

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: February 23, 2026

Members in attendance: Dr. Dan Ennis, Dr. Curtis Coleman, Dr. Edwin Craft, Mr. Peter Dean, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Ms. Hayden Kirkhart, Dr. Suzette Matthews, and Ms. Holly Senter (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Ms. Carley Brown, Mr. Kevin Entrekin, Mr. Serge Herzog, Dr. Etosha Johnson, Mr. Avis Neal, Dr. Donna Ossorio, Ms. Sydney Pittman, Dr. Brandy Smith, and Dr. Megan Smith

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 23, 2026. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Ennis presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Matthews and seconded by Dr. Lovin, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 9, 2025.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Matthews announced the dates of several upcoming events for University Advancement: Alumni Service Awards Ceremony is March 27 in Kent Wyatt Hall; Bolivar County Alumni Seafood Boil is April 23 in the Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni-Foundation House parking lot; Washington County Sippin' with the Statesmen is April 30; and the Leflore County Sippin' with the Statesmen is May 14.
- Dr. Lovin announced a small renovation occurring in Nowell Union. A new backlit wall is being installed near the bookstore. Additional outdoor furniture for the volleyball court will be delivered this Friday. Fifty-six students traveled to the Two Mississippi Museums over the weekend with the Office of Engagement and Advocacy.
- Dr. Craft gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The campus master plan being created by CDFL is halfway complete. Dr. Craft and the Facilities Management staff are working with MEMA and FEMA to secure funds for storm recovery efforts. The budget worksheets for FY27 were disseminated to vice presidents. Dr. Craft urged vice presidents to work with budget managers on finding ways to trim their budgets.
- Dr. Coleman provided an overview of current data for fall enrollment. Applications, admissions, and acceptances for Fall 2026 have surpassed the figures of Fall 2025 at this same time last year. Beginning this year, the Office of Admissions will track international admissions, as well.

- Dr. Griffin provided an overview of current Academic Affairs initiatives. Academic Affairs staff and faculty members have concluded the majority of their revisions to the curriculum. Academic Affairs is submitting several appendices to IHL for approval. The graduate and undergraduate catalogs and academic calendar are nearing completion. As the Academic Affairs continues to broaden its scope of delivery and pathways, faculty are being instructed on how to enhance their skills with hi-flex instruction. The Center for Teaching and Learning’s Let’s Go series begins this week with a trip to Jackson to visit the Nissan and Amazon plants. Within the coming weeks, evaluations begin and promotion portfolios will be submitted for review.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The swimming and diving teams competed in the NSISC Championships last week. The women’s team finished second, and the men’s team finished third. Twenty-seven individuals qualified to attend the DII National Championships beginning on March 10. The softball team hosts Blue Mountain University tomorrow and University of West Florida on Friday and Saturday. The baseball team travels to Ouachita Baptist University tomorrow, and they will host University of West Florida on Friday and Saturday. The basketball teams host Mississippi College on Friday. The women’s team has qualified to compete in the Gulf South Conference Championship tournament. If they defeat Mississippi College, they will host their game on Monday, March 2. The men’s team has an opportunity to qualify for the Gulf South Conference Championship tournament; however, they must defeat Mississippi College, and an opponent has to be defeated, as well.
- Mr. Dean shared elections for 2026-27 occur soon. Faculty senate will add additional senator positions for Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and Roberts LaForge Library. Future Faculty Senate meetings are moving to the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Ms. Senter shared nominations for upcoming elections in May beginning at the next meeting.
- Ms. Kirkhart provided an update on SGA activities. The Big Green Event is March 28. The signup for students to participate began today. An OkraFit series began last week. Echoes of Excellence is in the Lena Roberts Sillers Chapel on Wednesday. SGA and Alpha Phi Alpha will host the 2nd Annual Peace Walk this week, and SGA will host a Ramadan Dinner on March 4.
- Dr. Ennis continues to travel to Jackson for the legislative session. He congratulated Ms. Kirkhart and the SGA on a wonderful Student Legislative Day. The Institutional Executive Officers and the IHL Board of Trustees met last week for their monthly meetings. Dr. Ennis and other Delta State representatives attended a historical marker unveiling for Commissioner Willie Simmons. Dr. Ennis is travelling to Alabama this week for a GSC Expansion Committee meeting.

