

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: February 15, 2021**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge (via Zoom), Chief Jeffrey Johns (via Zoom), Dr. Kurt Keppler (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

**Guests:** Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on February 15, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Mr. Word, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 8, 2021.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. Black History Month events continued with Living the Dream: Black History Month Oratorical Contest. Delta State hosted the Raise the Flag ceremony to hoist Mississippi's new flag on the Quadrangle Flag Plaza. Mr. Kinnison organized sports teams visits for President LaForge last week, and he was able to visit with student-athletes on the soccer teams, baseball team, softball team. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Search Committee conducted their first meeting, and President LaForge provided them with the charge for the search. The GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi Board of Directors met for their quarterly meeting. Dr. Temika Simmons and Dr. Natasha Barnes provided President LaForge with an update on the upcoming virtual Winning the Race Conference.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Due to winter weather, several spring sports have or will postpone their competition for the week. The men's basketball team won one game and lost one game to Union University over the weekend. They were scheduled to compete against University of West Alabama on Tuesday and Wednesday, but it has been postponed. They will compete against Mississippi College this weekend. The women's basketball team won one game and lost one game to Union University over the weekend, and they are scheduled to compete against Mississippi College this weekend. The men's soccer team lost to Union University over the weekend, and they are scheduled to compete at University of West Alabama on Sunday. The women's soccer team won against Mississippi University for Women last week, and they will compete against Christian Brothers University on Sunday. The softball team will compete away this weekend against Mississippi College. The baseball

team will compete against University of West Florida this weekend at home. The New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference Championship takes place on Delta State’s campus next week. The women’s tennis team will compete in the Ouachita Baptist Invitational this weekend.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The brick laying portion of the Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project is almost complete. The Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project is on schedule, and the new scoreboard installation was postponed due to weather. Upon approval of the IHL Board of Trustees, the elevator project can begin approximately 20 days after once the notice to proceed is received. Mr. Rutledge is hosting a virtual pre-conference meeting for the residence hall roofing project tomorrow for the interested parties. The next project will be the renovation of the residence halls. The first project will be for Lawler-Harkins Hall followed by renovations of Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, and Brumby Castle Hall. Dr. Keppler provided Mr. Rutledge with a list of concerns from students about the residence halls, and Mr. Rutledge shared the concerns with the architects. Mr. Rutledge will have a preconference meeting for the residence hall renovations on Thursday, and all three projects (roofing and renovations) will be out for bid next week. Mr. Rutledge is hopeful a contractor for all projects will be selected by March 1. Construction will begin on May 1 with a completion date of August 1. Mr. Rutledge has a meeting this afternoon to hear the results of the feasibility study for the golf course development project. Mr. Rutledge will share information on the results soon.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Gulf South Board of Directors meet on Tuesday. The HPER Department is sponsoring “4 Statesmen & 5 Dogs + 1 Trail & Goal = 2,193 Miles” via Zoom on Tuesday evening, and President LaForge will provide the welcome. Three Delta State alumni and one current student will tackle a six-month journey to hike the Appalachian Trail with their five dogs starting on February 23. The Institutional Executive Officers meet on Wednesday. On Wednesday afternoon, President LaForge will participate in the Virtual Dementia simulation produced by the Social Work Department. The IHL Board of Trustees meet on Thursday, and the new Miss Delta State University will visit President LaForge on Thursday to share her platform. Black History Month events continue with the 1970's - Conversations with Black Faculty Members featuring Arlene Sanders, Ike Adams, and Georgene Clark on Thursday.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**COVID-19 Response Update and Plans.....President LaForge**

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university’s COVID-19 response and plans. Ms. Douglas provided Cabinet members with an update on several items related to her efforts as the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. She shared the current number of positive cases among faculty, staff, and students, and she reported on the number of faculty, staff, and students in quarantine and isolation. Ms. Douglas reported there is one student in Hill Apartments, and there are no students in the off-campus location. The university had no hotspots last week. Bolivar County will be a secondary vaccine site, with Delta State serving as the physical site. The approved vaccine site schedule will begin on February 23 and will take place on Tuesdays and Fridays through the end of August. Vaccine appointments will be uploaded to COVID-19 Vaccine Patient-Screening – UMMC COVID Scheduling link each Tuesday. Ms. Douglas will work with Dr. Edwin Craft on an Employee Vaccine Quick Reference Call List Form that employees will fill out in order to be put on a call list for the vaccine. The Quick Reference Call List helps vaccine site staff use all vaccine dosages in a vial without it being wasted by unfilled appointments. Ms. Douglas still needs additional medical and non-medical staffing for the vaccine site. South Delta Planning will help provide the non-medical staffing. Ms. Douglas has begun to run a report on which employees, all categories, are not completing the symptom checker each day. A total of 258 employees have not completed the symptom checker since February 1. Ms. Douglas has begun to reach out to the employees. In an effort to recognize

employees for going above and beyond the call of duty with regards to COVID-19, Ms. Douglas created the “COVID-19 Response Team Hero of the Week” recognition. Ms. Jessica Jarvis will be the “COVID-19 Hero of the Week” for February 15-19. Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members the plan Dr. Megan Smith in the Office of Student Financial Assistance and he created to distribute the next round of CARES Act grant funds to students. Eligible students are broken down into four categories: non-FAFSA, Pell eligible, non-Pell eligible, and zero family contribution. Their main goal is to provide support to as many CARES eligible students as possible, recognizing some students have a higher need of support.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

None

**Discussion**

**Residence Halls adjustments and changes ..... Dr. Keppler**

Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members a few adjustments being made within the residence halls. The first adjustment will be the cancelling of student curfew. The curfew was implemented during COVID-19 preparations to ensure all students leaving and entering the residence halls had their temperatures checked. Dr. Keppler will keep all residence halls staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week to continue checking temperatures. Staff will be paid with CARES Act funds and Regular Student Employment funds. Also, minimal furnishings will be added back to lounge areas in the residence halls. The congregation of students and events still cannot occur due to COVID-19 protocols, but students will be able to use the lounge areas as long as they are socially distant.

