

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: April 12, 2021

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Chief Jeffrey Johns (via Zoom), Dr. Kurt Keppler (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), Mr. Jeff Slagell (via Zoom), and Mr. Richard Word (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Dr. Vicki Bingham, Incoming Representative, Academic Council
Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Dr. Leslie Griffin, Chair, VP Academic Affairs/Provost Search Committee
Ms. Nakikke Wallace, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council
Dr. Andrew Wegmann, President-Elect, Faculty Senate
Mr. William Young, President-Elect, Student Government Association

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on April 12, 2021. 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 April 5, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The Delta State Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa initiated nine members last week. President LaForge filmed another segment of his Statesmen Insider with Coach Bo Petro regarding the tennis teams. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met, and President LaForge continued his internal relations efforts with a departmental visit, virtually, with the Delta Center for Culture and Learning. President LaForge visited with Mr. Jordan Coopwood to discuss his time in Washington, D.C. President LaForge hosted a virtual reception for graduating international students, and he provided remarks for the Sammy O. Cranford Memorial History Lecture that evening. He provided a welcome for the Mississippi Political Science Association Convention, and the Delta State Foundation Board met later that day. On Saturday, President LaForge visited with Coach Todd Cooley and the football team.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The baseball team won against Southern Arkansas University and two games against Auburn University at Montgomery last week, and they will compete against University of Montevallo this weekend. The golf team competed in their last match last week against University of West Florida. The Gulf South Conference Men's Golf Championship begins on Saturday.

The tennis teams compete today and tomorrow against University of Montevallo and University of West Alabama, respectively. They compete against Auburn University at Montgomery and Harding University this weekend. The softball team lost their series against Auburn University at Montgomery over the weekend, and they will compete against University of Montevallo this weekend. The football team will complete their spring practices with a Green and White scrimmage on Thursday evening. Mr. Kinnison announced the Hey Coach radio show will broadcast from Lost Pizza Co. tonight beginning at 6:00 p.m. on 107.5 FM.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Facilities Management completed the walkthrough for the Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project, and will complete the punch list tomorrow. Sod was ordered for the landscaping portion of the project, and it will be installed by the end of next week. The Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project walkthrough and creation of punch list will be the next steps in the project. The contractors for the campus-wide elevator project are ordering all equipment and parts, and Mr. Rutledge hopes to have a work schedule for the project soon to provide to the building managers. The contractors for the residence hall renovations are ordering supplies and materials, and they should begin work by May 1. The bonds for FY21 will be sold this week, and the bonds for FY22 will be sold in October.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge will provide a welcome for the Southwest Airlines Day for the College of Business and Aviation on Tuesday. The College of Education and Human Sciences will host their College and Scholarship Awards ceremonies on Tuesday. The DSU Research Showcase will be held virtually on Wednesday. The Institutional Executive Officers will meet on Wednesday, and the IHL Board of Trustees will meet on Thursday. A recognition luncheon will occur on Thursday to honor the four Board members whose service is ending. The four Board of Trustees members to be honored are Dr. Ford Dye, Mr. Shane Hooper, Ms. Ann Lamar, and Mr. Hal Parker. The Humanities Awards Day will be held on Thursday, and the Greek Awards are scheduled for Thursday evening. On Friday, President LaForge will participate in the inauguration of Dr. Felecia Nave, President of Alcorn State University,.

CABINET TOPIC

COVID-19 Response Update and Plans President LaForge

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university’s COVID-19 response and plans. 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 there are no students in the off-campus location. Currently, the university has no hot spots. The Bolivar County drive-through COVID-19 vaccine distribution site has provided more than 2,000 vaccinations, and 931 people have completed their vaccination process. Dr. Roberts, with the help of Ms. Douglas and Mr. Michael Lamb, provided Board members of the Bolivar Medical Center Foundation a tour of the Bolivar County drive-through COVID-19 vaccine distribution site last week. The Board members were pleased with the operations of the vaccine distribution site. The Mississippi State Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccine website did not populate Pfizer first-dose vaccinations for the Bolivar County drive-through COVID-19 vaccine distribution site for the week of April 12. Ms. Douglas is working with the Mississippi State Department of Health to rectify the situation. Ms. Douglas has continued her efforts for a promotional campaign geared towards the community. Through the help of City of Cleveland Clerk Ms. Dominique Green, a flyer will be sent out to citizens with their water bill at the end of April. Also, the COVID-19 vaccination flyer was distributed to a limited number of churches. Ms. Douglas is working with Mr. Rutledge on a procedure to allow Delta State employees to provide transportation assistance to the vaccine site. Employees wishing to volunteer to