CABINET TOPIC

Strategic Enrollment Plan proposals..... Dr. Coleman

Dr. Coleman presented the Strategic Enrollment Plan proposals to Cabinet members. The Strategic Enrollment Plan is a comprehensive, multi-year roadmap that aligns recruitment, retention, marketing, financial aid, academic programming, and student success strategies to achieve institutional enrollment goals. The overall goal of the Strategic Enrollment Plan is having an enrollment of 3,800 students by 2030. The targets to achieve this goal are: 1,000 to 1,200 new students annually; 78% freshman retention; 65% upper-classmen retention; and strengthened regional and workforce impact. The four core pillars for the enrollment growth strategy are access and accessibility, recruitment expansion, student success and retention, and technology and infrastructure.

1. DSU Access Scholarship (ACT 18)
 - a. First Mississippi public university offering scholarship for an ACT 18 score.
 - b. Targets high-potential, high-yield students.
2. Retention Scholarship Incentive
 - a. Implement a \$500 retention rebate for students who maintain enrollment.
 - b. 3% increase in year to year retention.
3. The Delta Reset – Stop-Out Reengagement
 - a. Reenroll former Delta State students who have been away for 5+ years.
 - b. Forgive institutional balances up to \$5,000 for those eligible to return in good standing.
 - c. Converts aged receivables into tuition revenue.
 - d. Improves adult completion rates.
4. Let's Go Delta – Workforce Tuition Scholarship
 - a. Increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment.
 - b. Strengthen Delta workforce pipeline.
 - i. Educators, law enforcement, first responders, and state employees.
 - ii. Residing in Delta communities.
 - c. 20% tuition discount.
5. Expand Territory
 - a. Hire four, full-time regional recruiters on nine month contracts to recruit in neighboring five states.
 - i. Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas.
6. Strengthen Conversion
 - a. Create a dedicated Enrollment Marketing Team to provide enrollment-focused marketing support that drives recruitment, graduate enrollment, and retention.
 - b. 15% increase in enrollment outcomes (projected).
 - c. Two full-time enrollment marketing professionals and two graduate assistantship positions.
7. Progress Grades
 - a. Progress grades due at weeks 1, 4, 8, and day before last day to withdraw as part of the early alert system. This policy establishes a two-checkpoint progress-grade process each fall and spring term to strengthen the University's Early Alert System, improve timely student support, and increase course success, retention, and completion.
8. Gateway Recitation Model
 - a. Improve retention and academic progression by reducing Biology and Chemistry D/F/W rates through an 8-week Gateway Recitation Model for students earning a D or F at midterm, preserving academic momentum and increasing term-to-term persistence.
9. MyDSU Dashboard Redesign
 - a. The MyDSU Dashboard Redesign is a student-centered initiative designed to ensure that all students can easily access essential information immediately upon logging in.
 - b. The primary goal of the redesign is to remove confusion, reduce barriers to success, and provide direct access to academic, financial, and wellness support resources in one centralized location.
10. Building the Capacity to Sustain 3,500+ students
 - a. Modernize campus connectivity and safety.
 - i. Improve campus-wide wireless reliability and capacity to support enrollment growth, instructional technology, and student success.
 - ii. Improve safety, security, and access efficiency through upgraded access control systems across academic and residential facilities.
 - iii. Provide equitable and sustainable student printing access through a pay-for-print

solution.

- b. Optimize Recruitment and Learning Platforms
 - i. Ensure continued access to essential platforms that support recruitment, retention, instruction, and student services.
- c. Infrastructure
 - i. Enhance residential living conditions to support student satisfaction and improve on-campus retention rates.
 - ii. Increase classroom utilization and instructional capacity through strategic use of technology and space analysis.
- d. Align Staffing with Application Growth
 - i. Ensure sufficient staffing, systems, and processing capacity to manage increased application volume tied to enrollment growth.

Dr. Ennis requested vice presidents meet with the Strategic Enrollment Plan committee and Dr. Coleman to discuss the proposals related to their portfolio. Another discussion about the proposals will occur during an April Cabinet meeting.

BUSINESS

Action

Disaster Resistant University Hazard Mitigation Plan (revised – final reading); Drug and Alcohol Free Campus and Workplace policy (new – final reading); Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment policy (revised – final reading); Authorized Software policy (revised – final reading); Budget Transfers policy (revised – final reading); Malware policy (revised – final reading); Passwords policy (revised – final reading); Use of Removable Media and Mobile Computing Devices policy (revised – first reading) Drs. Craft and Lovin

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to take the seven policies and one plan be taken as a group and seconded by Dr. Craft. The motion passed unanimously.

