

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT'S CABINET
Minutes

Meeting date: November 13, 2017

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. George Beals, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Dave Breaux, Ms. Ashley Griffin, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, and Ms. Caitlyn Thompson (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

Members not in attendance: Mr. Patrick Hundley

Guests: Ms. Mary Helen Varner, Internal Auditor

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on November 13, 2017. The meeting convened at 2:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Rutledge, seconded by Mr. Mayers, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on November 6, 2017.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Bennett gave an overview of Homecoming 2017. She stated she received overwhelmingly positive comments about the weekend. The Cleveland community was greatly involved with the parade and engaged throughout the entire weekend. She was pleased with the level of engagement from the campus. Next year, she hopes more people will attend the pep rally and bonfire on Friday evening. The Homecoming Committee will tweak events as they go along. Mr. Mayers stated it was a great weekend for Athletics. The Air Force flyover at the football game went very well, and the Airmen greatly enjoyed their visit on campus. The football team won and will advance to the first round of playoffs in Baltimore, MD this weekend. President LaForge stated the Alumni Association and Foundation Board meetings went well. The Alumni Awards Gala was a huge success and was well attended. Senator Percy Malone was very pleased with his recognition as the Alumnus of the Year. Dr. Roberts commended Dr. Bennett and the Homecoming Committee on having a master calendar on the website with information on all events located in one place.
- Ms. Griffin informed Cabinet Members that the 2018 Miss Delta State University, Ms. Gillian Oakley, was crowned on Thursday evening. Five contestants competed in the pageant. Miss Oakley won the title in 2016, as well. During the halftime show at the Homecoming game, Mr. Jaelin Bankhead was presented as Mr. Green and White and Ms. Brinkley Henry was crowned as Miss Green and White.
- President LaForge and the Executive Committee met with officials from Clarksdale last week to discuss the transfer of the Coahoma County Higher Education Center to Coahoma Community College.
- President LaForge hosted his third Faculty and Staff lunch last week. He continues to enjoy the opportunity to meet more of the Delta State family.
- President LaForge attended the Cleveland Music Foundation Board meeting last week. Ms. Becky

Nowell was selected as the new President of the Board. The date for the opening of the next exhibit, The Supremes, has been set.

- President LaForge met with Mr. Dinesh Chawla to discuss his company’s interest in the development of the golf course property. President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members the university will release an RFP for the project.
- President LaForge volunteered at St. Gabriel’s Mercy Center in Mound Bayou last week as part of the university’s outreach efforts, and he would like to strengthen Delta State’s relationship with this Center.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. The swimming and diving teams won over the weekend at Ouachita Baptist and Henderson State. The women’s basketball team played in the GSC/SSC Crossover Tournament over the weekend, and they lost their two games. The men’s basketball team hosted the GSC Sunshine Challenge Tournament on campus and lost to Florida Southern and Eckerd College. The men’s basketball team will host Central Baptist College on Tuesday.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on facilities. The Statesmen Boulevard project remains on track. Access to the sports complex will be closed from Shumate Circle and McClain Avenue beginning this week. Zeigel Hall will be completed by the end of March. The demolition portion of the dining hall project has been completed, and HVAC equipment will be installed soon.
- President LaForge and Senator Buck Clarke presented to Mrs. Miriam Ferriss a resolution passed by the Mississippi legislature honoring Coach Dave “Boo” Ferriss. She was very appreciative of the gesture.
- IHL Commissioner Glenn Boyce, President Jerryl Briggs from Mississippi Valley State University, Senator Buck Clarke, and President LaForge met to discuss legislative requests for the upcoming budget cycle. Commissioner Boyce shared the need for Repair and Renovation funds, a bond bill, and MISSION IT. Senator Clarke said he is optimistic a bond bill will pass for fiscal year 2019. President LaForge stated the President’s home was discussed, and funding options include a line item in the appropriations bill or bond bill funding.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities for the week. Tonight, the Alumni Association will host the Greenville/Washington County Alumni Event. President LaForge and Ms. Heather Miller will travel to Canton for the annual Hearin Foundation Board Beneficiaries meeting on Tuesday. On Tuesday afternoon, President LaForge will host a reception for graduating International students. On Wednesday and Thursday, President LaForge will be in Jackson for the IEO and IHL Board meetings. On Thursday afternoon, President LaForge will visit with Ms. Meredith Creekmore during her time on campus. President LaForge plans to attend the College of Business and Aviation Scholarship and Recognition Banquet Thursday evening.

CABINET TOPIC

Emergency Preparedness Audit President LaForge

President LaForge introduced Ms. Mary Helen Varner, Internal Auditor, and asked her to update Cabinet Members on the Emergency Preparedness Audit. To prepare for the audit, Ms. Varner researched other audits available and resources provided by IHL. The Emergency Preparedness audit looks into what the Police Department and campus would do in the event of a crisis or catastrophe. Prior to beginning her audit, Ms. Varner met with Dr. Bennett and Police Chief Jeffrey Johns to discuss the university’s needs related to emergency preparedness, and she reviewed the current Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to get a better understanding of Delta State’s current operations. She researched emergency plans on the MEMA and FEMA websites to see if there was standard for emergency measures at the state and federal levels. She stated our EOP lined up with the models presented by both agencies. During her audit, she identified two findings, and she has presented these findings to Dr. Bennett and Chief Johns for them to address. *(See attachment)*

BUSINESS

Action

University Listservs – Authorized Posting Agents Dr. Roberts

On behalf of Mr. Hundley, Dr. Roberts brought to Cabinet the “University listservs – Authorized Posting Agents” listing. Dr. Roberts reminded Cabinet Members the Director of Communications and Marketing is the main agent over the DSU-FYI listserv and was given access to send emails to students through the Okramail-FYI listserv in December 2015 as students couldn’t be added to the DSU-FYI listserv due to their domain name being run through Gmail. During OIT’s changeover this summer to Microsoft Office 365, the changeover cancelled the Director of Communications and Marketing’s access to send to the Okramail-FYI listserv. Mr. Hundley requests that the Director of Communications and Marketing be given access to send to the Okramail-FYI listserv.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Roberts to approve the Director of Communications and Marketing and their designee to have access to send DSU-FYI emails to students via the Okramail-FYI Listserv and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

Discussion

Employee MoraleDr. Beals and Ms. Thompson

President LaForge asked Ms. Thompson and Dr. Beals to share with Cabinet Members the results of their conversations with their constituencies regarding employee morale on campus. Ms. Thompson stated the conversation among Staff Council members was positive overall. She shared a few grievances and obstacles provided by Staff Council members as well as opportunities for morale boosters. She stated Staff Council members appreciated the fact that the Cabinet was discussing the subject. Dr. Beals informed Cabinet Members that the conversation regarding employee morale is ongoing within Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate would like to send out an anonymous survey to faculty members in the Spring semester to get additional feedback. Dr. Beals stated faculty would like to be given additional information on processes resulting in decisions that impact the academy. President LaForge expressed his appreciation to Ms. Thompson and Dr. Beals on their work to bring this information to the table. President LaForge asked individual Cabinet Members to address morale issues in their respective areas, as well. Ms. Thompson and Dr. Beals will bring proposals on increasing employee morale to Cabinet in January. *(See attachments)*

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Thanksgiving Holidays for staff, November 23-24
- Christmas Tree Lighting, November 30, 3:00 p.m., Leroy E. Morganti Atrium
- Rhythmic Circus: Red and Green, November 30, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Fall Exams, December 4-8
- Fall Commencement, December 9, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., BPAC

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, November 27
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.