

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: April 10, 2019**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Severine Groh, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Billy Moore, Mr. Rick Munroe, Dr. Christy Riddle, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Charlie King

**Guests:** Ms. Amanda Robinson, Interim Director, Alumni Relations  
Mr. James Forte, Director, Development  
Ms. Paula Thompson, Director, Advancement Services

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on April 10, 2019. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Dr. Groh, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on April 1, 2019.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Mr. Munroe introduced new members of his staff including Ms. Paula Thompson, Director of Advancement and Mr. James Forte, Director of Development.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last week. Representatives from FedEx were on campus last week to announce the Purple Runway Scholarship recipients in the Department of Commercial Aviation. Dr. Moore stated it was a wonderful day and thanked Cabinet members for their participation. President LaForge and Dr. McAdams met with Dr. Andrew Wegmann last week to discuss the future of The Madison Center. President LaForge and Dr. McAdams encouraged him to come up with a purpose statement for the center as it will help in launching programming. Mr. Kinnison stated National Student Athlete Day was a great day recognizing and thanking the student-athletes. President LaForge participated in the GSC Executive Committee Conference Call last week to prepare for the annual meeting in May. The BPAC hosted a sold out performance of Trace Adkins last week. President LaForge attended the NCAA DI Men's Basketball Final Four last week, and he stated it was an outstanding experience.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The softball team went 1-2 over the last week, and the baseball team went 4-1. The softball and baseball teams compete against the University of West Alabama over the weekend here for Go Green Weekend. Senior Day for baseball and softball take place on Saturday and Sunday respectively. The golf team is preparing for the GSC tournament next week. The tennis team competes against West Florida this weekend. The screening of the Wade

Documentary is Friday at 2:00 p.m. in the BPAC Recital Hall. The renaming ceremony of the Ronald G. Mayers Aquatics Center is Saturday at 10:00 a.m. The Statesman Club Hospitality Social takes place on Saturday during the softball and baseball games, and it is a way for the Statesmen Club to attract and recruit new members. The Athletics Department is hosting two sessions on Sexual Violence Prevention Education on Monday evening for student-athletes and a session for coaches and staff on Tuesday. Another session of the Coaches Club Luncheon takes place on Tuesday at the Country Club. The men's basketball team and swimming and diving teams will be recognized for their championship visits. The Green and White Awards are scheduled for Monday, April 22 at 6:30 p.m. with a reception at 5:30 p.m.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on facilities projects. A new Interim Director of Facilities Management will begin on Monday. Mr. Rutledge travels to Jackson tomorrow for a bid opening for the university's roofing projects. Bids for the Walter Sillers Coliseum project will open on May 7 with work commencing late June. The lighting project continues with Bailey Hall. Once Delta State receives their rebate, the project will cost \$1,700 instead of \$18,000. The next locations for the lighting project are McCool Stadium and Brumby Castle Hall. Facilities Management is working on updating Hill Apartments for instructors in the Department of Commercial Aviation Renovations of the Odealier Morgan Laundry begin in the coming weeks.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members some of the meetings and events planned for the week. President LaForge, Mr. Munroe, and Mr. Rutledge met with Mr. Keith Fulcher and Ms. Laura Howell to discuss the BPAC aspect of the capital campaign this morning. President LaForge will speak to members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council tonight at the Town Hall Greek Meeting. Dr. Bennett stated this is a way for administration to convey support for the organizations and their recruitment efforts. The Cleveland Music Foundation Board meets tomorrow. Thursday afternoon, President LaForge will host a reception for graduating international students. Dr. Bennett announced Springfest begins at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday and will take place on the Quad. The annual Sammy O. Cranford Lecture is Thursday evening in Jobe Hall Auditorium, and the annual F. E. Woodall Conference is Friday morning in Jacob Conference Center. Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet members the Office of Admissions is hosting Spring Preview Day on Friday. Over 100 students and 98 guests have registered for the event. The SGA sponsored OkraFest is Saturday evening at Walter Sillers Coliseum due to the threat of rain.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Foundation's New Giving Website .....Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe presented to Cabinet members the newly formatted Delta State University Foundation giving website. The webpage can be accessed from the [www.deltastate.edu](http://www.deltastate.edu) homepage from two separate links at the top of the page. The website simplifies the giving process, and it lists different ways for donors to give. All Foundation funds are not listed in the giving options; however, the main areas for giving and a 'give to an unspecified fund' are available. Mr. Munroe asked Cabinet members to review the website and share opinions with him.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day..... Dr. Riddle**