Disaster Resistant University Hazard Mitigation Plan

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Lovin brought the revised Disaster Resistant University Hazard Mitigation Plan to the Cabinet for review and approval. This document represents a five-year update of the plan including an update to buildings and land uses on campus and an update to the Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis (HIRA) sections of the plan. Delta State University's (DSU) original Disaster Resistant University (DRU) planning process began on April 9, 2009, with grant funding provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program. The process of updating the DSU Hazard Mitigation Plan began in 2025 and concluded in 2026. The planning process involved re-establishment of a local advisory committee represented by a cross section of faculty and staff at the University. The goal of the project and planning process was to identify specific areas in which DSU could increase its resilience to natural disasters and minimize the potentially costly impacts of natural disasters to the University. This plan represents the first step of the hazard mitigation planning process. Upon successful review and approval from FEMA and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the University will become eligible to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant assistance and other funding to financially assist in the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the plan.

The goals of this process are three-fold. First, to provide a safer environment for the University community by implementing measures designed to protect human health and safety. Secondly, to protect the assets of the University represent a very significant investment on the part of the taxpayers of the State of Mississippi. The final goal is to implement measures that will ensure continuity of operations and to ensure the University continues to fulfill its mission prior to, during, and after a significant natural disaster event. The University executed a professional services agreement with Allen Engineering and Science, Inc. (AllenES) to guide the planning process. AllenES worked under the guidance of the DRU Committee. The DRU Committee is comprised of representatives from various divisions, departments, and functions of the University. The DRU provided valuable guidance and insight into University operations and the planning process and will continue to exist as an Ad Hoc committee to guide implementation of the plan. The plan provides information related to eight natural hazards that have the highest probability of affecting the University including: earthquakes, expansive soils, drought/extreme temperatures, flooding/levee failure, hail, hurricanes and coastal storms, severe winter storms, thunderstorms, lightning, and wind, tornados, and urban fires.

Through the planning process, the DRU Committee also eliminated eight hazards that had limited or no probability of affecting the University, including: avalanches, coastal flooding and erosion, dam failure, expansive soils, land subsidence, tsunami, volcano, and wildfire.

At the request of IHL, the DRU Committee, also addressed manmade hazards , including chemical, civil disturbance and terrorism, cyber-attack, communicable disease and pandemic, hazardous materials, transport accident, power failure, transportation, pedestrian, and biking-related hazards, and other human-made hazards. Though planning efforts focus on natural hazards, many of the mitigation strategies selected for inclusion in this Plan address human-made hazards. The plan development process resulted in the University selecting and prioritizing twenty mitigation measures designed to reduce the University's vulnerability to probable natural hazards. The mitigation measures selected and prioritized range from policy actions, to planning initiatives, to actual physical improvements to select structures and buildings on campus and are all designed to address specific vulnerabilities.

This updated plan provides information on the status of the original twenty mitigation measures and provides an updated list of current mitigation measures based on changes in development and infrastructure use on campus as well as changes in administrative priorities since development of the initial plan. Some new construction has taken place since development of the initial DRU plan. Additionally, some buildings have been repurposed. However, these changes in land use do not significantly impact the University's overall vulnerability since development of the initial plan. Additionally, although the University's overall mitigation priorities have not changed, objectives were created for each of the original goals.

Drug and Alcohol Free Campus and Workplace policy

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Lovin brought the Drug and Alcohol Free Campus and Workplace policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. Delta State University is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, and productive learning and working environment. This policy establishes standards of conduct, prohibited behaviors, prevention/education efforts, disciplinary actions, and resources related to alcohol and drug

use consistent with the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act (DFSCA), Drug-Free Workplace requirements, and applicable Mississippi law. The University implements this policy to comply with the DFSCA and associated federal guidance, the Drug-Free Workplace requirements applicable to federal award recipients/contractors, and applicable Mississippi statutes and criminal laws concerning controlled substances. Except as explicitly permitted by University policy and applicable law (e.g., authorized,

regulated events where alcohol is allowed under permit/registration and by law), the following are prohibited on University property and at University-sponsored activities: manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, or purchase of illegal drugs or controlled substances; possession, consumption, or distribution of alcohol by persons under the legal drinking age; public intoxication, driving under the influence, or conduct while impaired that endangers persons or property; misuse of prescription drugs (including use of another person's prescription); use, possession, or distribution of paraphernalia associated with illegal drug activity. Violation of these prohibitions may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, termination, referral for criminal prosecution, and referral to treatment.

Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment policy

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Lovin brought the revised Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. Delta State University expects that all members of the University community, including students, faculty, and staff, should be able to pursue their work and education in a safe environment, free from sex-based misconduct. The University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sex-based harassment, in its education and employment programs and activities. This policy prohibits a broad continuum of harassment on the basis of sex, including misconduct prohibited by Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S. C. § 1681 et seq. ("Title IX"), by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act") and Section 304 of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 ("VAWA"), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII"), and other applicable federal and state laws. Nothing in this policy shall affect the right of an individual to file a complaint with external law enforcement agencies, if applicable. A complaint may be filed concurrently with external law enforcement agencies and the University without jeopardizing an individual's rights to an investigation or other process. Inquiries regarding the application of this policy and the respective resolution process and procedures used to resolve complaints may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Authorized Software policy

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the Authorized Software policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. Authorized software includes any software approved for use by Delta State University employees or students. This policy establishes guidelines to reduce information security risks and ensure compliance with software licensing requirements. All users granted access to DSU's information technology resources are responsible for maintaining valid licensing documentation for any software they install. Upon request, users must provide this documentation to the Office of Information Technology (OIT). This policy applies to all devices, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other computing resources. Violations of software copyright laws may result in civil and criminal penalties under federal and state law. These consequences may apply to the individuals and/or an departments.

Budget Transfers

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the revised Budget Transfers policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. In order to maintain the University's fiscal integrity, each University department/division is responsible for administering its approved budget according to University guidelines. Each University department or division will be allocated a portion of the University's annual budget based on assessed needs established during the annual budget planning process. The budget will be categorized into the following seven major object categories: salaries, wages, and fringe benefits; travel; contractual services; commodities; capital outlay other than equipment; capital outlay for equipment; and transfers. Departments are responsible for managing expenditures within the limits of

each major object category to ensure fiscal responsibility and compliance with University financial regulations. If unexpected expenses are projected to cause a department to overspend a specific budget line item, the department must request a transfer as outlined below:

- Within Travel (Account 7400): Travel is budgeted as a total under account 7400. As funds are spent, expenses are posted to the appropriate detail accounts. No transfers are required within travel accounts.
- Within Contractual Services: These accounts are budgeted by line item. If a line item shows a deficit, a transfer from another Contractual Services line item is required.
- Within Commodities (Account 7600): Commodities are also budgeted as a total. Expenses are charged to the corresponding detail accounts as they are incurred. Like travel, no transfers are needed within commodities accounts.
- Within Capital Outlay: These accounts are budgeted by line item. Any deficit must be addressed through a transfer from another Capital Outlay line item.

Requests for transfers within a major object can be submitted by email to University Accounting. Transfers between major objects (e.g., from Commodities to Travel) or between departments must be submitted to the Comptroller via email. Transfers between functional areas with distinct program codes (e.g., from Instruction to Academic Support) are not permitted without approval by the Vice President for Finance and may require IHL approval prior to the expense being incurred.

Malware policy

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the revised Malware policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. Members of the Delta State University community are expected to perform their scholarly and scientific activities in a safe-computing environment. The university will vigorously investigate allegations of malware activity on campus that would adversely affect the academic or administrative computing environment. The purpose of this policy is to describe the responsibilities of individuals, departments and the Office of Information Technology Services (OIT) in protecting Delta State University (DSU) computer systems against malware. Malware is almost always costly to the institution through the loss of data (possibly permanent), staff time to recover a system, the delay of important work, and ransomware. This policy was revised to ensure all definitions and malware detection information are up to date. If an individual bypasses the protections put in place by OIT and data is lost, the responsibility falls to the individual and not the University.

Passwords policy

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the Passwords policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. The Office of Information Technology is responsible for the safety and security of all software and hardware applications that are connected to the university network. To aid in the safety of computer software and hardware, this policy establishes a standard for the creation of strong passwords and protection of those passwords within the University information systems. This policy applies to all people who have, or are responsible for, an account on any system accessed on the Delta State University network, computer systems, or any software/hardware systems remote or physical that contain university data.

Use of Removable Media and Mobile Computing Devices policy

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the revised Use of Removable Media and Mobile Computing Devices policy to the Cabinet for review and approval. This policy establishes safeguards for the use of removable media in conjunction with Delta State University computing resources and data. Appropriate security of all removable media, whether owned by Delta State University or by

individuals, is required to prevent the spread of viruses, the loss or compromise of sensitive data, and other risks to the Delta State University network. All members of the University community have a responsibility to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of University information collected, processed, transmitted, stored, or transmitted on mobile computing devices and removable media. The use of such data is provided to university employees as a privilege. Improper storage or loss of such data could result in penalties both to the university and the individual employee responsible.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Craft to approve the bulk action of seven policies and one plan and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

None

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Dwight Yoakam, March 5, 7:30 p.m., Bologna Performing Arts Center
- Spring Break, March 9-13

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 9, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.