

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

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**Meeting date: March 12, 2018**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. George Beals, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Mr. Patrick Hundley, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Ms. Christie Rocconi, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

**Members not in attendance:** Dr. Dave Breaux, Ms. Ashley Griffin, and Dr. Charles McAdams

**Guests:** Dr. Edwin Craft, Director, Office of Information Technology  
Ms. Michelle Johansen, Coordinator, Quality Enhancement Plan

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 12, 2018. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Beals, seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 26, 2018.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge introduced Ms. Michelle Johansen and expressed his gratitude to her for her work with Delta State's Quality Enhancement Plan and diversity initiatives. He informed Cabinet Members that Ms. Johansen was awarded IHL's Diversity Educator of the Year award at the February Board meeting. Ms. Johansen stated she was honored to represent Delta State in this capacity. She informed Cabinet Members she recently returned from a trip to Bulgaria and Poland to work on expanding Delta State's opportunities in those areas. She and Dr. Beverly Moon leave on Friday to continue looking for opportunities for Delta State in China.
- President LaForge hosted two faculty and staff lunches in the past couple of weeks. He continues to enjoy the interaction with faculty and staff members.
- President LaForge was invited to be a guest lecturer for Mr. Charly Abraham's "Meet the Beatles" course. President LaForge enjoyed giving a lecture on the Beatles as well as visiting with the students.
- President LaForge gave a campaign update to Mrs. Anita Bologna a couple of weeks ago, and he had the opportunity to speak with her about a continuation of their family's gift to the BPAC.
- Delta State hosted a dinner for members of the Senate a couple of weeks ago. Dr. Roberts expressed it was a wonderful dinner with great attendance. She informed Cabinet Members the purpose of the dinner is to allow members of the Senate to meet members of the Delta State family so they will feel good about supporting the university in its initiatives.
- President LaForge announced the gift announcement ceremony for the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation Center for Teaching and Learning went well. Mr. Hundley stated it was a very nice event and the board members of the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation were pleased with their treatment and are looking at other gift opportunities for Delta State.

- President and Mrs. LaForge attended the BPAC performance of RENT. President LaForge stated it was a great performance. President LaForge informed Cabinet Members the sound during the performance was off slightly; however, the BPAC sound system was not used. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet Members Ms. Laura Howell has called in specialists to look into the BPAC’s acoustics and make suggestions on how to make it better.
- President LaForge welcomed attendees of the Margaret Tullos Field Symposium a couple of weeks ago. Ms. Cora Jackson and the Social Work Department did a great job putting together the symposium.
- President LaForge attended two wonderful events sponsored by Delta State programs a couple of weeks ago: the Big Band Bash fundraiser and the Thacker Mountain Radio Show. The Big Band Bash is an annual fundraiser for the Jazz Ensemble. The Delta Music Institute hosted the Thacker Mountain Radio Show, and our episode airs in April.
- President LaForge spoke at the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Midyear meeting last week on the topic of Testifying before Congress.
- President LaForge and Dr. Roberts traveled to Washington, D.C. last week for visits with Mississippi’s congressional delegation. They met with Senators Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker, Congressmen Gregg Harper and Trent Kelly, as well as staff for Congressmen Bennie Thompson and Steven Palazzo. While in Washington, D.C., President LaForge filmed a Fireside Chat with Congressional Fellow Mr. Paxton Stratton and former SGA president Ms. Allie Rose Parker.
- President and Mrs. LaForge attended the GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi event “A Night with Mary Wilson” last week. He stated the event was a huge hit and a great night for the museum.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. The men’s basketball team competed in the GSC Conference Championship game, but fell to the University of West Florida. Mr. Mayers expressed his pride for the hard work the men’s basketball team exhibited this season. The women’s basketball team fell to Union University in the first round of the GSC tournament. Over the weekend, the baseball team lost one of three games. Twenty-two members of the swimming and diving team left on Saturday for the NCAA DII Swimming and Diving Championships. Their goal is to score 250 points to be in the top five. The golf team is doing very well, and Mr. Mayers is very pleased with the new coach. The tennis teams did very well over the weekend, and they play again on Wednesday.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. He hopes for work to continue on Statesmen Boulevard this week and will do a walk through on Statesmen Boulevard, Zeigel Hall, and Young-Mauldin Cafeteria this week.
- President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members that Spring Break began today for faculty and students.
- This morning, President LaForge welcomed students participating in the Spring Outdoor Youth Camp sponsored by the Environmental Science program and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.
- President LaForge visited this morning with Student Business Services as part of his campus outreach. He reinforced to them the importance of good customer relations and thanked them for their efforts. He stated the operations have improved over the past several years.
- President LaForge gave an overview for the week ahead. He will call Mr. Mayo Flynt of AT&T on Tuesday to discuss the STEM summer camp proposal and an accelerator grant. On Wednesday and Thursday, President LaForge will give campaign updates to Mr. Jim Tims and Ambassador John Palmer.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Music Across Campus project ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts presented to Cabinet Members the Music Across Campus project. She stated President LaForge developed the idea as a way to enhance the university’s focus on music and culture. She referenced the music one hears at an outdoor shopping area, and advised this would be the same concept. The idea for this

