

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: March 4, 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, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: Ms. Elizabeth Swindle

Guests: Chief Jeffrey Johns, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council
Dr. Temika Simmons, Chair, Winning the Race Conference
Ms. Barbara Washington, Committee Member, Winning the Race Conference
Dr. Jonathan Westfall, President-Elect, Faculty Senate

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 4, 2020. The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Ms. Killebrew, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 24, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge welcomed Chief Jeffrey Johns, chair-elect for the Administrative Staff Council, and Dr. Jonathan Westfall, President-Elect of Faculty Senate to Cabinet as they begin the process for shadowing their outgoing counterparts on the President's Cabinet.
- President LaForge extended his congratulations and well wishes on behalf of all Cabinet members to Dr. Bennett and her fiancé, Mr. Patric Fairs, on their upcoming wedding this Saturday.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge met with Dr. Temika Simmons to discuss the Local Government Leadership Institute and the Delta Proud Youth Initiative. A Celebration of Life Ceremony for student Mr. Dylan Dempsey occurred last week, and President LaForge and Dr. Bennett gave remarks. Mr. Dempsey's parents were in attendance and very much appreciated the thoughtfulness of the university. President LaForge filmed a segment for the DSU Alumni Connect platform. Mr. Munroe shared that the platform will be a way for alumni to connect socially. Mr. Munroe gave an overview of the successful Foundation Steering Committee meeting held last week. Members of the Foundation Steering Committee developed a strategy for Capital Campaign events to be held in their homes. President LaForge continued his campus outreach last week with a visit to Blansett Hall and a department visit with Commercial Aviation. President LaForge welcomed guests to campus at the Annual Margaret Tullos Field Symposium and the Statesmen Spotlight and Academic Insight Day. Dr. Bennett gave an overview of the outstanding Statesmen Spotlight and Academic Insight Day. She reported that the event boasted more than 1,200

students in attendance. Dr. Bennett and Mr. Merritt Dain are compiling a list of students who attended the November and February Statesmen Spotlight Days and have been granted admission to the university. Delta State's Jazz Ensemble hosted their annual fundraiser, Big Band Bash, at the Cleveland Country Club. President LaForge met with the accreditation team for Robert E. Smith School of Nursing for an exit meeting. Dr. McAdams shared that the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing met all standards with no required follow up, and he stated the rating is very rare and a significant nod to our nursing school. The 33rd Annual Higher Education Appreciation Day - Working for Academic Excellence program took place in Jackson on Monday. Ms. Elizabeth Swindle and Mr. Eckward McKnight represented Delta State as its honorees. While in Jackson, President LaForge met with the Executive Editor of the *Clarion Ledger*, and he reported to Cabinet members that the meeting was well received, and the Executive Editor plans to visit campus. Also, President LaForge visited with IHL Commissioner Rankins while in Jackson to discuss the legislative session, budget issues, and President LaForge's performance evaluation. President LaForge participated in a special called GSC Executive Committee conference call to discuss a media rights proposal. Mr. Kinnison explained to Cabinet members the GSC Executive Committee voted to accept a proposal from FloSports, which is an opportunity for our conference football and basketball programs to put our live broadcast and online broadcasts behind their paywall. This opportunity will help promote our conference regionally and nationally.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Both basketball teams finished their regular seasons on Saturday with wins over University of Montevallo. The women's team advanced to the Gulf South Conference Tournament, and they competed and won against University of West Georgia yesterday. The women's team plays again on Saturday against Lee University. The baseball and softball teams went 0-3 in the series against University of West Florida over the weekend. The baseball team lost against Southern Arkansas yesterday. Both the softball and baseball teams host Auburn University – Montgomery this weekend. The swimming and diving teams have 18 members who qualified for the NCAA DII Swimming and Diving Championships, and they leave on Sunday for competition that will begin on March 11. The golf team won the Mississippi College Invitational earlier this week, and the men's and women's tennis teams host the University of Alabama – Huntsville on Sunday.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The roofing project for Walter Sillers Coliseum has stalled due to the lack of good weather. Most of the work on the HVAC project for Walter Sillers Coliseum is complete. The roofing project for the Holcombe-Norwood Hall building is complete, and the faculty parking lot, which was being used for the supplies, reopened for use. The roofing project for the Facilities Management Building is behind schedule, and the architect continues to pay liquidated damages. Repairs on the areas that sustained storm damage recently have begun, but several projects require an architect and will be put out for bid. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the university plans to expend the remaining R&R funds for the fiscal year with several projects including replacing all electrical line poles on the west side of the BPAC and replacing several boilers across campus. The roofing projects for the residence halls will be awarded on March 18, and the university will host a pre-construction meeting next week. The HVAC project for the Mayers Aquatics Center will be awarded on March 24. Following the awarding of both projects, construction will begin 45 days after being awarded. Mr. Rutledge announced that the President's home will be complete in six weeks.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members some of the meetings and events planned for the week. The Greenwood Lions Club Youth Leadership Seminar invited President LaForge to speak to the group this morning on the topic of education. The Office of Career Services hosts the Spring Career Fair today. Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet members 69 employers registered for the Spring Career Fair. President LaForge participates in an interview tomorrow for the Oral History Project documentary on the 1969 Black Student Sit In. During lunch on Thursday, President LaForge will welcome and give remarks at the Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting. The Annual Juried Student Exhibition

Opening Reception takes place Thursday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the Fielding Wright Art Gallery. The BPAC hosts an Acoustic Evening with Mark Chestnutt and Joe Diffie Thursday evening. The next Cabinet meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16.

