

**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PRESIDENT'S CABINET**  
*Minutes*

---

**Meeting date: April 9, 2018**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Dave Breaux, Ms. Ashley Griffin, Mr. Patrick Hundley, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Ms. Christie Rocconi (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

**Members not in attendance:** Dr. George Beals and Mr. Jamie Rutledge

**Guests:** Ms. Kate Ellis, Student, Cabinet Art Award Winner  
Mr. Michael Stanley, Chair, Art Department  
Ms. Amanda Tabb, Student, President's Art Award Winner

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on April 9, 2018. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Mayers and seconded by Dr. Breaux, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on March 26, 2018.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. McAdams introduced Mr. Michael Stanley, Chair of the Art Department. Dr. McAdams described the Art Department as a place where skill and creativity intersect. Mr. Stanley introduced Ms. Kate Ellis, the Cabinet Art Award winner, and Ms. Amanda Tabb, the President's Art Award winner. Ms. Ellis won with her piece titled "My Love in Cypress" in the style of Mr. Sammy Britt. Ms. Amanda Tabb won with her sculpture "The Incredible Fighting Okra."
- President LaForge gave a recap on the Winning the Race Conference. He felt the conference was very successful, well attended, and the supporting programs were excellent.
- President LaForge hosted two Faculty and Staff Luncheons in the past two weeks. He stated they continue to go well and present him with an opportunity to learn about other parts of campus life.
- President LaForge was able to give a campaign update to Dr. David Abney while he was on campus for the International Business Symposium.
- President LaForge attended and welcomed attendees of the International Business Symposium. He stated it was a wonderful event and was proud that all panelists were Delta State alumni.
- President LaForge participated in the DSU Worship Night recently. He stated the event was a well-attended, non-denominational event hosted by several campus ministries for Holy Week.
- Dr. Bennett gave a recap on the Most Beautiful Pageant. She said 31 contestants participated. The winner, Ms. Rachel Jackson, is the reigning runner-up to Miss Mississippi USA.
- Due to his service on the NCAA DII President's Council, President LaForge was able to attend the NCAA Final Four Men's Basketball Tournament in San Antonio, TX.

- President LaForge continued his campus outreach last week with department visits to Human Resources and the Office of Information Technology.
- The Winning the Race Conference partners with community organizations throughout the year to continue the work of the conference. This year the conference partnered with Civil Rides to commemorate the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to support the fight against poverty in rural Mississippi. The event was a bike ride from the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, TN to the Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, MS. During the ride, the bikers made a stop in Cleveland. President LaForge and other Delta State officials rode with the bikers through campus and to downtown Cleveland.
- President LaForge attended the Kyle Trust Scholarship Reception hosted by University Advancement last week. He stated this is an excellent way to thank major donors for renewing their scholarship. Mr. Hundley stated 19 of their scholarship recipients were in attendance to thank them.
- President LaForge attended and welcomed attendees of the Sammy O. Cranford Memorial History Lecture. He stated the lecture went very well.
- President LaForge met with several campus constituent groups to discuss a potential partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), headquartered in Alexandria, VA. The NCMEC would like to work with Delta State to sponsor an educational program on campus to spotlight the good work of the organization.
- President LaForge continued his visits to Greek organizations around campus. He visited with the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity chapter last night and will visit with the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority chapter tonight.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. The baseball and softball teams have done very well the last two weeks. Both the baseball and softball teams swept Christian Brothers University two weeks ago and won their series against Union University. The Athletics Green and White Awards will take place on Wednesday, April 25. Last week, Athletics honored their student athletes during National Student Athlete Day. Mr. Mayers was very appreciative of President LaForge speaking to the student athletes during their reception. President LaForge informed Cabinet Members that Delta State's own Mr. Zack Shannon leads in all categories statistically in baseball.
- President LaForge gave an overview for the week ahead. He will give the welcome at the College of Education and Human Sciences Scholarship Reception on Tuesday. On Thursday, he will attend the quarterly Cleveland Music Foundation Board meeting. Also on Thursday, the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing will host their annual scholarship reception, and Springfest will take place on the Quadrangle from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pepsi executives will be on campus that day to sign the contract. President LaForge will welcome Phi Theta Kappa students to campus on Friday for the Phi Theta Kappa Early Registration Day.
- Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet Members that the "Music Across Campus" launch will occur on Thursday at 2:00 p.m. on the south end of the Quadrangle in conjunction with Springfest. The launch will commence with the operation of 28 speakers. Students and leaders from all music areas on campus will be in attendance to help with the launch to showcase our music-centric focus. Dr. Roberts offered a huge thank you to Facilities Management and OIT for working diligently to get ready for the launch.
- President LaForge informed Cabinet Members several news outlets have reached out for interviews with him with regards to Facebook CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, testifying before Congress. He is being contacted due to his book, *Testifying Before Congress*.

