

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: August 10, 2020

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Dr. Vernell Bennett-Fairs (via Zoom), Chief Jeffrey Johns (via Zoom), Mr. Mike Kinnison (via Zoom), Dr. Charles McAdams (via Zoom), Mr. Rick Munroe (via Zoom), Dr. Michelle Roberts (via Zoom), Mr. Jamie Rutledge (via Zoom), Mr. Jeff Slagell (via Zoom), Dr. Jonathan Westfall (via Zoom), and Mr. Richard Word (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guest: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom conference call on August 10, 2020. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Word and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on August 3, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last two weeks. The Spring 2020 Virtual Commencement ceremony aired last week. President LaForge and Mr. Munroe had a stewardship meeting with a new donor, and President LaForge participated in a conference call with Commissioner Al Rankins and the Institutional Executive Officers to discuss reopening of campuses for the Fall.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Student-athletes will not have their voluntary, supervised workouts this week. Mr. Kinnison shared there are no new COVID-19 positive cases for his staff or student-athletes. The GSC Board of Directors meet tomorrow to discuss the fate of Fall 2020 sports. Mr. Kinnison and his coaches will hire three assistant coaches this week to fill vacancies.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Repairs on the Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC system began last week, and the repairs should be complete by December. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the Facilities Needs Request for FY21 and FY22 that is to be paid for with bond funds. For FY21, Delta State received \$3,000,000 that will focus on repairs throughout campus. For FY22, Delta State's Facilities Needs Request in priority order are: 1) Robert E. Smith School of Nursing addition; 2) campus repairs; 3) ADA compliance; 4) Walter Sillers Coliseum renovation; and, 5) campus-wide HVAC and electrical work. This request totals \$16.8 million, with the bulk of the money needed for the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing addition, and will be presented to IHL for approval.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge, Dr. Bennett-Fairs, and Ms. Allie Rowe had a Zoom meeting with the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. alumni chapter, who oversees the Delta State chapter, to discuss the recent suspension of Delta State’s chapter due to hazing. Delta State’s annual Convocation and President LaForge’s State of the University address will be held virtually on Thursday beginning at 3:00 p.m. Student Life will host “Move In Days” on Friday through Sunday of this week. President LaForge announced Delta State received \$72,000 in scholarship funds from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation.
- President LaForge congratulated Mr. Word and the entire Zeta Beta chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity on receiving the Raymond L. Orians Excellence Award.

CABINET TOPIC

COVID-19 Plans for Fall 2020 President LaForge

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university’s COVID-19 plans for Fall 2020. President LaForge participated in a conference call with Commissioner Al Rankins and all Institutional Executive Officers this morning to discuss reopening plans for Fall 2020, and he reported that none of the universities have made drastic changes to their plans since his last report. Commissioner Rankins requested a conference call every Monday morning, through the end of the semester, to discuss COVID-19 related issues. Mr. Kinnison gave an update on the GSC Athletic Director meeting. Joint Administrators recommend postponing all high contact risk sports for Fall 2020 until Spring 2021. High contact risk sports for Fall sports are football and soccer. Low contact risk sports will continue their seasons as planned. For Delta State, low contact risk sports include cross country and golf. High contact risk sports will be reevaluated toward the end of the Fall semester. During reevaluation, a decision will be made on allowing high risk contact sport seasons to occur in Spring 2021 or cancelling until Fall 2021. Winter sports, such as basketball and swimming, will be evaluated at a later date. All NCAA championships were cancelled for Fall sports. Mr. Word held a forum last Thursday to address questions from students about the university’s COVID-19 protocols for students. He stated the forum went very well, and most questions are addressed in the protocols. Ms. Douglas stated the new screening process implemented today went well; however, there were a few hiccups as some faculty and staff utilized the wrong link to the screening questionnaire. All current screeners were briefed on the new screening process. Ms. Douglas hopes to hire 17 additional screeners for the remainder of campus this week, and training will be held on Friday. As of today, no applications were received for the Healthcare Specialist; however, Ms. Douglas may have someone that can help part-time. She is working with Communications and Marketing on the creation of the COVID-19 website and Facilities Management on custodial staff sanitizing buildings at night. Dr. Bennett-Fairs informed Cabinet members five units of Hill Apartments are complete for use as quarantine/isolation units for students. There are 18 units that still need to be completed. The Office of Student Life will implement a “No Mask Citation.” Students not wearing a mask will receive a fine of \$25. During the first few weeks of the semester, the Office of Student Life and the Police Department will monitor this situation. Dr. McAdams reported 34 full-time faculty members and five adjunct instructors will teach remotely for Fall 2020. Delta State has 1,161 courses listed in Banner for Fall 2020; however, this number includes Dual Credit, special topics, internships, private lessons, thesis courses, etc. Without the individualized courses, Delta State has 888 courses for Fall 2020. Of the 888 courses, 733 are undergraduate courses, and 155 are graduate courses. There are 247 online undergraduate courses, and 121 online graduate courses. Of the 888 courses, 41.4% are online. As of this morning, 50 students requested to complete their Fall 2020 courses online. Also, Dr. McAdams reported the College of Education and Human Sciences is updating its protocols on the Mayers Aquatics Center and Fitness Center, and the protocols need to be reviewed by the Executive Committee. Each center may require a delayed opening to faculty, staff, and students until the protocols are complete. Mr. Munroe shared with Cabinet members the final draft of the COVID-19 Action

Plan for external use, which should be vetted today and ready for distribution this week. Communications and Marketing staff have been implementing the university's COVID-19 communication plan for a few weeks now. Social media posts on several protocols have circulated for a few weeks. Posters outlining the university's COVID-19 protocols were printed and delivered to Facilities Management for distribution throughout campus. Cabinet members discussed the threshold at which the number of positive cases on campus would cause the university to move to online only instruction. Several opinions and options were shared. Cabinet members decided that 65 positive cases in a 14-day period would prompt Cabinet members to convene to discuss the university's appropriate course of action.