project was presented to Cabinet in December 2015 as part of University Relations Visioning process. The project began with vendors visiting the campus in December 2016, and the speakers were piloted in 2017 at DMI. The speakers used for the project are realistic, hand-painted recreations of rock patterns, colors and shapes. The material used to make the speakers is glass fiber reinforced concrete and is UV resistant and waterproof. The speakers' range covers approximately 100 feet, and the source of the music will come from the DSU Radio Station. Dr. Craft and his staff will work to have a preset volume level on each speaker. If a speaker is closer to an academic building, the volume won't be as loud. Thirty speakers were purchased with private funds, and each speaker contains the rock shell, radio receiver, and power supply. Prior to installing the speakers, a concrete slab will be laid to anchor the speaker to it for stability and to keep the power supply underground. Dr. Roberts and Dr. Craft worked closely with Facilities Management to make sure the speakers wouldn't hinder the grounds crew in their duties. Dr. Craft and his team tested the speakers in various areas of the campus, and he feels the range could be extended, dependent upon the building structures surrounding the speaker. Dr. Craft will have all speakers on the DSU network and has installed an app allowing him to turn them on and off. This project could help with campus safety in emergencies with the help of announcing okra alerts. Dr. Roberts showed Cabinet Members maps indicating the areas the speakers will be placed around campus. The projected "go-live" date is April 1. Mr. Rutledge suggested having a protocol in place of who could turn the speakers on and off in the case of a disturbance or an event. Dr. Roberts plans to speak with Ms. Tarnisha Smith to see about adding an option to the Facilities Request Form. President LaForge thanked Dr. Roberts and Dr. Craft for their hard work in researching this project and seeing it to fruition.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Mass Email for Communications policy – revised (final reading)..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts reported to Cabinet Members that two proposed changes have been made to the Mass Email for Communications policy. The first proposed change is the addition of a sixth listserv group for Delta State retirees. This listserv's constituency group will encompass all retiree emails created last year as well as emails for members of the Dedicated Statesmen Association. The second proposed change is to the Authorized Posting Agents spreadsheet with that addition of a new column for the Retirees-FYI listserv and the associated approvals for each posting agent. Also, an additional posting agent was added to the Authorized Posting Agents spreadsheet to include the Vice President for University Advancement and External Relations and their designee. Dr. Roberts changed her title in the policy to reflect her title change.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Roberts to approve the revised Mass Email for Communications policy for a final reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

**Employment status policy – revised (first reading)..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge presented to Cabinet Members a revised copy of the Employment status policy. The policy was revised to clarify the definitions of regular full-time employee, regular part-time employee, and temporary employee, and the changes have been vetted through the Attorney General's office. A regular full-time employee is employed in a full-time, 40-hour per week, position and is entitled to all university benefits. A regular part-time employee is employed in a part-time, at least twenty hours a week, position and is entitled to the university benefits programs with tuition remission limited to nine credit hours per fiscal year and major medical and personal leave prorated according to FTE. A temporary employee is employed in a position, not to exceed 29 hours per week, and is not eligible for the university's benefits program. Dr. Beals suggested leaving out the word "regular" in the definition for regular full-time and

regular part-time employees and to take out the phrase “or less than” from the definition of temporary employee. A suggestion was made to add a statement to reflect that the policy is for staff and not faculty. In order to have members of Staff Council review the policy, Ms. Rocconi requested that the second reading of the policy take place on April 9, following their April Staff Council meeting.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the revised Employment Status policy for a first reading and seconded by Ms. Rocconi. **The motion was approved.**