provide transportation assistance will provide a signed consent form to Ms. Douglas with a copy of their driver's license. Ms. Crystal Beach in Procurement will provide the employee's name and driver's license information to the university's insurance company. Ms. Douglas is working with Communications and Marketing on a marketing campaign for the Student Health Center and their ability to provide basic health services to students and employees. President LaForge asked Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Munroe to work together on distributing a press release to the community regarding Delta State's facilities being available for rental and use, beginning May 3. 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. The Campus Counseling staff will be the "COVID-19 Heroes of the Week" for April 12-16. Dr. Keppler informed Cabinet members three-fourths of the federal Coronavirus Responses and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act funds were disbursed to students. The Office of Student Financial Assistance has approximately \$400,000 that will be made available to students enrolled in the Summer or Fall. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the university has not received its Higher Education Emergency Relief funds, and the university will receive additional funds during the third round of Higher Education Emergency Relief. Mr. Rutledge will have some funds from the second round of Higher Education Emergency Relief funds available due to the university not maintaining the point-of-entry screeners after April 30.

BUSINESS

Action

COVID-19 Protocols - revised President LaForge

Dr. Roberts provided an overview of the recommended revisions to the COVID-19 Protocols. The Executive Committee recommends revising the COVID-19 protocols to reflect the university's efforts to return to normal operations by requiring all employees who have been working from home to return to the workplace no later than June 1, 2021. Employees who are at high-risk for COVID-19, including older adults and people of any age with certain underlying medical conditions, are encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine before returning to work. If an employee, who is at high-risk for COVID-19, is medically ineligible to receive the vaccine, and wants to continue working from home, the employee must submit to Human Resources a statement from the employee's physician stating the medical reason for the employee being unable to receive the vaccine. Once Human Resources validates the document, and verifies the employee's successful ability to perform their job from home, Human Resources will notify the employee and the supervisor of their decision regarding the employee's "work from home" request.

Ms. Douglas will post the updates to the COVID-19 webpage on the Delta State website, and the revised protocols will be sent via the listserv.

Motion: Moved by Chief Johns to approve the revised COVID-19 protocols and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

FY22 Budget Plans Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the university the good news that Delta State will receive a 4.11% or \$820,216 increase in State appropriations for FY22. Included in the increase is \$2,131 is for the university's legislative line items: The Delta Center for Culture and Learning, the Delta Music Institute, E-Learning, and Commercial Aviation. The remainder of the increase, \$818,085, are unrestricted funds and can be used at the university's discretion. The Executive Committee discussed the university's priorities and decided the best use of the unrestricted State appropriations would be for salary raises. Mr. Rutledge

analyzed all salaries in the university’s operating budget to deduce how far the \$818,085 in the State appropriations increase could stretch, and he removed all students, graduate assistants, and adjunct faculty members during his computations. The university’s salary budget is \$23,911,098. The Executive Committee reviewed salary increases at 1%, 2%, 2.5%, and 3% levels. A 2.5% increase would cost \$597,777.45, and the university has to include an additional \$119,555.49 for fringe benefits for a total of \$717,332.94. The university would have \$100,752.06 remaining in unappropriated funds to fund market needs. A 3% salary increase would cost \$717,332.94, and the university would have to include an additional \$143,466.59 for fringe benefits for a total of \$860,799.53. The 3% salary increase exceeds the unrestricted State appropriations available for salary increases. The Executive Committee recommends utilizing the funds to provide a 2.5% salary increase for all employees, and to use the remaining \$100,752.06 for market and equity salary increases. Upon the approval of Cabinet members and the IHL Board of Trustees Thursday, the Executive Committee will develop a process for awarding the market and equity salary increases.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve a 2.5% salary increase for all employees and seconded by Chief Johns. The motion was approved.

