

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: April 21, 2020

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Dr. Vernell Bennett-Fairs (via Zoom), Dr. Tricia Killebrew (via Zoom), Mr. Mike Kinnison (via Zoom), Dr. Charles McAdams (via Zoom), Dr. Beverly Moon (via Zoom), Mr. Rick Munroe (via Zoom), Mr. Cetin Oguz (via Zoom), Dr. Michelle Roberts (via Zoom), Mr. Jamie Rutledge (via Zoom), and Ms. Elizabeth Swindle (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Chief Jeffrey Johns, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council (via Zoom)
Mr. Jeff Slagell, Representative, Academic Council (via Zoom)
Dr. Jonathan Westfall, President-Elect, Faculty Senate (via Zoom)

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom conference call on April 21, 2020. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Ms. Swindle and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on April 13, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge participated in the IEO and IHL Board meetings via conference call last week. The main topic of discussion during the IEO meeting was the COVID-19 response on each individual campus. During the IHL Board meeting, each university was given approval to award degrees at the completion of the semester. Mr. Munroe gave an update on the Delta State University Foundation Board meeting held last week. The meeting was held via Zoom, which allowed many members to participate. The main topics of the board meeting were the budget and resuming a mindset of fundraising going forward.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Statesmen golf team members Mr. Zach Zediker and Mr. Zach Smith earned PING All-American honors during post-season. Mr. Kinnison shared with Cabinet members the Green and White Awards ceremony should have taken place this week; however, the Athletics' staff will virtually recognize all award winners over the coming days. All GSC athletic directors continue to have a weekly conference call to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on their respective campuses and the overall picture of athletics. Delta State's Athletics Department continues to have weekly meetings to stay engaged and productive during this down time.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The roofing projects for Walter Sillers Coliseum, Holcombe-Norwood Hall, and the Facilities Management Building are behind, and a formal complaint was filed with the Bureau of Buildings. A Zoom conference call will take place next week to

discuss the stalled projects. All contracts for projects caused by the storm damage in January were sent to vendors. These projects include lighting and the press box for Parker Field-McCool Stadium and various roofing repairs across campus. All the projects should be complete by August 1. Several power outages will occur this week due to the replacement of electrical poles and lines on the west side of the BPAC. Mr. Rutledge has asked for an hour notice prior to the outage to notify campus. The President's home is on schedule, and the concrete driveway will be poured this week. The Notice to Proceed for the HVAC project for the Mayers Aquatics Center was received, and the Notice to Proceed for the residence hall roofing projects should be received next week.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Students are voting in the SGA elections this week. Ms. Swindle stated SGA hopes to keep students engaged and continue voting. She will keep Cabinet members up to date on the results. Mr. Slagell shared with Cabinet members plans for the 5th Annual Academic Research Poster Showcase. This year's showcase will be virtual through Zoom, and Mr. Slagell encouraged Cabinet members to participate. The Campus Budget Review session will take place via Zoom on Thursday at 3:00 p.m., and President LaForge will participate in a virtual celebration with the TFA Graduate Fellows on Saturday.

CABINET TOPIC

FY21 Budget Plan Proposal Mr. Rutledge

President LaForge asked Mr. Rutledge to provide a brief recap on the FY21 budget plan proposal. Executive Committee members sought advice and counsel from their constituencies for suggestions on enhanced revenues along with reductions in expenses. Mr. Rutledge reminded Cabinet members the final budget voted on by Cabinet members could change as the State budget will not be decided until June or July. Also, Delta State's budget remains fluid and depends on tuition and appropriations. The budget proposal suggested by the Executive Committee and Mr. Kinnison totals \$1,779,805 in budget reductions and includes a one-time transfer of \$169,114 of TFA funds to help reconcile the budget. The FY21 budget has several inevitable expenses that must be added including: \$500,000 for cash reserves; \$500,000 for a contingency fund; and, an increase of \$35,000 for workers' compensation insurance. The total for these inevitable expenses is \$1,035,000. Additionally, Mr. Rutledge was advised by the IHL CFO, Dr. John Pearce, to plan for a decrease of 5% in State appropriations or \$837,000. In order to get back to the FY20 base, Delta State needs to reduce expenses or find new revenues in the amount of \$1,872,000. Mr. Rutledge explained to Cabinet members several expenses are paid each year, but those expenses were never budgeted. Going forward these expenses will be added to the budget: GIT Instructor salary; Dissertation Committees fees; Compliance expenses; Radio Station expenses; Athletic Department travel; Student-Athlete meals; Student-Athlete insurance; escalation clauses for long term contracts; and, travel and moving expenses for faculty. These non-budgeted items total \$508,000. With the addition of the non-budgeted items, Delta State needs to reduce expenses or find new revenues in the amount of \$2,380,000. Cabinet members have discussed several items that could bring in new, enhanced revenue and offset some of our expenses including: a \$1,000 per year tuition increase for international students, a decrease in Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships by \$117,000, \$150,000 worth of scholarships rolling off the budget that will not be added back, and a 6% tuition increase. The tuition increase for international students will generate an estimated \$100,000, and the 6% tuition increase will generate an estimated net of \$825,984. An additional way to increase revenue would be to increase Dual Enrollment fees for an extra \$27,500. These enhanced revenue streams could offset expenses by \$1,220,484. Mr. Rutledge shared additional expenses that should be added to the budget in order to stay relevant. Those expenses include computer upgrades for \$300,000; additional technology upgrades for \$150,000; six vehicle replacements for \$120,000; and, an increase to the marketing budget of \$50,000. If these expense items are added to the budget, Delta State needs to reduce expenses or find new revenues in the amount of \$3,000,000. President LaForge shared it

is unknown if the IHL Board will allow any university to increase revenue for the 2020-21 academic year, and there is deep concern over enrollment for the fall. Mr. Rutledge stated any new suggestions made during the Campus Budget Review will be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting.

