

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: February 24, 2020

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

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: None

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 24, 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 February 17, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. Mr. Munroe and President LaForge met with Mr. Tom Gresham, Mr. Walt Gresham, and Mr. Bill McPherson about funding opportunities. Dr. David Abney was in town last week for the International Business Symposium, and he visited with President LaForge while he was here. The International Business Symposium was a successful event. President LaForge and other Delta State representatives attended a luncheon honoring Delta State alumnus and President of Hinds Community College Dr. Clyde Muse. President and Mrs. LaForge attended a couple of shows at the Wiley Planetarium. Mr. Rutledge and President LaForge met with Ms. Killebrew, Mr. Oguz, Chief Jeffrey Johns, and Dr. Jon Westfall to discuss the budget process and the idea of a potential budget committee. President and Mrs. LaForge attended the Cleveland Junior Auxiliary Charity Ball where Dr. Wayne Blansett and Ms. Becky Nowell were honored as the King and Queen.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the Institutional Executive Officers (IEO) meeting from last week. The IHL System will switch to ACT superscoring. The consensus with superscoring is student results will increase. Also, ACT will allow four free examinations for those in need as this will increase a student's chance of reaching entry level scores. Universities will need to review their scholarship requirements as it relates to this change in ACT scores. The IEOs reviewed a scorecard on all eight public universities. Several legislative issues were discussed including: a bill allowing student-athletes to be paid for the use of their name, image, or likeness, and that also prohibits enforcing any rule to the contrary; a bill altering the format of appointing the Board of Trustees; and, a bill to abolish the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). During the IEO meeting, President Thomas Hudson was welcomed as Interim President of Jackson State University. President LaForge thanked Cabinet

members for their efforts in modifying Delta State's records retention policies as he was able to present our policies to the Commissioner at their meeting. Commissioner Rankins has asked the IEOs to provide him with a report on out-of-state legacy students attending their university. Commissioner Rankins would like to provide this information to the legislature to show some out-of-state students attend their respective university because their family went there. Mr. Munroe and Dr. Bennett will provide a report to Cabinet members. President LaForge informed Cabinet members that the Families First program, which is linked to the Mississippi Department of Human Services and helped fund the Complete 2 Compete program, was charged with embezzlement.

- President LaForge gave an overview of the IHL Board of Trustees meeting from last week. The IHL Board of Trustees celebrated Black History Month by holding its annual Diversity and Inclusion Awards ceremony at the meeting. Campus and community leaders were recognized for their efforts in advancing diversity and encouraging understanding and respect. Delta State's nominee for the Diversity and Inclusion Award was Dr. Glendscene Williams. Dr. J. Walt Starr was elected the new Vice President of the Board of Trustees, and his term begins May 8. President LaForge met with the Board of Trustees in Executive Session to discuss our budget situation and provide an update. He stated the meeting went very well. IHL staff provided the Board with an updated report that showed we are on track to meet our June goal.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The women's basketball team went 2-0 last week against Mississippi College and Auburn University - Montgomery, and the men's basketball team went 1-1 with a win against Mississippi College and a loss to Auburn University – Montgomery. Both teams host University of Montevallo on Saturday, and Senior Day will be Saturday for the basketball teams and the cheerleading squad. The men's basketball team will not compete in post-season play, but the women's basketball team is in third place going into this week. Their seed placement will be determined after Saturday's game. The softball team went 2-1 against Christian Brothers University last week, and the baseball team went 4-0 against Mississippi Valley State University and Christian Brothers University. The baseball team will play Tuesday at Henderson State University, and both baseball and softball teams travel to University of West Florida this weekend. The golf team competes in the Hurricane Invitational at Georgia Southwestern State University today and tomorrow. The women's tennis team went 2-2 during the Ouachita Baptist Tournament with wins against North Central Texas College and Ouachita Baptist University and losses to Angelo State University and Henderson State University. Both tennis teams will compete against University of West Alabama at home on Thursday. The swimming and diving teams held the NSISC Championships last week, and the men's team won and the women's team came in second. Both teams have a great group of qualifiers going to the NCAA DII National Championships in March.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The HVAC project change order for Walter Sillers Coliseum was approved by the Bureau of Buildings and IHL, and the roofing project for Walter Sillers Coliseum is almost complete. The roofing project for the Holcombe-Norwood Hall and Facilities Management Building is behind schedule, and the architect has to start paying liquidated damages. Mr. Rutledge stated the Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project and the residence halls roofing project were advertised last Friday, and he hopes to award the projects in April. Mr. Stan Wagon, architect for the dorm renovation project, will be on campus this week to do a walk-through with Mr. Rutledge, Ms. Julie Jackson, and Mr. Gerald Finley. Following the walk-through, Mr. Rutledge will assemble a committee of students and Student Affairs staff members to formulate a plan for the dorm renovations. The campus elevator project needs an engineer, and the university has three options. Mr. Rutledge hopes to decide on an engineer in the next few weeks. Mr. Rutledge stated the recent storm damage was split into two packages. The first package includes repair to lighting, the press box, and roofing—all of which requires an architect. All other damages do not require an architect. The President's home is on schedule, and it should be finished by the end of the summer.