#### CABINET TOPIC

**None**

## **BUSINESS**

### **Action**

#### **Scholarships .....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams stated all eight IHL institutions spend more on scholarships from their Fund 10 budgets than what is budgeted, but Delta State cannot continue to do this. In past years, Delta State has spent more than \$1 million in excess of what is budgeted for scholarships. The primary reason this overspending is due to rising tuition rates. As Delta State's obligations for scholarships increased, the budgeted amount for scholarships remained the same. Going forward, Delta State will account for the change in obligations when tuition increases. A scholarship committee was formed to look at Delta State's situation and make recommendations on how to manage better the scholarship budget. The committee recommended six items to implement for Fall 2018: 1) all freshmen academic scholarships will be limited to eight semesters; 2) all transfer scholarships will be limited to four total semesters; 3) scholarship recipients must enroll in a minimum of 15 hours each fall and spring semester; 4) the Statesmen Award will pay room and board only if the student lives on campus; 5) enforce the July 1 deadline for Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship applications; 6) the Academic Opportunity Scholarship will be 25% of tuition instead of 33%; the GPA requirement for eligibility and maintaining the Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship, Transfer Academic Scholarship, and Transfer Recognition Award will be increased to 3.25 GPA; and, the Transfer Recognition Award amount changed from \$2,000 to 25% of tuition. Changes in award amounts and changes in GPA eligibility requirements will take effect in Fall 2019. In addition to the GPA requirement changes and awarded amount changes for transfer scholarships, the Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship will count only community college hours and uses the GPA earned at community college. The Transfer Recognition Award is only available to Phi Theta Kappa students who transfer with less than 60 hours. The projected savings for scholarships this year will be approximately \$230,000. Mr. Mayers inquired about the scholarship deadline for students who transfer to Delta State in January. Dr. McAdams will work with Dr. Debbie Heslep to establish application deadlines for students who transfer to Delta State in the Spring. The Office of Enrollment Management will communicate all of the scholarship changes to students. Mr. Hundley will work with Communications and Marketing to develop and distribute an announcement to the campus regarding the changes.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the Scholarship Budget Recommendations and seconded by Mr. Hundley. The motion was approved.

#### **2018-19 Tuition and Fees .....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams referred Cabinet Members to the first and fifth pages of the IHL Tuition Rate Usage document included in the Cabinet materials. He stated all IHL institutions are requesting a tuition increase for the FY19. The increases range from 2% to 5%. With Delta State's Capital Improvement Fee and the requested Student Activity Fee, Delta State's tuition will be the fourth lowest in the IHL system. President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members that tuition increases are an issue for our legislators, and Commissioner Boyce expects push back from them on this issue. If the legislature had increased appropriations at a higher interval than 1%, a smaller tuition increase would have been requested or been avoided all together. Mr. Rutledge sought advice from Enrollment Management to determine if the tuition increase would impact enrollment. Enrollment Management doesn't believe a modest tuition increase will turn away students.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the 5% tuition increase for FY19 and seconded by Mr. Hundley. The motion was approved.

