

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: November 9, 2020

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Dr. Vernell Bennett-Fairs (via Zoom), Chief Jeffrey Johns (via Zoom), Mr. Mike Kinnison (via Zoom), Dr. Charles McAdams (via Zoom), Mr. Rick Munroe (via Zoom), Dr. Michelle Roberts (via Zoom), Mr. Jamie Rutledge (via Zoom), Dr. Jonathan Westfall (via Zoom), and Mr. Richard Word (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: Mr. Jeff Slagell

Guest: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Mr. James Forte, Director, Alumni Affairs

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on November 9, 2020. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Word and seconded by Chief Johns, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on November 2, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last week. President LaForge stated that all polling locations in Cleveland reported having excellent turnouts on election day. President LaForge commended the Office of Student Affairs and Delta State students for organizing a registration campaign and offering transportation to the polls to encourage all to exercise their right to vote. The Delta State chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa initiated four new members last week. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and the Gulf South Conference Board of Directors met last week. Mr. and Miss DSU were announced at half-time during the football scrimmage on Saturday. The football scrimmage had great attendance, and all COVID-19 protocols and guidelines were followed.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The Gulf South Conference Board of Directors is reviewing basketball schedules and considering revising the formats of competition, and they are trying to reduce the burden of COVID-19 testing. Athletic activities will taper off beginning this week with the exception of basketball and swimming and diving. Both basketball teams have their first practice today. The first basketball game will take place on December 10, and the swimming and diving teams will host their annual Christmas Invitational on December 12. Preparations for these events have begun to ensure all COVID-19 protocols are met. The Coaches Club Radio Show airs tonight at 6:00 p.m. on 107.5 FM.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project is on schedule, and the sidewalks in front of Cleveland Hall were

poured last week. The Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project is on schedule. The elevator and roofing projects were released for advertisement, and the university will take bids at the end of this month. Burris Wagnon was chosen as the architect for the residence halls renovation project, and the university will begin to work with them on plans. The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing expansion schematics and drawings will be ready on Wednesday. Mr. Rutledge will share them with Cabinet members soon.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Office of Admissions will host a virtual Spotlight Day on Tuesday beginning at 10:00 a.m., and 559 students are registered to participate. Students were incentivized to participate with a TikTok challenge where the winner will receive a cash prize. University Advancement will host on Wednesday a virtual reception for the Kyle Educational Trust Board members and their scholarship recipients. Cleveland Music Foundation Board will meet on Thursday. Delta Council will host their Annual Meeting virtually on Thursday with former Mississippi Senator Trent Lott and former Louisiana Senator John Breaux as their keynote speakers. GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi's Red Carpet Guild will host the "Down in Mississippi" virtual gala Thursday evening honoring Bobby Rush. The Alumni Association Board of Directors meets on Friday, and their President-Elect, Mr. John Fletcher, will take over in his new role as President. Cleveland's 50 Nights of Lights virtual Tree Lighting Ceremony will occur on Saturday at 6:45 p.m.

CABINET TOPIC

Homecoming Week Activities Dr. Bennett-Fairs, Mr. Munroe, Mr. Word

Delta State's virtual homecoming week began yesterday. Alumni can participate in a Virtual 5K Challenge, social media trivia, and virtual campus tours throughout the week. Tonight, Mr. Chris Smith, James Beard Award-winning author of *The Whole Okra: A Seed to Stem Celebration*, will lead a discussion about okra. Bolivar County Alumni can attend DSU Trivia at Hey Joe's on Wednesday, November 11. The Alumni Awards Gala and Golden Circle Celebration will be pre-recorded, and the video will be released on all Delta State Alumni social media platforms on Friday, November 13. SGA will host several events for students this week including: create your own custom street signs and a hypnotist today; Tron Arena laser tag and O2 bar on Tuesday; virtual games and a virtual escape room on Wednesday; build your own "Critters on Campus" on Thursday; and, Thinkfast on Friday. All COVID-19 protocols and guidelines will be followed