Plans for Start of Fall Semester Cabinet Members

Cabinet members provided updates on their plans for the start of the Fall Semester with regards to their respective areas. Dr. Bennett-Fairs announced the National Panhellenic Council's New Member Recruitment began on Saturday and will conclude with Bid Day on Wednesday. There are 57 students participating in recruitment this year. All students participating in recruitment—new members and current members—are following COVID-19 protocols closely. Dr. McAdams provided to faculty and staff last week the Fall 2020 Opening Session schedule. Opening Session 2020 follows the same schedule as in years past except all events will be held virtually. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, President and Mrs. LaForge will not be able to host their annual Welcome Back Luncheon for faculty and staff. In an effort to show his appreciation to faculty and staff, President LaForge plans to add funds to each employee's Okra Kards so they can have lunch on the university. These funds were graciously donated by Mr. Charlie McGuffee. "Move In Days" begin on Friday at 10:00 a.m. and conclude on Sunday at 5:00 p.m. Dr. Bennett-Fairs stated residence halls are ready for students' return. A few areas need to be mopped and/or swept, but all will be ready Friday. Mr. Rutledge will conduct a walk through with the Facilities Management Director on Thursday to ensure completeness.

BUSINESS

Action

Threshold for closures/Moving to on-line President LaForge

Cabinet members discussed the threshold at which the number of positive cases on campus would cause the university to move to online only instruction. Cabinet members decided that 65 positive cases in a 14-day period would prompt Cabinet members to convene to discuss the university's appropriate course of action.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Westfall to approve the new threshold of 65 positive cases in a 14-day period as the point when Cabinet members would convene to discuss the university's appropriate course of action and seconded by Chief Johns. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Enrollment Update Dr. Bennett-Fairs

Dr. Bennett-Fairs provided Cabinet members with an update on enrollment. Currently, 424 students are registered for their Fall courses, and 206 students need to be enrolled in their Fall courses. The staff in the Office of Admissions, along with faculty members, are calling students to inquire as to why the student has not registered. Dr. Bennett-Fairs hopes at least half of the unregistered students will register for their Fall courses.

Dr. McAdams shared with Cabinet members an update on summer enrollment. Summer I had a total enrollment of 959 students (466 undergraduate students and 493 graduate students). Summer I enrollment increased by 11.8% from Summer I 2019. Summer I tuition increased \$495,452 or 33.9% from Summer I 2019. Summer II had a total enrollment of 561 students (259 undergraduate students and 302 graduate students). Summer II enrollment increased by 19.4% from Summer II 2019. Summer II tuition increased \$310,707 or 39.6% from Summer II 2019.

Dr. McAdams shared the current graduate student of 621 students which is 34 students less than Fall 2019. Currently, 232 graduate students are not registered, but these students are eligible to return for Fall 2020. The Graduate Studies staff reached out to these students to inquire about registering and the responses are: 1) 24 students are not returning to Delta State; 2) 29 students are in the enrollment process; and, 3) 179 students have not responded. Dr. McAdams stated graduate enrollment for the Fall should increase as graduate students are apt to register closer to the start of the semester, and he expects around 50 to 60 more graduate students to register.

Dr. McAdams gave a summary on international student enrollment for Fall 2020. An estimated 107 international students will be enrolled for Fall 2020. Of that number, 87 are returning international students, and 17 are new international students. Three international students will remain in their home countries and will enroll in online courses.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

The FY21 Annual Operating Budget, approved by Cabinet, will be recommended for approval to the IHL Board of Trustees at their August meeting next week. IHL CFO, Mr. John Pearce, requested each institution's CFO provide a list of assumptions the university made during their budget planning process. Mr. Pearce will present each institutions budget, along with their assumptions, to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Rutledge shared Delta State's budget planning assumptions: 1) an 11% decrease in enrollment; 2) providing online-only instruction for a portion of academic offerings that would otherwise be face-to-face; 3) a proposed reduction in workforce; 4) potential furloughs should instruction move to online only and no students are on campus; 5) adjusting auxiliary budgets in the event of partial closures of residential facilities including salaries and other expenses; 6) mitigation plans in the event of a partial or full cancellation of athletic events; 7) expenditures are decreased and vacant positions will remain vacant until enrollment figures can be analyzed; and, 8) using a portion of unrestricted cash on hand for capital expenditures. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members three requests he received for the remaining pool of State CARES Act funds and were subsequently approved by the Executive Committee. First, the Hamilton-White Child Development Center needs their staff to work overtime to help with intake and outtake of children due to COVID-19 protocols. Their request was \$45,000 to fund their overtime pay. Second, if Fall sports occur, the Athletics Department needs additional staff to help execute their game day operations. Their request was \$6,000. Third, the Police Department needs to hire additional security for the campus for \$35,000. The remaining pool of State CARES Act funds is \$430,000.

Additional Information

- Mr. Word shared with Cabinet members the first round of SGA Appointed Officer interviews is complete, and they were successful. The final selectin of Appointed Officers occurs this week. Upon selection, Mr. Word will share the names of the officers with Cabinet members.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Virtual Convocation, August 13, 3:00 p.m.

- Move In Day (Freshmen), August 14, 10:00 a.m.
- Move In Day (Juniors), August 15, 10:00 a.m.
- Move In Day (Sophomores, Seniors, and Graduates), August 16, 10:00 a.m.
- Day and night classes begin, August 17
- Welcome Week, August 17-21

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, August 17 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.