CABINET TOPIC

Plans for the Winning the Race Conference..... President LaForge

President LaForge welcomed Dr. Temika Simmons and asked her to share with Cabinet members plans for the upcoming Winning the Race Conference on March 22 through March 24. Dr. Simmons shared with Cabinet members the Winning the Race Conference theme for the seventh annual conference will be “Making the Invisible, Visible,” and the conference will be held in Jobe Hall instead of the BPAC this year. The conference boasts Mr. Lawrence Ross as the keynote speaker, and the keynote panel during the President’s Luncheon will be Delta State alumni who participated in the 1969 Sit-in. The topics of prisons and voting will be discussed during breakout sessions, and each college/school will host a Faculty Forum to engage in conversations about diversity differences within their divisions. The conference will conclude on Tuesday with the Closing Ceremony where the Diversity Award Champion will be announced.

BUSINESS

Action

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

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Moving Expense Reimbursement policy. The policy was edited to mirror current practices. Delta State offers 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. Dr. Moon suggested editorial changes.

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

Staff Emeritus recommendations..... Ms. Killebrew

Ms. Killebrew shared with Cabinet members the names of three 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. Killebrew to approve the three staff members recommended for Emeritus status and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day Ms. Killebrew

Ms. Killebrew announced the annual Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day sponsored by the Administrative Staff Council is Thursday, May 14. The sessions will focus on teambuilding, and since the Summer Olympics occurs this year, Staff Council is including an Olympic theme. Leadership development trainer, Mr. Daniel Vassel, will provide interactive team building experiences for staff during the morning and afternoon sessions. During the morning session, awards will be given to staff members who have achieved their five, ten, or fifteen years of service to the university. Following the cookout during the lunch

hour, staff members can participate in the annual softball game or other outdoor activities. The final event of the day will be a service project. Ms. Killebrew requested approval to close all offices so that staff members can attend. Staff Council makes it clear to all staff members that the options are to: 1) participate in Staff Development Day, or 2) remain in the office.

Motion: Moved by Ms. Killebrew to allow all staff the opportunity to participate in the Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day on Thursday, May 14 and seconded by Dr. Roberts. 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, Dr. Bennett, Dr. McAdams, Mr. Kinnison, and Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet positions for consideration. The positions presented do not impact the salary savings identified previously to address the budget shortfall for this fiscal year.

Student Affairs Request

Dr. Bennett presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Financial Aid Counselor for the Office of Student Financial Assistance. The position is vacant due to the employee accepting another position on campus.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Bennett to approve the searching and hiring of a Financial Aid Counselor and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Academic Affairs Faculty Request

Dr. McAdams presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire an Instructor of Education for the Division of Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research and two Assistant Professors of Library Science/Reference Librarians for the Roberts-LaForge Library.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of an Instructor of Education and two Assistant Professors of Library Science/Reference Librarians and seconded by Dr. Moon. The motion was approved.

Academic Affairs Staff Request

Dr. McAdams presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire an Administrative Assistant for the Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of an Administrative Assistant for the Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences and seconded by Dr. Moon. The motion was approved.

Athletics Request

Mr. Kinnison presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Head Coach for the women’s soccer team.

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. Roberts. The motion was approved.

Finance and Administration Request

Mr. Rutledge announced he was recommending Ms. Crystal Beach to assume the permanent position of

Accounts Payable and Procurement Coordinator, and he needs to fill her old position of Accounts Payable Analyst. Also, Mr. Rutledge presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire three positions in Facilities Management in the areas of Custodial Services, Shipping and Receiving, and Grounds.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the searching and hiring of an Accounts Payable Analyst and three positions in Facilities Management and seconded by Dr. McAdams. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Instructional Sustainability in Uncertain Times.....Dr. McAdams

Out of an abundance of caution and to plan for continuity of instruction, Dr. McAdams asked all faculty members to begin preparations of online instruction and embrace the use of Canvas. All courses have a Canvas shell, and Dr. McAdams requested faculty members to populate their Canvas shell with the course syllabus and some material. The Ford Center for Teaching and Learning and OIT have scheduled trainings for Canvas and Zoom. Dr. McAdams and Mr. Munroe are working with Communications and Marketing to update the university website to include information on the COVID-19 as a way to be prudent in uncertain times and keep our campus community informed.

