

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: March 9, 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: Dr. Curtis Coleman and Ms. Hayden Kirkhart

Guests: Mr. Cecil Barnett, Dr. Vicki Bingham, Mr. Clinton Carlisle, Mr. Kelvin Davis, Mr. Josh McPherson, Ms. Collins Phelps, Ms. Sydney Pittman, Mr. Forrest Upchurch, and Dr. Merideth Van Namen

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 9, 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 23, 2026.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Matthews announced Centennial Under the Stars is April 11. Faculty and staff can purchase tickets for a discounted price of \$30.
- Dr. Craft announced budget worksheets will be discussed with budget managers next week.
- In the absence of Dr. Coleman, Ms. Pittman provided an overview of current data for fall enrollment. EAB will be on campus April 28 and 29. Eight Takin' Care of Business Days are scheduled with virtual and in-person options.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The women's basketball team reached the semifinals tournament. The thirteen members of the swimming and diving teams are at the DII National Championships. The baseball team competes at the University of Arkansas-Monticello tomorrow. The tennis teams compete at Valdosta State University and University of West Florida today and tomorrow, respectively. The golf team competes at Valdosta State University today and tomorrow. Spring football begins on March 19.
- Mr. Dean shared that Faculty Senate is working on the Faculty Handbook revisions, and spring elections will occur soon.
- Dr. Ennis announced Delta State will host four commencement ceremonies this spring. The location of the ceremonies will be the Bologna Performing Arts Center.

CABINET TOPIC

Statesman Boulevard Phase II..... Dr. Craft

Dr. Craft invited Mr. Forrest Upchurch and representatives from Eley McPherson to the President’s Cabinet to discuss Phase II of the Statesman Boulevard expansion. The Phase II expansion joins together the end of Statesman Boulevard at the baseball complex to Highway 8. The project will be bid out in 2026, but construction will not commence until 2027. The cost of the project is \$3.3 million, and additional funds must be requested.

Campus Bookstore Request for Proposal (RFP) – Presentations..... Dr. Craft

Delta State released a Campus Bookstore Management Request for Proposal (RFP), and two bookstore management companies were selected to make presentations to the university. As part of the bookstore management companies’ presentations, they presented their proposals to the President’s Cabinet.

BUINESS

Action

Abuse of Computers and Network Systems policy (revised – final reading)..... Dr. Craft

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the revised Abuse of Computers and Network Systems policy to Cabinet for review and approval. All members of the Delta State University community must responsibly use electronic communications. The University may restrict the use of its computers and network systems for electronic communications, in response to complaints presenting evidence of violations of other university policies or codes, or state or federal laws. Specifically, the university reserves the right to limit access to its networks through university-owned or other computers, and to remove or limit access to material posted on university-owned computers. The university reserves the right to limit access to its networks through university-owned or other computers, and to remove or limit access to material posted on university-owned computers. Use of University systems must comply with all applicable federal and state laws, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Mississippi Public Records Act, applicable records retention requirements, litigation hold obligations, and IHL Board policies. Users of University systems have no expectation of privacy in information stored on, transmitted through, or created using University systems. The University reserves the right to access, monitor, review, preserve, and disclose information on its systems as permitted or required by law, including for purposes of public records compliance, litigation, investigations, and institutional operations.

**see motion under Paid Parental Leave policy.*

Paid Parental Leave policy (revised – final reading) Dr. Craft

On behalf of the University Leadership Council, Dr. Craft brought the revised Paid Parental Leave policy to Cabinet for review and approval. Delta State University recognizes the importance of supporting employees during significant family milestones. The purpose of this policy is to provide eligible employees with paid leave following the birth of an employee’s biological child or legal adoption of a child in accordance with the Mississippi State Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, Miss. Code Ann. §25-3-105. This policy applies to all eligible full-time permanent employees of Delta State University who meet the eligibility requirements defined below. The policy is adopted pursuant to the Mississippi State Employees Paid Parental Leave Act and is intended to integrate with existing University leave policies and applicable federal and state laws, including the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Motion: Moved by Dr. Craft to discuss and approve the Abuse of Computers and Network Systems policy and Paid Parental Leave policy in bulk and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Craft to approve the Abuse of Computers and Network Systems and Paid Parental Leave policies and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

Curriculum Development and Revision policy (revised - final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Curriculum Development and Revision policy to Cabinet for review and approval. All academic development and change at Delta State University will be conducted according to the policy and procedures as described herein and as required by Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Academic Guidelines, IHL policy, and all applicable accreditation policies. The policy was revised to include current practice of school and divisions rather than departments and divisions.

**See motion under Student Advising policy.*

Grades and Credits policy (revised - final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Grades and Credits policy to Cabinet for review and approval. Delta State University uses a standardized grading and credit system and provides students with access to their individual grades. The University may also award academic credit for demonstrated college-level learning through credit by examination, prior learning assessment (PLA), and competency-based education (CBE) in accordance with Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning policy and accreditation standards. Credit is awarded for verified learning, not for experience alone. The edits to the policy are the additions of the credit for prior learning and competency-based education and structured assessment pathways.