Campus Budget Review Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts provided Cabinet members an overview of the upcoming Campus Budget Review. The event will be held on Thursday, April 23 at 3:00 p.m., and faculty and staff will participate via Zoom. President LaForge will provide context and perspective on the budget prior to Mr. Rutledge recapping budget issues and sharing the budget plan. The potential negative impacts — COVID-19, State appropriations, enrollment, and fundraising — will be discussed, and Mr. Munroe and Mr. Rutledge will share budget timelines with regards to the legislature and IHL. Faculty and staff can submit their questions to Dr. Killebrew or Mr. Oguz prior to the event or live during the event during Google Voice text messaging services. The moderators, Dr. Roberts and Dr. Edwin Craft, will unmute microphones for questions to be asked. Access to the event will be provided to Delta State faculty and staff and the SGA president. OIT plans to create a Delta State email address for the SGA President that will roll over to each new president, and this will allow Ms. Swindle to gain access to the Campus Budget Review on Thursday. Dr. Roberts scheduled a test run for the Campus Budget Review on Wednesday to test connections and make sure all Cabinet members are versed in Zoom functions.

BUSINESS

Action

Faculty Annual Evaluation policy – revised (final reading)Dr. McAdams

On the recommendation and approval of Academic Council, Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet the revised Faculty Annual Evaluation policy for a final reading. If a faculty member receives a rating of “unsatisfactory” or “needs improvement” in any category of the Faculty Annual Evaluation, a Professional Improvement Plan is required. Also, members of the Annual Evaluation Appeals Committee are to be Associate or full Professors with at least four years of service to Delta State. The Faculty Senate President will also nominate two faculty members to this committee with the same restrictions.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the revised Faculty Annual Evaluation policy for a final reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Search and Hire approvals Cabinet Members

There were no requests for search and hire approvals brought to the Cabinet.

Discussion

Campus Response to COVID-19..... President LaForge

President LaForge shared with Cabinet members recent updates to Delta State’s COVID-19 Action Plan. He informed Cabinet members this is an ever-changing document, and it will be updated as new information is released by IHL and the State. All eight public universities are trying to be consistent with their action plans, but each university has the authority to respond to unique requests and concerns. Delta State’s COVID-19 Action Plan was most recently updated after the Governor’s Shelter in Place orders were extended to April 27.

He shared information discussed during the IEO conference calls last week and this morning with regards to each university’s response to COVID-19. Commissioner Rankins spoke with the IHL Board about the

financial situations of the universities. Also, Commissioner Rankins asked for guidance on what the universities may need with regards to employment in the upcoming fall semester. The IHL Board approved all eight universities to lay off or furlough employees, as needed, in order to be flexible in changing times and in dealing with decreases in revenue. Commissioner Rankins and the IHL Board spoke on the effects the COVID-19 virus has on a tenure-track faculty member and their ability to progress through their required processes. Commissioner Rankins will seek approval from the IHL Board at the May meeting to make a tenure policy change to grant extra time as needed for faculty members. In addition to the CARES funds, Governor Reeves was given a pool of money to be used for education. He created a task force to advise him on where best to provide the funds. Each IHL institution has provided suggestions to Commissioner Rankins on how higher education can benefit from the funds, and Commissioner Rankins will provide the suggestions to the task force. Concerns are rising over the reopening of campuses this fall and what the reopening could entail. Commissioner Rankins plans to create a task force with members from each university to discuss all possible options for reopening each campus.

Delta State should receive half of its CARES funds next week, and IHL will provide guidelines on how the funds can be used. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the three types of refunds Delta State will provide to students. Students will receive cash reimbursements for their pro-rated room charges. If a student owes a balance, the refund will be applied to the balance first. Students will receive a credit towards next year's meal plan for missed meals and unused funds this year. If students are graduating or transferring, they will receive a refund for unused meals and funds from their meal plans. Students will also receive a pro-rated refund on their parking decals. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the university will refund approximately \$550,000 to students, and he will publicize the information about the refund process once refunds can be distributed and credits applied.

Legislative UpdateMr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet Members that the Mississippi Legislature has taken a recess until mid-May or early June. Ms. Kim Gallaspy shared with the Legislative Liaisons a summary of the potential losses to universities from the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Munroe will share the summary with Cabinet members.

Additional information

- Mr. Kinnison invited Cabinet members to participate in his Athletic Department Zoom meetings, as needed, to share information with his team.
- Mr. Munroe announced Alumni Connect went live last week. Approximately 200 alumni signed up for the social media platform.
- Dr. Killebrew informed Cabinet members she is working with Communications and Marketing and other members of the Administrative Staff Council to create a message for our graduating seniors that will be released on their original graduation date. Cabinet members discussed additional efforts being made to honor our graduating seniors. Dr. McAdams will create a task force to combine and coordinate all efforts supporting and recognizing our graduating seniors. The task force shall include Dr. Killebrew, Dr. Bennett, Ms. Emily Dabney, Ms. Caroline Fletcher, and Ms. Emily Jones.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Campus Budget Review, April 23, 3:00 p.m., via Zoom

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, April 27 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – FY21 Budget Plan Proposal (Mr. Rutledge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.