

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: March 27, 2017

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Chris Jurgenson, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Ms. Allie Rose Parker, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Ms. Christie Rocconi (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

Members not in attendance: Mr. Keith Fulcher and Mr. Jamie Rutledge

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 27, 2017. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Jurgenson, seconded by Ms. Rocconi, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on March 20, 2017.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the Capital Campaign and meetings he had last week to discuss the Case Statement with members of the Capital Campaign Strategy Study Committee. The Case Statement has been reviewed by several people including Mayor Billy Nowell, Ms. Nan Sanders, Dr. Rose Strahan, and Ms. Anne Weissinger. The response to the Case Statement has been very good. President LaForge has more meetings this week and is excited about the progress.
- President LaForge attended two BPAC performances last week. He attended the Main Stage performance of 42nd Street, and stated it was a great performance. Also, he attended the BPAC Recital Hall Series performance of Sybarite 5, which involved all string instruments and was well received.
- President LaForge met with Mr. Mike Walker, External Relations Director for AT&T, to discuss ways he can help Delta State become a recipient of grant funds from AT&T.
- President LaForge met with representatives of the National Panhellenic Conference last week to discuss Delta State's Panhellenic Council and Greek life. They were on campus to conduct an evaluation to see if our system is open, inclusive, and operates with sound and fair governance.
- President LaForge met with Mr. Billy Cummins and Dr. Gary Bouse for a signing ceremony for the Karen L. Cummins Scholarship. President LaForge stated it is a great way to honor and remember Ms. Cummins. The scholarship has raised \$50,000 with additional gifts to come from Atmos and Entergy.
- President LaForge attended Delta State's Delta Players performance of "Speech and Debate" last week.
- President LaForge visited Madison Ridgeland Academy for a recruiting trip last week. President LaForge was very excited about the visit and the number of students who were able to hear about Delta State. Several Delta State alumni work for MRA. Also, they have a college fair coming up, and Delta State will participate in it.
- President LaForge met with Dr. Steve Huber of Immanuel Baptist Church last week to talk about the President's Award given to a student participating in the annual Juried Student Art Exhibition.
- President LaForge met with international student Mr. Zuhaib Raja last week. President LaForge

explained Mr. Raja wanted to meet him prior to his graduation.

- President LaForge was able to welcome two separate groups to Delta State’s campus over the weekend. Delta State’s chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon hosted the SAE Province Council on Delta State’s campus over the weekend. Also, the Tech Savvy Conference was held on campus on Saturday, and provided seminars on STEM for girls in grades sixth through ninth.
- President LaForge attended the Pre-Conference Open House on Sunday at the Amzie Moore House to launch the fourth annual Winning the Race Conference.
- President LaForge attended the GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi event, “An Evening with Tena Clark” on Sunday. Ms. Clark is here in conjunction with the Winning the Race conference. Her presentation included talks of her time growing up in Mississippi and how social rights became an aspect of her career.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics, which had a great week. Four tennis matches were held during the week. The tennis teams have received great community support. The baseball team won all three games against North Alabama over the weekend. The golf team plays today at North Alabama, and the baseball team plays at Southern Arkansas on Tuesday. The baseball and softball teams will play Christian Brothers this weekend in Memphis. The Coaches Club luncheon is Tuesday at 12:15 p.m. at the Country Club. The Athletics Department has sent out a Request for Proposals for equipment and uniforms. The new contracts will be for a term of five years. Mr. Mayers would like to bring Mr. Devin Schmidt and Ms. Melanie Tombers to Cabinet to recognize them for their stellar careers.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the Winning the Race Conference thus far. The Opening Session began at 9:00 a.m. this morning. Dr. William Bell gave a terrific opening address and several honors were bestowed upon him. The Lunch and Learn session began at 12:00 p.m. President LaForge invited Cabinet Members to help him host guests at the President’s Reception, which begins at 5:30 p.m. in the BPAC, and to attend the Plenary Session beginning at 6:30 p.m.
- President LaForge had a meeting with Dr. William Bell this morning to discuss Casey Family Programs and Delta State’s partnership, and ideas going forward. President LaForge shared the Visioning Principles with him and briefed him on the Capital Campaign.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the upcoming week. President LaForge and Dr. Roberts will travel to Jackson on Tuesday to attend recognition ceremonies for Dr. William Bell in the Senate and House. The International Business Symposium begins on Wednesday, and President LaForge will host a breakfast for the speakers on Thursday morning. President LaForge will meet with Dr. David Abney on Wednesday to brief him on the Capital Campaign. On Thursday, President LaForge will brief Dr. Fred Carl on the Capital Campaign, and will attend the BPAC performance of The Illusionists. President LaForge has invited Mr. and Mrs. John Lewis of the Gertrude Ford Foundation and Dr. William Bynum, President of Mississippi Valley State University, to be his guests. President LaForge will travel to Phoenix on Friday to attend the NCAA Division I Final Four basketball games. President LaForge announced the Alumni Association Board and the Foundation Board will meet next Friday.