**See motion under Student Advising policy.*

Notification of Rights Under FERPA policy (revised - final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Notification of Rights Under FERPA policy for review and approval. Delta State University establishes policy in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), which affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. In accordance with 34 CFR § 99.7, Delta State University provides annual notification to students of their rights under FERPA. The University may provide this notice electronically through official University communication channels. The policy was revised to reflect current practices of FERPA.

**See motion under Student Advising policy.*

Scholastic Honors policy (revised - final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Scholastic Honors policy to Cabinet for review and approval. Delta State students receive academic honors based on their GPAs. To qualify for the President's List, a student must have a GPA of 3.8 or higher for the semester with no incomplete grades or grades below a B and must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 academic hours unless they are engaged in student teaching. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must have a GPA of 3.5 to 3.79 for the semester with no incomplete grades or grades below a C and must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 academic hours unless they are engaged in student teaching. To qualify for the Honor Diploma (4-year honors), a student must have earned at least 105 semester hours of academic credits at DSU with a GPA of 4.00. To qualify

for the Doyce Stallings Mitchell Honor Diploma (2-year honors), a student must have earned at least 60 semester hours of academic credits at DSU with the GPA of 4.00. Latin honors are awarded at graduation to students seeking a degree who have attempted and earned at least thirty (30) credit hours at Delta State University and achieved the required overall cumulative GPA. The Latin honor of cum laude is awarded to students achieving a 3.50-3.74 GPA. The Latin honor of magna cum laude is awarded to students achieving a 3.75-3.89 GPA. The Latin honor of summa cum laude is awarded to students achieving a 3.90-4.00 GPA. For students who transferred into Delta State University, students must have within the thirty (30) credit hours requirement for Latin honors at least twenty-four (24) attempted and completed credit hours in courses numbered 300 or above. The minimum thirty (30) hours of attempted and earned credits will include those registered in the student's final term. Latin honors recognized at the time of the commencement ceremony are determined by the cumulative GPA earned at the end of the previous term. Final Latin honors, those appearing on the student's transcript at the time of degree conferral, will be based on the cumulative GPA at graduation. Credits, grades, and quality points earned as part of a previously completed baccalaureate degree are not used to calculate honors at graduation. Honors are not awarded at the completion of graduate degree programs.

**See motion under Student Advising policy.*

Student Advising policy (revised - final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Student Advising policy to Cabinet for review and approval. Delta State University is committed to a comprehensive, student-centered advising model designed to support student success, retention, timely degree completion, and post-graduation outcomes. Academic advising is a shared institutional responsibility that integrates professional advisors and faculty advisors in clearly defined primary and secondary roles across the student life cycle. The purpose of academic advising at Delta State University is to provide intentional, proactive guidance that supports students in making informed academic decisions; maintaining satisfactory academic progress; completing degrees efficiently and on time; and preparing for careers, graduate study, and professional pathways. Academic advisors help students connect with campus resources that strengthen academic success, including support for study strategies, foundational writing skills, and discipline-specific academic, research, and professional development opportunities. Students are encouraged to engage in regular advising appointments to support ongoing communication about academic progress and long-term goals.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffin to discuss and approve the Curriculum Development and Revision policy, Grades and Credits policy, Notification of Rights Under FERPA policy, Scholastic Honors policy, and Student Advising policy in bulk and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffing to approve the Curriculum Development and Revision policy, Grades and Credits policy, Notification of Rights Under FERPA policy, Scholastic Honors policy, and Student Advising policy and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

Delta State University logo Dr. Matthews

Dr. Matthews requested the approval of the revised Delta State University logo. The logo has been utilized for several months; however, it needs to be formally approved by the President's Cabinet.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Matthews to approve the new Delta State University logo and seconded by Dr. Craft. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

Neurodivergent Concept..... Dr. Griffin

Dr. Griffin proposed a Neurodivergent Student Success Program for Delta State. The potential proposed Neurodivergent Student Success Program is a voluntary, opt-in initiative for students who may benefit from additional structure, proactive outreach, and coordinated support. Open to students without formal accommodations, the program would complement Accessibility Services by creating a neurodiversity-affirming environment that reduces barriers and supports persistence, graduation, and post-graduate success. This potential program would be a 2+2 program with a community college with a similar program.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Spring Break, March 9-13
- Freedom Trail Marker Unveiling and Reception, March 10, in front of Kethley Hall, 11:00 a.m.
- Springfest, March 19, Green space in front of Walter Sillers Coliseum
- Waka Flocka Flame, March 19, Walter Sillers Coliseum, 9:00 p.m.
- Go Green Weekend, March 20-22
- Athletics Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, March 20, Jobe Hall, 7:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 23, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.