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members for their information and approval the revised FY22 budget proposal recommended by the Executive Committee. The FY22 budget totals \$49,258,544 in proposed revenue, which includes a decrease of \$4,864,141 from the FY21 budget in the following areas: CARES funding; Delta State University Foundation contributions; scholarship funds; tuition revenue (based on FY21 actual numbers); and, projected loss of other revenues (sales, services, commissions, etc.). The budget proposal was adjusted to include increases in the following areas: \$818,085 from State appropriations; \$810,000 in additional revenue from the 3% tuition increase; and, the use of \$1,000,000 from the Higher Education Emergency Relief funds to cover lost revenue. The proposed FY22 budget has several reductions in expenses from FY21: insurance costs; removal of the cash contingency; computer equipment; technology equipment; vehicle replacements; payments to the Department of Education; and, Admissions scholarships. The budget reductions total \$3,712,816. Additional expenses for FY22 include: scholarship budget adjustment for the tuition increase; Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion salary; new Scholarship Coordinator salary; scholarship software; Student Health Services budget; Department of Athletics Strength and Conditioning staff; additional monies for the contingency fund; and, a 2.5% salary increase for full-time employees. The additional expenses for FY22 total \$1,478,890.90. The university budget proposal for FY22 is \$49,258,544.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the FY22 budget plans and seconded by Dr. McAdams. The motion was approved.

Discussion

VP Academic Affairs/Provost Search Update..... President LaForge

President LaForge invited Dr. Leslie Griffin to provide an update on the Vice President for Academic Affairs search. Dr. Griffin informed Cabinet members the search committee is comprised of 16 very engaged campus representatives. The nationwide search produced 45 applications with 37 applying by the “best consideration” deadline. The search committee narrowed down the search to seven applicants for phone interviews. From the phone interviews, the pool was narrowed to three applicants. The search committee conducted their reference checks and invited two qualified candidates to campus for in person interviews this week and next.

VP Student Affairs Search Update..... Mr. Kinnison

Mr. Kinnison shared with Cabinet members the Vice President for Student Affairs search committee has received the survey results from the in-person interviews of all four candidates. The search committee met this morning to discuss the survey results, and they will meet one last time on Thursday for the final assessment of candidates. Mr. Kinnison will present their final report to President LaForge Thursday afternoon.

Legislative Update Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe shared with Cabinet members the legislature passed the bond bill, and the university will receive \$10.8 million for facilities projects in FY22: \$7.8 million for the School of Nursing addition and \$3.0 million for other campus projects.

Staff Evaluations..... Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the performance evaluation timeline. Human Resources will email out the evaluation forms and guidelines tomorrow. Supervisors are to conduct evaluations from April 14-30. The Vice Presidents review period will be May 3-10. All signed performance evaluations are due to Human Resources by May 11.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Expenditures are below the projected target, and the university should exceed its target for days of cash on hand at the end of the fiscal year. He will share the budget-to-actual report to Cabinet next week for review.

Additional information

- Dr. Keppler announced they received 42 applications for the Student Hall of Fame, and 10 students will be inducted. He congratulated Mr. Word and Mr. Young on being selected for induction into the Student Hall of Fame. The ceremony will take place at the end of the month.
- Dr. Wegmann announced that his new book, *American Color*, will be released this fall.
- Mr. Rutledge announced community members will be able to resume visiting the Young-Mauldin Cafeteria in August. The community's access to the pool and facilities will resume May 3. Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Munroe will work together on a press release.
- Dr. Westfall announced the new President-Elect of Faculty Senate is Dr. Josh Armstrong, and Ms. Maia Wegmann will continue to serve as Secretary.
- President LaForge and Mr. Munroe solicited a donor last week, and the meeting went very well. Mr. Munroe believes the donor will donate the requested amount.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Research Showcase, April 14, 6:00 p.m., Virtual
- Faculty and Staff Forum, April 21, 3:00 p.m., Virtual
- Student Hall of Fame Ceremony, April 29, BPAC
- Commencement, April 30, Sillers Coliseum

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, April 19 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Response Update and Plans (President LaForge)

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