COVID-19 Response Update and Plans President LaForge

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university's COVID-19 plans for Fall 2020. Ms. Douglas provided Cabinet members with an update on several items related to her efforts as the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. She shared the current number of positive cases among faculty, staff, and students, and she reported on the number of faculty, staff, and students in quarantine and isolation. Ms. Douglas reported there are no students in Hill Apartments, and no students are in the off-campus location. The university has no current hotspots. Ms. Douglas and the Communications and Marketing staff continue to work on videos promoting social distancing and mask wearing for students. The videos are to be released in Spring 2021. University Physician Dr. Steven Clark met with the Healthcare Specialists on Friday. The Healthcare Specialists, the Mississippi State Department of Nursing, and Dr. Clark are working diligently on the practice agreement for the Healthcare Specialists. Ms. Douglas hopes the agreement will be final within the next two weeks, so that the additional provisions can begin. With the Healthcare Specialists able to provide more services, the Student Health Center will need a budget. Ms. Douglas will work with Mr. Rutledge on this item. The Student Health Center is testing for COVID-19, and they are working on testing independently for Spring 2021. The Bolivar County Health Department offers free COVID-19 tests for Delta State students, faculty, and staff once a week on a scheduled day. Anyone

can visit their website to see the scheduled day for COVID-19 tests for any given week. Ms. Douglas is narrowing down the screening locations during the “work from home” timeframe. A few building managers still have to provide her some information. Currently, she is experiencing issues with point-of-entry screeners not showing up for work or requesting leave time. The screeners causing the issues are the ones who will not return during the “work from home” time-frame. Ms. Douglas has not received final confirmation on Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) providing additional funds for point-of-entry screeners for Spring 2021. In an effort to recognize employees for going above and beyond the call of duty with regards to COVID-19, Ms. Douglas created the “COVID-19 Response Team Hero of the Week” recognition. This week’s selection is Mr. Michael Kemp. Mr. Kinnison stated the Athletics Department continues their surveillance testing, but he did not have anything to report. Mr. Rutledge provided Cabinet members with an update on CARES Act funds. Mr. Rutledge stated all CARES Act funds provided by the State will be obligated by the deadline of November 30.

Ms. Douglas recommended Cabinet members revise the COVID-19 Protocols for Employees and Students to reflect current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and State Department of Health guidelines. The recommended changes reflect a reduced isolation length for those who test positive for COVID-19 (from 14 days to 10 days), as well as a change of date to be tested (from first day of quarantine to day 5-7 since close contact) for those who come in close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive.

If an employee or student tests positive for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms):

- If symptomatic, must isolate until: (a) 3 days with no fever (achieved without the use of medication), and (b) respiratory symptoms have improved, and (c) 10 days since symptoms first appeared; AND
- If asymptomatic, must isolate for 10 days (from the date of testing), AND should contact his/her primary care physician’s office or the Healthcare Specialist for further direction

If an employee or student comes in close contact with someone that is positive?

- must quarantine at home for 14 days (from date of last contact), AND
- must be tested for COVID-19 on day 5-7 of quarantine/close contact.

BUSINESS

Action

COVID-19 Protocols - revision President LaForge

Ms. Douglas provided an overview of the recommended revisions to the COVID-19 Protocols for Employees and Students (as listed above). Once approved, Ms. Douglas will post the updates to the COVID-19 webpage on the Delta State website, and the revised protocols will be sent to faculty, staff, and students.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the recommended revisions to the COVID-19 Protocols for Employees and Students and seconded by Mr. Word. The motion was approved.

Discussion

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Mr. Rutledge will provide update on the university's cash flow position to the Executive Committee on Friday. The university hasn't received its first reimbursement from the State for our CARES Act funds, and we have requested our second reimbursement. Mr. Rutledge is hopeful the funds will be deposited with the next week.

Additional information

- Dr. McAdams shared with Cabinet members a four-year comparison of six-year graduation rates for the cohorts from Fall 2010 to Fall 2014. Over that time period, the six-year graduation rates for black males increased 182% and the six-year graduation rate for black females increased 59%. The six-year graduation rate for white males decreased by 34%, and the six-year graduation rate for white females increased by 9%. The university increased the six-year graduation rates by 11%.
- Dr. Roberts announced the Office of the President has a new employee, Ms. Cristie Washington. Ms. Washington will serve as the Scheduling and Events Specialist for the President's Office.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Staff Council's Feed-A-Family for Thanksgiving and Holiday Toy Drive, November 2-18
- Virtual Homecoming Week activities, November 8-14
- Fall Commencement, November 24, 10:00 a.m., via Livestream
- Winter Holidays for Students, November 25 – January 11
- Thanksgiving Holidays, November 26-27
- "Work from Home" schedule, November 30 - January 8
- Winter Holidays for Staff, December 23-January 1

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, November 16 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Response Update and Plans

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.