#### **Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day.....Ms. Rocconi**

Ms. Rocconi stated that Staff Council is looking forward to hosting their annual Staff Development Day. The

proposed date is May 10. This year's theme is "Mind. Body. Spirit." Featured guest speakers will include Dr. Myrtis Tabb, Ms. Sara Moreland, Dr. George Beals, and Ms. Tricia Killebrew. They will have a program in the morning, serve BBQ for lunch under the football stadium, and host games in the afternoon at Statesman Park. Then, at 3:15, they will participate in a campus clean-up project. Ms. Rocconi requested approval to close all offices so that staff members can attend. Staff Council makes it clear to all staff members that the options are to: 1) participate in Staff Development Day, or 2) remain in the office. Dr. McAdams referenced the fact that this date falls on the week following Commencement, which is a very busy week for the Registrar's office due to this being the week they must certify all graduates. He asked if the date could be changed. Ms. Rocconi said she would talk with the Registrar to determine if there is a date that would be amenable for all involved.

**Motion:** Moved by Ms. Rocconi to close all offices on Thursday, May 10 for Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day and seconded by Mr. Mayers.

**Motion:** Moved by Ms. Rocconi to lay on the table the previous motion and seconded by Dr. Roberts. **The motion was approved.**

#### **Discussion**

##### **VPUA/ER search ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts distributed the itineraries and the resumes of the two candidates for the Vice President for University Advancement and External Relations position. She explained each candidate would meet with the search committee, Academic Council, Cabinet Members, President LaForge, members of the Alumni Association and Foundation Boards, and have an open session for faculty, staff, and students. Anyone attending a session will have the chance to evaluate each candidate with evaluation forums provided at the conclusion of the sessions.

##### **Legislative recap ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts distributed a handout on the items from the 2018 Legislative Session pertinent to Delta State. As of April 8, Governor Bryant had not signed the bond bill nor the appropriations bill; however, he has until April 19 to sign them. Dr. Roberts reminded Cabinet Members the bond bill allocates \$5,000,000 to Delta State. The money will be split evenly between the repair and replacement of roofing and exterior restoration of the Walter Sillers Coliseum and critical repair, renovation, ADA improvements, furnishing and equipping of campus buildings, facilities, and infrastructure. The appropriations bill provides a \$2,688,787 or 0.8% increase to the IHL system for distribution to all universities. It remains unclear how much funding Delta State will receive. Delta State's four line items—Commercial Aviation, The Delta Center for Culture and Learning, Delta Music Institute, and E-Learning program—with the appropriations bill for are intact. The transfer of the Coahoma County Higher Education Center to Coahoma Community College was approved and signed by Governor Bryant earlier in the legislative session and was effective upon passage. President LaForge said he spoke with Commissioner Boyce about the President's home, and Commissioner Boyce plans to have IHL staff look into different financing options.

##### **Budget Plan FY19..... Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams stated that the budget plans for FY19 will be finalized over the next few weeks, following the IHL Board meeting, where they will consider Delta State's request for a tuition increase as well as determine Delta State's appropriations allocation.

**Additional information:**

- President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to give an update on any personnel changes. Dr. Breaux announced the Chair of the Speech and Hearing Sciences Department has resigned. Mr. Hundley continues to work on filling the positions of Communications and Marketing Director, Chief Development Officer, radio station coordinator, and a Feature Writing position.
- Ms. Griffin announced the results of the recent SGA elections: Mr. Charlie King, President; Ms. Huntley Brewer, Vice-President; Ms. Hart Rogers, Secretary; Ms. Lauren Hale, Treasurer; Ms. Porsche Chambers, Attorney General; and, Ms. Megan Sullivan, Chief Justice. The inauguration of the newly elected and appointed SGA members will take place on April 23 in the Lena Roberts Sillers Chapel. The State of the Student Union address is tonight at 7:00 p.m. in the Student Union. Interviews for appointed positions will take place next week.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Cabinet Meeting with Mr. Rick Munroe, VPUA/ER candidate #1, April 10, 10:00 a.m., President's Conference Room
- Cabinet Meeting with Mr. Henry Taylor, VPUA/ER candidate #2, April 11, 10:00 a.m., President's Conference Room
- Springfest, April 12, 2:00 – 6:00 p.m., Quadrangle
- Phi Theta Kappa Early Registration Day, April 13
- Cinderella, April 17, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Retirement and Service Awards Ceremony, April 20, 2:00 p.m., Union, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor East Lobby
- Presidential Forums, April 26

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, April 16 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.