**Office of Admissions event ..... Dr. Keppler**

Dr. Keppler announced the Office of Admissions will host Statesmen Kickback on March 6<sup>th</sup> beginning at 2:00 p.m. in Statesmen Park. This recruitment event allows potential students to enjoy a full tailgating experience topped with live entertainment, free Chick-fil-A, home Delta States baseball and softball games, along with socialization with Greek chapters and student organizations. The Office of Admissions is working closely with Ms. Douglas to follow all COVID-19 protocols.

**FY21 Budget Update ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members an update on how the \$3,010,494 of newly allocated Higher Education Emergency Relief grant funds will be spent. Several items to be funded by the grant funds were discussed and approved by the Executive Committee last week. Those items are: \$1,505,247 for lost revenue recovery; \$360,850 for the continuation of COVID-19 related positions to December 31, 2021; \$200,229 for the replacement of old file servers; \$80,000 for additional desktop computers for computer labs; \$25,000 to cover the Student Health Center expenses through June 30; and, \$100,000 to cover any expenses related to the vaccine site. Additionally, the Executive Committee approved the university use some of the Higher Education Emergency Relief grant funds to cover advanced budget items from the FY21 budget. Those items are: \$150,000 for six university vehicles and \$50,000 for marketing. Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget and shared with Cabinet members the Cash Flow projections for January 2021. This report compares the current cash flows to the cash flows from January 2020. The university’s bank receipts from January 2020 to January 2021 have decreased, and the decrease stems from: a lack of payment for January of the Education Enhancement fund; the decrease in tuition in fees from the decrease in enrollment; a decrease in Foundation transfers; and, a

decrease in sales and services. The Education Enhancement fund is paid monthly by IHL; however, the university was notified a payment would not be received in January and two would be received in February. In 2020, the university requested the Foundation transfer funds to the university for their employee salaries for the first half of the fiscal year. This is not typical practice, so it was not continued in FY21. Employee payroll decreased from January 2020 to January 2021 even though the university employed more personnel in January 2021 due to COVID-19. The additional personnel employed due to COVID-19 are paid with CARES Act funds. Vendor disbursements increased including payments for insurance and Worker’s Compensation. Mr. Rutledge stated some disbursements will be reimbursed with CARES Act funds. The December 2020 ending cash balance was \$4,413,486.13, which is more than this time last year. The university continues to increase its cash balance. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the 2021 Monthly Cash Flow Report that he updates monthly once the bank reconciliations are complete. Mr. Rutledge will update the monthly projections accordingly to adjust for any unexpected expenses or revenues. The IHL Board of Trustees are going to review financial ratios of the eight universities at their meeting on Thursday, and Mr. Rutledge believes Delta State’s ratios will show a positive trend. He will share the financial ratios report with Cabinet members.

**Legislative Update .....Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe provided Cabinet members with an update on the 2021 Legislative session. Mr. Munroe announced appropriations and bonds bills will be introduced in each chamber this week. Mr. Munroe shared with Cabinet members a few bills that could affect Delta State such as a gun legislation, an anti-hazing bill, and a sexual assault bill. Mr. Munroe has scheduled calls with legislators for President LaForge to discuss Delta State’s needs for appropriations and bond funds next week.

**Additional information**

- Mr. Munroe announced the Foundation Board Executive Committee met last week, and they had a great meeting discussing big ticket items.
- Dr. McAdams emailed Academic Council and all of his direct reports in regards to academic continuity and flexibility during the winter weather and campus closures.
- Chief Johns announced a second winter storm will occur on Wednesday and Thursday. He reported on road closures within the State.
- Mr. Rutledge commended Facilities Management and OIT for their preparations for the winter weather to ensure campus was prepared for any outcome.
- Dr. Keppler participated in the BPAC Advisory Board meeting last week. BPAC staff are planning four events for late spring and summer beginning in April and ending in July. The lineup will be released at a later date.
- Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members his admiration for Ms. Julie Jackson and the extra mile she goes for the students in the residence halls.
- Dr. Roberts announced the Bolivar County Vaccine Site Planning Committee met last week to finalize last minute plans to ensure operations run smoothly next week.
- Dr. Roberts reminded the Executive Committee members she sent out an updated spreadsheet of assignments for the enrollment discussion. She asked Executive Committee members to review their assignments for Friday’s meeting as the enrollment discussion will end soon.
- The Faculty Senate met last week. Dr. Westfall informed Cabinet members Dr. Keppler attended the meeting, and Chief Operating Officer of the Global Mentorship Initiative Chad Fuller spoke to the senators on the mentorship program and the importance of recommending students for the program.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Annual Margaret Tullos Field Symposium, February 26, 8:30 a.m., Virtual
- Winning the Race Conference, March 29-30, Virtual

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, February 22 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Response Update and Plans (President LaForge)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.