**Holiday Schedule..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge presented to Cabinet Members the 2018-2019 Holiday Schedule produced by Human Resources. The proposed holiday schedule is compliant with IHL’s policy of 15 approved paid holidays. The holidays include: Independence Day, Labor Day, two days for Thanksgiving, eight days for winter holidays, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a spring holiday, and Memorial Day.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the 2018-2019 Holiday Schedule and seconded by Mr. Mayers. **The motion was approved.**

**Staff Emeritus recommendations ..... Ms. Rocconi**

Ms. Rocconi shared with Cabinet members the names of five staff members who have been recommended for Emeritus status by the Administrative Staff Council. All staff members listed were unanimously approved for Staff Emeritus status by the Administrative Staff Council Executive Committee and have been approved by their respective Vice President.

**Motion:** Moved by Ms. Rocconi to approve the five staff members recommended for Emeritus status and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

**Discussion**

**Building Shut Backs and Closures for Summer 2018 ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge gave Cabinet Members an update on the building shut backs and closures for Summer 2018. The buildings that will be closed include: Jobe Hall, Norwood Hall, Broom Hall, Court of Governors, Lawler-Harkins Hall, Brumby-Castle Hall, and Blansett Hall. All other buildings will be open for the summer with daily temperatures raised to 74 degrees during the workday and 80 degrees on the weekends. The dorms that will be open during the summer are Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, and Foundation Hall. The temperature in each building will be 74 degrees. Prior to finalizing the shut back and closures list, Mr. Rutledge vetted the list with the Deans Council, Academic Council, and the Executive Committee. Mr. Mayers requested the air not be turned off in Chadwick-Dickson Hall if it can’t be regulated. Mr. Rutledge stated all employees should have received an email from Human Resources last week detailing the summer hours, which begin on May 7 and end on August 9. Summer hours will be 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from Monday through Thursday, with a 30-minute lunch. For those employees who cannot work the summer schedule, they are required to work 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. five days a week and to work in Kent Wyatt Hall on Fridays. To better protect those working in Kent Wyatt Hall on Friday, a security guard will be hired for the summer. If any employee needs an exception to be made to their summer hours, Mr. Rutledge asked that Ms. Lisa Giger and the corresponding Vice President be notified. President LaForge thanked Mr. Rutledge and his staff for their hard work on finding ways to save money for the university and working with all parts of campus to find the best plan of action.

**Legislative Update..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts gave an update on the legislative session. The legislature is three weeks away from sine die.

Governor Bryant signed Delta State's bill to transfer the Coahoma County Higher Education Center to Coahoma Community College. A small event to commemorate the exchange with Coahoma Community College will take place later this spring. The bill to clarify the public places where weapons can be carried by holders of the enhanced concealed carry permit was amended in the Senate to clarify that weapons cannot be carried into a school, college, or professional athletic event where law enforcement is present at every public entrance. Dr. Roberts believes the new gun legislation will not pass since the legislator in favor of this legislation is not pleased with the amendment. All appropriations and bond bills will go to conference.

**Additional information:**

- Dr. Bennett announced the Women's Conference begins on Tuesday, March 20 and continues through Wednesday, March 21. The keynote speaker for the conference will be Ms. Pam Chapman. The target audience for the conference is students, but faculty, staff, and community members are invited to attend.
- Mr. Mayers announced Ms. Elisabetta Zengaro, Assistant for External Relations, got accepted to a Ph.D. program at the University of Alabama in Communications.
- Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet Members that former faculty member Dr. Terry Everett passed away over the weekend. His services are scheduled for March 24.
- Mr. Hundley informed Cabinet Members the Director of Communications and Marketing has resigned effective at the end of April. He will begin the search process soon.
- Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet Members the Vice President for University Advancement and External Relations search closed with twelve applicants. The first round of interviews begins next week.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Spring Break for Faculty and Students, March 12-16
- Women's Conference, March 20-21
- Colloquia Series with Mr. Fred Smith, CEO of FedEx, March 21, 6:00 p.m., Jobe Hall
- Gladys Knight, March 22, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Winning the Race Conference, March 26-27
- International Business Symposium, March 28-29

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 19 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.