spring.
- 5) The blues conference was successful.
- 6) The planning of the race relation conference that will take place in spring, has started.
- 7) Celebration of the 90th anniversary of DSU will take place early November 3rd.
- 8) Grammy museum: opening is scheduled for 3/5/16.
- 9) DSU recently welcomed students and faculty from John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin (Poland). DSU students will go to the Polish University next June. DSU will continue its relationship with Perm State University in Russia. A new exchange program should also start next spring with Bulgaria. It is noteworthy that President LaForge, along with 16 other US University Presidents, went to Cuba to initiate exchange programs with Cuban schools.
- 10) Rashad Warren, an alumnus from the Department of Biology, has started the Peace Corps in the Gambia. M. Warren is the first DSU student to ever join the Peace Corps.
- 11) The Colloquia series continues with U.S. Poet Laureate, Natasha Trethewey (Thursday 10/22 from 6 to 8pm).

04) President's report:

President Fadiga-Stewart commended everyone for their calm behavior during the events of September 14th and appreciated all the support that the division of Social Sciences and History and herself have received from colleagues. Losing two colleagues has been tragic for the division of Social Sciences and History that is still deeply affected. Both Ethan and Shannon have significantly impacted the campus.

Faculty feedback regarding DSU response during the event stressed the need for improving communication during any type of campus emergency.

President Fadiga-Stewart will follow-up at the November FS meeting.

05) Faculty Senate Committees:

Senators Hebert and McKnight motion that the resolutions presented by the Academic Affairs Committee regarding 1) virtual office hours and 2) DSU policy documents entitled "Termination/Dismissal" and "Work Performance and Code of Conduct" be read and sent to divisions/units for feedback. Motion carried.

06) Adjournment: Meeting adjourned @ 5:18pm. Motion by Senators Hebert and Merryday.

Next meetings

Executive Committee Meeting Date:

3:30 PM - Thursday, 11/5/2015- Faculty Lounge

November Senate Meeting Date:

3:30 PM – Thursday, 11/12/2015 – 302A Union