

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: April 5, 2021

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Chief Jeffrey Johns (via Zoom), Dr. Kurt Keppler (via Zoom), Dr. Charles McAdams (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: Mr. Mike Kinnison and Mr. Rick Munroe

Guests: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Mr. Michael Farr, Winner, President's Art Award
Ms. Abigail Killian, Winner, Cabinet Art Award
Mr. Cetin Oguz, Chair, Art Department
Ms. Nakikke Wallace, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council
Dr. Andrew Wegmann, President-Elect, Faculty Senate

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on April 5, 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 March 29, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The university hosted virtually the seventh annual Winning the Race Conference last week. President LaForge expressed his gratitude to faculty and staff involved in the planning and execution of the conference. President LaForge filmed a segment of his Statesmen Insider with Mr. Eckward McKnight regarding the Finance Lab in the College of Business and Aviation. The Office of Student Affairs hosted the Most Beautiful pageant and Springfest last week. Miss Kate Bowen was selected Most Beautiful. The Administrative Staff Council Employee of the Month for March was Ms. Grace Ballard, Accounts Payable Analyst.
- In Mr. Kinnison's absence, President LaForge gave an update on Athletics. The men's and women's tennis teams defeated Lee University and Shorter University last week during their matches. Both teams travel to the University of West Alabama on Friday and University of Montevallo on Saturday. The softball team won one of two games against the University of Arkansas-Monticello Softball and lost their series against Valdosta State University last week. The baseball team won their series to Valdosta State University over the weekend. The baseball team hosts the University of Southern Arkansas on Tuesday, and the softball and baseball teams travel to Auburn University at Montgomery this weekend.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Facilities Management is working with the architects and engineers on a punch list for the Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project and the Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project. The Bureau of Buildings postponed the pre-construction meeting for the campus-wide elevator project until this week. Once the pre-construction meeting convenes, Mr. Rutledge can provide to building managers a timeline of the project. The notice to proceed will be issued for two projects today: residence halls roofing project and the residence halls renovations projects. All of these projects are scheduled to be finished by August 1. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the bonds approved for FY21 have not been sold and may not sell until June or July, which will delay some campus projects. Delta State was approved to receive \$10.8 million in bonds for FY22 to complete the School of Nursing expansion and other campus renovations. The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) will receive a 4.3% increase in State appropriations for FY22, and Delta State’s portion of the increase will be \$716,802. The Executive Committee will discuss options for the extra funds, and will bring a recommendation to Cabinet for approval. The feasibility study for the Delta State golf course project was finalized and approved. The feasibility study states a hotel, a conference center, and single-family housing are feasible for the Cleveland economy. The next step is for Delta State to work with the IHL legal team on a contract for the university and the development company.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Delta State Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa will initiate nine members tonight. The final two candidates for the Vice President for Student Affairs are on campus today and tomorrow. President LaForge will film another segment of his Statesmen Insider tomorrow with Coach Bo Petro regarding the tennis teams. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meet on Tuesday, and President LaForge will continue his internal relations efforts with a departmental visit, virtually, with the Delta Center for Culture and Learning. President LaForge will host a virtual reception for graduating international students on Thursday, and he will provide the welcome for the Sammy O. Cranford Memorial History Lecture that evening. He will provide a welcome for the Mississippi Political Science Association Convention on Friday morning, and the Delta State Foundation Board will meet on Friday morning, as well.
- President LaForge introduced and welcomed Mr. Cetin Oguz, Chair of the Art Department, and asked him to introduce the students who recently won the top awards at the Student Art Exhibit. Mr. Oguz introduced Mr. Michael Farr, who won the President’s Art Award, and Ms. Abigail Killian, who won the Cabinet Art Award. Mr. Farr won with his furniture design piece titled “Three-legged Table”. Ms. Killian won with an image titled “LadyLike.” Cabinet members congratulated the winners. President LaForge thanked Cabinet members for providing personal financial support for the Cabinet Art Award.