CABINET TOPIC

Visioning Goal #9: Core Values..... Dr. Jurgenson

Dr. Jurgenson shared with Cabinet Members the goals and strategies for Visioning Goal #9: Core Values with regards to the faculty. Dr. Jurgenson stated some goals were submitted to him by faculty members and others are his ideas. Their goals for core values include: developing a study abroad program for students to enhance their cultural awareness; building an observatory on the golf course to use in conjunction with the Wiley Planetarium; creating and providing more awards that recognize the hard work and dedication of faculty members; and, providing faculty access to a grant writer in order to increase the success rate of submitted grants and in looking for grants with indirect costs. President LaForge asked Dr. Jurgenson the dimensions of

an observatory, and Dr. Jurgenson stated it would be approximately 20'x20'. President LaForge asked Dr. McAdams to work with Dr. Jurgenson on providing more opportunities for faculty members to be recognized for their hard work and dedication to students.

BUSINESS

Action

Hiring RequestsDr. McAdams/Mr. Rutledge/Dr. Bennett

In response to the Cabinet’s decision that only those vacant positions deemed essential to university operations will be filled, and that requests to fill these essential positions be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Cabinet, Dr. McAdams, Mr. Rutledge (in absentia), and Dr. Bennett brought to Cabinet several positions for consideration. The positions presented do not impact the salary savings identified previously to offset the mid-year budget cuts.

Academic Affairs Staff Requests

Enrollment Management requests approval to search and hire a new Transfer Admissions Clerk for FY17.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of the Transfer Admissions Clerk for FY17 and seconded by Dr. Roberts. **This motion was approved.**

Finance and Administration Staff Requests

Facilities Management requests approval to search and hire a new Electrical Supervisor for FY17 beginning May 1.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams, in absentia of Mr. Rutledge, to approve the searching and hiring of the Electrical Supervisor for FY17 and seconded by Dr. Roberts. **This motion was approved.**

Student Affairs Staff Requests

Student Financial Assistance requests approval to hire for FY17 a new Financial Aid Counselor.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Bennett to approve the hiring of a new Financial Aid Counselor and seconded by Dr. McAdams. **This motion was approved.**

Housing Deposit FeeDr. Bennett

Dr. Bennett explained that systems used in Housing and Residence Life are outdated and need to be automated. Dr. Bennett would like to change the current refundable housing deposit of \$50 to a non-refundable application fee of \$75. The fees would be used to purchase the housing component of the CRM to allow Housing and Residence Life to run efficiently. Through use of the CRM, students would be able to apply for housing electronically and choose a roommate, and staff would be able to run different reports. President LaForge asked Dr. Bennett to check with Dr. Debbie Heslep to see if our current CRM has the component for housing. This topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Statesmen Boulevard bids Mr. Rutledge

Dr. McAdams, in Mr. Rutledge absence, brought to Cabinet four bids received for the Statesmen Boulevard project. The bids were opened with a base bid plus add ons. All bids came in over budget and the federal government will not accept the base bids. The university has to re-bid the Statesmen Boulevard project. This will delay the project by approximately five weeks.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve that the Statesmen Boulevard project be re-bid without add ons and seconded by Dr. Jurgenson. **This motion was approved.**

Discussion

Student Incident.....Dr. Bennett

Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members of an unfortunate incident involving a student that occurred on campus last week. During a routine traffic stop, a Delta State police officer found weapons and commercial grade fireworks in a student’s car. The student was arrested and suspended from Delta State for one year. The student pled guilty to misdemeanor charges. Dr. Bennett reached out to the student’s family, and the family stated the student would not be returning. President LaForge stated this is an unfortunate situation, and he has briefed IHL Commissioner Glenn Boyce on the situation.

Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Dr. McAdams, in Mr. Rutledge absence, informed Cabinet Members that Delta State will receive another mid-year budget cut in April. The additional cut is approximately one-half of a percent or \$119,820. The estimated appropriations cut for FY18 is \$977,984. The total projected decrease in Delta State’s base budget from July 1, 2016 is \$2,176,190. President LaForge stated tough decisions are ahead. The Executive Committee is looking into additional ways to offset the impending budget cut. President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to bring to Cabinet or provide to Mr. Rutledge ways to mitigate the budget cuts.

Legislative Update Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet Members that the land lease bill was signed last Tuesday by the Governor, and it went into effect upon signing. The deadline for conference reports was Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Legislators didn’t reach an agreement on the bond bill, and so it died. They are discussing ways to revive the bill through a special session. Dr. Roberts said the conferees agreed on \$45 million for bonds for the IHL system prior to the bill dying. Dr. Roberts stated IHL’s appropriation from the State is worse than anyone thought it would be, as the state’s revenue continues to fall short. She believes the cut could be close to another 5%. Delta State’s line items are still intact, but three will receive a cut of 3% to 5%. The line item for Aviation was the only one not receiving a cut. Today is the deadline for appropriations and revenue bills to be passed, and all other bills must be passed by Thursday.

Other Discussion

- President LaForge and Dr. McAdams will travel to Clarksdale tomorrow to meet with Mayor Bill Lockett, Dr. Valmadge Towner of Coahoma Community College, and others to discuss the future of the Coahoma County Higher Education Center. The CCHC doesn’t have any academic traction for Delta State, and may be closed as a result of the budget cuts.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Winning the Race Conference, March 27-28
- International Business Symposium, March 29-30
- The Illusionists performance, BPAC, March 30, 7:30 p.m.
- Go Green Weekend, April 7-9
- Colloquia Lecture Series, Dr. LouAnn Woodward, April 12, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium
- Good Friday holiday, April 14
- Retirement and Service Awards Program, April 21, 2:00 pm, Union 2nd Floor

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, April 10 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.