The campus wide HVAC project was delayed due to the recent storm damage. The new boiler in Bailey Hall has issues, and a contractor was contacted to correct the issues. The O. W. Reily Student Health Center needs a new boiler and has lighting issues. Mr. Rutledge applied for an Entergy grant for the lighting issues, and the boiler will be bought with R&R funds. On the west side of the BPAC, the light poles are rotten. Mr. Rutledge will use R&R funds to replace the poles, and this project will start in two to three weeks.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members some of the meetings and events planned for the week. President LaForge filmed an episode of Statesmen Insider this morning on the topic of the Digital Media Arts program. A Celebration of Life Ceremony for Mr. Dylan Dempsey takes place tonight at 6:00 p.m. in Lena Roberts Sillers Chapel. Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet members the Foundation Steering Committee has their first meeting on Wednesday. This committee will be the lead team for the Capital Campaign. President LaForge continues his campus outreach this week with a visit to Blansett Hall and a department visit with Commercial Aviation. On Friday, President LaForge will welcome guests to campus at the Annual Margaret Tullos Field Symposium and the Statesmen Spotlight and Academic Insight Day. Delta State’s Jazz Ensemble hosts their annual fundraiser, Big Band Bash, at the Cleveland Country Club Friday evening. Cabinet will not meet next Monday due to the 33rd Annual Higher Education Appreciation Day - Working for Academic Excellence program in Jackson. Ms. Elizabeth Swindle and Mr. Eckward McKnight will represent Delta State. While in Jackson, President LaForge hopes to have a meeting with the Executive Editor of the *Clarion Ledger* and with IHL Commissioner Al Rankins.
- Dr. Bennett announced Statesmen Spotlight Day and Academic Insight surpassed 1,100 pre-registered students, and recruiters are continuing to visit schools this week to pre-register additional students.
- President LaForge shared exciting news that Dr. Bennett was accepted into the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Millennium Leadership Initiative. This program prepares, enhances, and advances the prospect for qualified candidates, who have progressed in their professional careers, to compete successfully for positions of president or chancellor at universities or colleges. Dr. Bennett begins her program at the end of May.
- Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet members a student was robbed in Foundation Hall last week. The suspect was apprehended on campus.

CABINET TOPIC

None

BUSINESS

Action

Moving Expense Reimbursement policy (revised – first reading) Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Moving Expense Reimbursement policy. The policy was edited to mirror current practices. Delta State provides a moving reimbursement to new employees which generally includes faculty and, in select instances, staff employees who are offered permanent, benefit eligible contract appointments. The total for the reimbursement will not exceed the equivalent to one half of one month’s salary not to exceed \$2,500. The maximum allowable reimbursement to employees is at the discretion of Human Resources.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the revised Moving Expense Reimbursement policy for a first reading and seconded by Ms. Swindle. The motion was approved.

Search and Hiring Requests..... Cabinet Members

In response to the Cabinet’s decision that all requests to search for and fill vacant positions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Cabinet, Mr. Kinnison brought to Cabinet a position for consideration. The position presented does not impact the salary savings identified previously to address the budget shortfall for this fiscal year.

Athletics Staff Request

Mr. Kinnison presented the request to search for and hire a Head Coach for the women’s soccer team. The current coach resigned to take a position at another school.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Kinnison to approve the searching and hiring of a Head Coach for the women’s soccer team and seconded by Dr. Moon. Mr. Rutledge asked to table the motion until budget decisions were made at a later Cabinet meeting. The motion was tabled.

Discussion

Tree Removal Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet Members that three trees need to be removed from campus. The first tree, an oak tree by the Odealer Morgan Digital Media Arts Building, needs to be removed due to the tree being dead. Two additional trees will be removed during the replacement of light poles on the west side of the BPAC. The policy on tree removal states Mr. Rutledge has to inform Cabinet Members of the intention to remove the trees prior to their removal. Mr. Munroe will work with Communications and Marketing to get a press release out on the removal.

Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge gave a budget update to Cabinet members. He stated the first two phases for FY21 were presented to the Executive Committee on Friday, and the Executive Committee prioritized all requests into three lists. The three lists include bond funds priorities, R&R funds priorities, and new and expanded activities priorities. Mr. Rutledge stated the university should receive approximately \$670,000 in state appropriations (during the 2020 Legislative session) for R&R funds, which will allow the university to fund eight or nine items on the priority list. The university currently does not have money to fund new and expanded activities. Prior to Mr. Rutledge bringing the requests to Cabinet on March 4, the Executive Committee will review the priorities one last time. Mr. Rutledge shared the presentation IHL staff presented to the Board of Trustees during the Executive Session last week at the Board of Trustees meeting. IHL staff engaged Matthews Cutrer and Lindsay, P.A. to verify Delta State’s budget revision plan and to help develop a monitoring tool, which is updated monthly, to ensure progress towards the goal of increasing cash by \$1.5 million by June 2020. The presentation had a Spring 2019 to Spring 2020 comparison on cash, payroll, and non-salary decreases. Delta State’s non-salary decreases include a \$2.3 million reduction in student refunds due to less student financial aid provided by the federal government; reduction in Food Service Vendor payments as we pay our Food Service Vendor monthly now; decrease in debt payment as Blansett Hall was paid off last year; decrease in MDOT project as we paid our match for Statesmen Boulevard; decrease in other contractual services as we cut these during our budget revisions; early vendor payments from December 2019; and, other miscellaneous items. Matthews Cutrer and Lindsay, P.A. confirmed Delta State’s cash balance of January 31 as \$8,699,927, and that the university was on track to have \$6.8 million in cash by June 30. The Board of Trustees was informed that Delta State’s spending freeze was implemented, and January disbursements were 30% below projections or \$300,000. February disbursements are trending below projections, as well. Mr. Charles Lindsay said he believes Delta State’s administration appears to be attentive, and they are hard at work as a unit to rebuild the university’s cash reserves. President LaForge reminded Cabinet members that everyone needs to work

together to make sure we meet our June 30 goal. The Executive Committee will begin this week looking at possible reductions to the budget in order to develop a sustainable budget going forward. Dr. Moon requested Mr. Rutledge work with his staff on streamlining and increasing the efficiency of their accounting processes. Mr. Rutledge asked Cabinet members to let him know if certain processes/documents are delayed, and he will work to push the item through the accounting process.

Legislative UpdateMr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet Members that legislative committees will begin meeting to process legislation in preparation for the March 3 deadline for committees to act on legislation originating in their own chamber. Two bills being tracked by IHL staff include HB1200 and HB1343. HB1200 concerns freedom of speech on university campuses, and HB1343 wants to amend Section 37-7-13, Mississippi Code of 1972 to provide that the procurement of aircraft equipment by State Institutions of Higher Learning for degree programs in aviation shall be exempt from the public purchase law requirements. On March 18, SGA will host Student Legislative Day at the Capitol. Legislators are invited to attend a come-and-go brunch from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. in the Capitol Rotunda.

Additional information

- President LaForge informed Cabinet members he has noticed a significant number of vehicles on campus without the proper parking decals. President LaForge asked Dr. Bennett to work with the Police Department to review this matter. Dr. Bennett stated 23 decal violations have occurred since February 1—Hill Apartments (11 violations) and the Faculty and Staff Apartments (12 violations.) From the 23 violations, 12 violators have multiple citations. Residents in the Hill Apartments and Faculty and Staff Apartments were reminded that they must have a decal on their vehicle. Dr. Bennett shared that the Police Department’s software for entering payments, ARMS, is not compatible with Banner, and the police officers have to contact Student Business Services to collect information on individual cars with regards to tickets and payments. Dr. Bennett stated the Police Department would have all information needed on tickets and payments if ARMS was used to full capacity. The only cost to fully utilizing ARMS would be the cost of a card swipe machine. Cabinet members continued the discussion on parking on campus with regards to visitor parking, visitor parking passes, guests who are on campus to eat at the food court and/or the cafeteria, etc. President LaForge asked Dr. Bennett to have the Police Department conduct a 360° review of parking on campus and provide a report, when final, to Cabinet members.
- Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members Student Business Services has compiled a list of employees who owe the university money. Student Business Services will begin sending bills out to those owing money.
- Ms. Swindle announced applications for DSU Legislative Day are available this week.
- Dr. Moon reminded Cabinet members Delta State will host the Region III Mississippi Science Upper Fair on Wednesday.
- Dr. Moon informed Cabinet members she is finalizing SACSCOC reports, and she needs all requested information today or tomorrow.
- Mr. Munroe asked Cabinet members to remind their areas that it imperative that they verify they have accurate scholarship guidelines prior to distributing scholarships. If anyone has questions, they can contact Mr. Munroe.
- Mr. Rutledge announced it is time to rebid our Information Technology services, and he will create a committee to develop the RFP. The committee will also determine the needs of the university and review bids. If anyone would like to serve on the committee, please contact him.
- President LaForge announced Cabinet will meet next Wednesday instead of Monday, and the topic will be plans for the upcoming Winning the Race Conference.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Statesmen Spotlight Day and Academic Insight, February 28
- An Acoustic Evening with Mark Chesnutt and Joe Diffie, March 5, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Spring Holidays, March 9-13

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Wednesday, March 4 at 2:00 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Winning the Race Conference (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.