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 fourteen students in Hill Apartments, and there are no students in the off-campus location. Currently, the university has two hot spots. The Bolivar County drive-through COVID-19 vaccine distribution site has provided more than 2,000 vaccinations. Ms. Douglas continues to work with Dr. Keppler and Mr. Munroe on a promotional campaign geared towards Delta State students getting vaccinated prior to the end of the semester. The first email in the campaign was sent to students on March 22 and a press release was distributed on March 29. On March 30, a social media push occurred with

photos of the football team receiving their vaccinations. On March 31, a second email was sent to students with the COVID-19 vaccination flyer, and the COVID-19 vaccination flyer was also distributed across campus. Today, Communications and Marketing will film a promotional video for distribution. Ms. Douglas has continued her efforts with a promotional campaign geared towards the community, as well. She emailed a COVID-19 vaccination flyer to EOC Director Mr. Michael Lamb, Executive Director of the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Ms. Lara Bowman, and City of Cleveland Clerk Ms. Dominique Green. Also, the COVID-19 vaccination flyer was distributed to a limited number of churches. 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. Ms. Mitzi Woods and the South Delta Planning and Development District staff will be the "COVID-19 Hero of the Week" for April 5-9. Mr. Kinnison announced twelve members of the football team tested positive for COVID-19 over the last two weeks. Through contact tracing, 19 student-athletes were placed in quarantine. All football operations are suspended through the remainder of this week. All other sports have continued to conduct surveillance testing with negative results. Dr. Keppler informed Cabinet members 1,387 applications were submitted by students for the federal Coronavirus Responses and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act. The Office of Student Financial Assistance has disbursed \$665,000 to student accounts, and there are 50 applications remaining to be reviewed. Any funds remaining after the 50 remaining students receive their allotted funds will be made available to students enrolled in the Summer or Fall.

BUSINESS

Action

COVID-19 Protocols - revised President LaForge

President LaForge provided an overview of the recommended revisions to the COVID-19 Protocols. He recommended revising the COVID-19 Protocols to reflect changes from Executive Order 1550 by Governor Tate Reeves. Executive Order 1550 extends Executive Order 1549 until Friday, April 30, 2021, except as follows:

- Indoor Arenas: Attendance at events held in indoor arenas, including college and university arenas, shall be limited as follows:
 - Seating Capacity: Seating capacity in all sections (bowl/arena seating, club areas and suites) shall be limited to a maximum of 75% of seating capacity.
 - All entry/exit gates and restrooms shall be open. Attendees should be encouraged to practice social distancing while waiting in line at entrance/exits and restrooms. Attendees shall not be permitted to congregate in the area around entrances/exits or restrooms.
 - Attendees are encouraged to wear a face covering, covering their nose and mouth, while inside the arena when social distancing is not possible from persons not in the same household.

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

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

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities policy (revised – final reading)Dr. McAdams

On the recommendation of the Academic Council, Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet the revised Faculty Rights and Responsibilities policy for a final reading. The revisions to this policy help manage the transition from a majority of virtual instruction to face-to-face instruction. With the permission of their department

or division chair, faculty members can provide a balance of virtual and face-to-face advising appointments for registration, and they may schedule up to 50% of their office hours virtually.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the revised Faculty Rights and Responsibilities policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Westfall. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Orientation 2021 Steering Committee Recommendations Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members the dates for Summer Orientation 2021: June 8, June 15, June 22, June 29, and July 27. The June 8, June 22, and June 29 sessions will be held in person, and the June 15 session will be held virtually. The final date, July 27, will be held in-person and will be made available virtually for those not attending in-person. Following an opening session, students and parents will be separated into different tracks. Students will end their day with registration and advisement, and parents will finish their day with conversations with Alumni Affairs, Athletics, and the parents’ association.

FY22 Budget Plans Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge announced budget worksheets will be distributed to the vice presidents this week, and will be due back to Mr. Rutledge in two weeks for entry into the new fiscal year budget worksheet.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Expenditures for March 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.

Legislative UpdateMr. Munroe

In Mr. Munroe’s absence, President LaForge provided Cabinet members with an update on the 2021 Legislative session. The funds for Delta State’s four-line items were realigned slightly, and we do not know the reason for the change. Also, the university will receive \$607,000 in Repair and Renovation funds.

Additional information

- Career Services will host a virtual Young Professionals’ Conference on Wednesday, April 7.
- Dr. McAdams announced 449 students applied for graduation this Spring, and 311 students plan on walking during the Commencement ceremonies on April 30.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

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

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, April 12 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Response Update and Plans (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.