Dr. Riddle announced the annual Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day sponsored by the Administrative Staff Council is Thursday, May 16. The theme of the day is kindness, and sessions will focus on customer service and random acts of kindness that go above and beyond a job description. During the morning session, awards for staff members achieving 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. Dr. Riddle 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 Dr. Riddle to close all offices on Thursday, May 16 for Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day and seconded by Dr. Moore. The motion was approved.

**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 and Mr. Kinnison brought to Cabinet positions for consideration. The positions presented do not impact the salary savings identified previously to address the budget shortfall.

**Student Affairs Request**

Dr. Bennett presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire an Assistant Director of Career Services.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Bennett to search for and hire an Assistant Director of Career Services and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Athletics Request**

Mr. Kinnison presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Head Baseball Coach and a Head Men’s Basketball Coach.

**Motion:** Moved by Coach Kinnison to search for and hire a Head Baseball Coach and a Head Men’s Basketball Coach and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Ratification of Requests**

Motion: Moved by Dr. Roberts to ratify and affirm the following action taken by the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Cabinet, since Cabinet last met on April 1, 2019 and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

- April 3, 2019 – Request from Dr. Bennett for approval to search for and hire a Dispatcher for the University Police Department.
- April 4, 2019 – Request from Dr. Bennett for approval to search for and hire an Admissions Clerk for the Office of Admissions.
- April 4, 2019 – Request from Mr. Rutledge for approval to search for and hire a Director of Facilities Management.

**Discussion**

**First in the World Innovation Fund.....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams shared with Cabinet members the funding the university received from the Department of Education First in the World Grant will be exhausted in September. This grant allowed for the creation of our Okra Scholars program. Delta State was offered the opportunity to sign a letter of support for federal legislation to create a permanent fund for a First in the World fund to support universities with projects innovating higher education. Upon the recommendation of the Student Success Center and Dr. McAdams, President LaForge signed the support letter. If this legislation passes, the First in the World grant would be

a permanent line item in the federal budget.

**Golf Course Development..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the RFP for the golf course development was published for advertisement last Friday. Four developers have inquired about the project thus far. Mr. Rutledge will host a walkthrough of the golf course on Monday for the interested parties. The project will be awarded on June 6, and the next step will be a feasibility study to assess the proposed plan.

**Personnel Updates ..... Cabinet Members**

President LaForge requested Cabinet members give an update on personnel changes in their respective areas. Dr. Bennett announced Ms. Nakikke Johnson was promoted to the Director of Career Services. Dr. Megan Smith has been hired as the new Director of Financial Aid. She begins on June 17. Mr. Rutledge announced the Director of Facilities Management was terminated last week, and Mr. Gerald Finley will serve as Interim Director of Facilities Management during the search for a new director. Dr. Moore announced Mr. Joe Saia assumed the role as Interim Chair for the Department of Commercial Aviation. Mr. Munroe reiterated his new hires of Ms. Paula Thompson for the Director of Advancement Services and Mr. James Forte for the Director of Development. He announced Mr. Keith Fulcher plans to retire at the end of June, and Mr. Jeffery Farris resigned to take another job. Dr. Groh announced the Faculty Senate elections take place tomorrow during their meeting, and Mr. Cetin Oguz will assume his role as Faculty Senate President.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Presidential Forums, April 16 (Staff-10:00am, Students-12:15pm, Faculty-3:00pm)
- Easter Holiday, April 19
- 38 Special performance, April 25, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Retirement and Service Awards Ceremony, April 26, 2:00 p.m., Union
- Spring Exams, April 29-May 2
- Spring Commencement, May 3, 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., BPAC

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, April 15 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Elevator Speech and Business Card template (Mr. Munroe)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.