Scholarship Management System Taskforce Update Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts informed the Cabinet Members that the Scholarship Management System Taskforce will not complete the streamlined scholarship process by fall. The process of reviewing scholarships and inputting the information into Access for a future scholarship system is taking more time than estimated. The Scholarship Management Taskforce does not want to speed up the process and it hinder the final product. They are working with Dr. Megan Smith, Director of Financial Aid, to ensure correct scholarship amounts are in Banner. Dr. Roberts will continue to bring updates to Cabinet as new information is available.

Budget Committee Proposal President LaForge

President LaForge and Mr. Rutledge met with Ms. Killebrew, Mr. Oguz, Chief Jeffrey Johns, and Dr. Jon Westfall about a proposed budget committee and to discuss additional ways to ensure the campus is aware of and involved with the budget process. President LaForge brought their proposal to Cabinet to see how a budget committee would fit into the budget planning process. With the input of Cabinet members, a decision was made to replace the Spring Campus Forum with a Campus Budget Review session. The Campus Budget Review will take place on Thursday, April 23 and will be open to all faculty and staff. The review will include a briefing on the budget deliberations to-date, and will provide an opportunity for input, questions, and discussions by all employees. The Cabinet’s intent is to be direct, informative, responsive, and transparent to ensure an understanding of both process and substance as we build the budget for next year. President LaForge and the Executive Committee members will continue to work closely with the Faculty Senate president and Administrative Staff Council chair to ensure campus-wide understanding of budget decision-making. Faculty and staff are encouraged to contact supervisors, budget managers, the Faculty Senate President, or Administrative Staff Council Chair with ideas for new/enhanced revenue or thoughts about ways to minimize expenses.

Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the budget discussion today will provide context for the FY21 budget planning process. The upcoming budget needs to combine new, enhanced revenue along with substantial reductions to our expenses. An estimate of the reductions to be made is from \$1.7 million to \$2.4 million. Several inevitable expenses that will be added to the FY21 budget include: \$500,000 for cash reserves; \$500,000 for a contingency fund; increase of \$95,000 for insurance premiums; and, increase of \$35,000 for workers’ compensation insurance. One possible increase to the university’s revenue would be

revenue from a tuition increase, resulting in a net increase of \$650,000. Jamie said the Executive Committee has discussed the issue, and recommends conducting an analytical 360° review process of all university programs and activities, with the outcome of having a sound and dependable budget for FY21. All areas of the campus will be under review, and the Cabinet will do everything possible to protect people and programs. Delta State’s budgets going forward need to be sustainable, dependable, and reflect the university’s mission and priorities. Mr. Rutledge shared the FY21 budget cycle priorities with Cabinet members, and he asked for Cabinet members to return their suggestion on any reordering of priorities to him at the next Cabinet meeting. Also, Mr. Rutledge and his staff will disseminate the FY21 budget worksheets in April, after the March 31 snapshot of expenses.

Dr. McAdams shared the process he will use to review instructional and non-instructional units in Academic Affairs. His process consists of three phases, and it will be completed in April. Phase I consists of a listing of all graduate and undergraduate programs broken down with graduation rates, credit hours, and number of students in the program. Programs with a low benchmark will move on to Phase II where Dr. McAdams will conduct a program review with the deans, chairs, and faculty of those individual programs. Upon completion of the review of the individual programs, recommendations will be made to the Deans’ Council, and Dr. McAdams will report the recommendations to the Executive Committee. Phase III comprises the final recommendations to the President’s Cabinet.

President LaForge assured Cabinet members each Vice President, Academic Dean, as well as the Athletic Director, will work with his/her department/division/unit to engage in program/unit review, seek input, and determine ways to align resources with needs.

Legislative UpdateMr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe informed Cabinet Members that committees met last week to consider legislation that originated in their own chamber. The deadline for committees to act on general bills and constitutional amendments that originated in their own chambers was yesterday, March 3. 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

- Mr. Munroe announced Delta State’s second annual Spring for Success online giving day will take place on March 19, 2020. Three microgrant projects have been selected, and they will each try to raise \$2,500 in 24 hours for worthy campus causes: 1) instruments for the Electronic Music Ensemble, 2) equipment for teaching/learning physiology, and 3) Okra Suits.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Annual Juried Student Exhibition Opening Reception, March 5, 5:00 p.m., Fielding Wright Art Gallery
- An Acoustic Evening with Mark Chesnutt and Joe Diffie, March 5, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Spring Holidays, March 9-13
- DSU Legislative Day, March 18, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., Mississippi State Capitol, Jackson
- Winning the Race Conference, March 22-24
- Athletics Hall of Fame Induction, March 27, 7:00 p.m., GRAMMY Museum Mississippi
- Beautiful, March 28, 7:30 p.m., BPAC

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 16 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.