

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: August 1, 2023**

**Members in attendance:** Dr. Dan Ennis, Dr. Ellen Green, Dr. Christopher Jurgenson, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Mr. Rick Munroe, Dr. Andy Novobilski, Ms. Holly Ray, Ms. Haley Rooks, and Mr. Larry Wakefield (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Mike Kinnison and Dr. Michelle Roberts

**Guests:** Dr. Edwin Craft, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Dr. Caroline Fletcher, Digital Media Coordinator, Communications and Marketing  
Ms. Dana George, Senior Executive Associate Athletic Director for Compliance, Academics, and Internal Operations  
Dr. James Gerald, Dean, Graduate and Honors Studies  
Dr. Christy Riddle, Chief Marketing Officer

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on August 1, 2023. The meeting convened at 3:00 p.m. with Dr. Ennis presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Dr. Novobilski, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on July 24, 2023.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Ennis gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. Dr. Ennis attended the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' New President Academy last week. Dr. and Mrs. Ennis visited Chancellor Glenn Boyce and toured the campus of University of Mississippi. While in Oxford, Dr. Ennis visited with Senator Nicole Boyd and Representative Clay Deweese. Senator Boyd was not able to attend the Legislative Facilities Tour in June, and so Dr. Ennis shared with her information on Delta State.
- In the absence of Mr. Kinnison, Ms. George gave an update on Athletics. The cheer team and football team report this week, and both soccer teams report next week. Once student-athletes report to campus, they begin pre-season workouts and practice. Ticket sales began today for all fall sports.
- Mr. Wakefield shared an update on Facilities projects. The Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project began. Mr. Wakefield will share a map of all areas to be affected by the sidewalk project construction. The third floor of Foundation Hall is being painted. Contractors have made great progress on temporarily fixing roofs around campus. The ADA portion of the BPAC project is progressing; however, the elevator portion was extended for almost two years. The Walter Sillers Coliseum project will begin this month. The boiler for Nowell Union will be installed this fall.

- Ms. Rooks provided an update on Student Government association activities. Members of the Student Government Association and Office of Student Life staff installed the basketball court at the William H. Young Outdoor Recreational Center.
- Dr. Ennis shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Dr. and Mrs. Ennis met with the Department of Speech and Hearing faculty this morning and received a tour of their clinic. Dr. Ennis met with community members to discuss the golf course, and he attended the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting. Dr. Ennis will meet with several local and State government officials this week including Cleveland Mayor Billy Nowell, State Senator Sarita Simmons, Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons, and State Representative Robert Sanders. On Wednesday, Dr. Ennis will welcome Cleveland and West Bolivar County School Districts teachers to campus for their annual convocation. Dr. Ennis and Mr. Munroe travel to Greenville, MS on Wednesday to meet with a potential donor. On Thursday, Dr. Ennis will speak with the football team and with residence hall staff.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Stipends for Graduate Students.....Dr. Novobilski**

Dr. Novobilski invited Dr. James Gerald, Dean of Graduate and Honors Studies, to Cabinet to discuss his comparative study of stipends for graduate students. Dr. Gerald and his staff conducted a simple survey of 21 different graduate programs to try to better understand how Delta State’s graduate assistantship funding fits within the spectrum of similar schools. The questions asked were the following: what is your university Graduate Assistantship budget?; what is the typical package a graduate assistant receives?; how many graduate students do you typically support out of the university budget?; and, what duties do they typically perform? The schools were selected using the tool provided by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in the article “Who Does Your College Think Its Peers Are?” by Jacquelyn Elias. Using that tool, Dr. Gerald and his staff developed a list of institutions that included two groups: those Delta State called its peers, and those that call Delta State their peers. After generating the two groups, IPEDS data was used to eliminate schools from the list with graduate programs less than half our size and more than twice our size. Of the schools that participated in the survey, Delta State had the second highest graduate assistant budget; and, most schools required more hours per week than Delta State’s 15 hours. Delta State’s graduate assistantship packages are comparable to our peers. Delta State’s Athletics department allows their graduate assistants to work as assistant coaches and will alter their packages with their department funds to make the package more attractive. Delta State is not able to recruit for graduate assistants like other universities due to a delay in the budget and the availability of graduate assistants. Cabinet members discussed the option of a reduced housing rate for graduate assistants; and, they discussed revising the graduate assistant budget to create a number of higher-end graduate assistantship packages to attract a larger pool of students.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Social Media policy (new – first reading) .....Mr. Munroe**

In July 2022, Mr. Munroe brought a Social Media policy for review. It was approved for a first reading; however, the policy was discarded. The policy presented today was provided by the Special Assistant Attorney General assigned to IHL universities. This policy defines the rules and procedures for the use of Official University Social Media Accounts to ensure both legal and policy compliance. All Official University Social Media Accounts must be registered with the University’s Office of Communications and Marketing.

Official DSU social media accounts should be registered to a shared or general email address accessible by a primary and secondary administrator to ensure consistent management. At least one of the administrators should be a permanent, full-time university employee. Official accounts are expected to maintain DSU's brand identity, integrity, and reputation by maintaining an appropriate voice, sharing, and liking appropriate content, and serving as a productive, supportive element of the university's social media community. Accounts must comply with the Delta State University Identity Standards Guide, as well as state and federal law, including intellectual property and copyright laws, terms of social media providers, and University policies. Further, any use of official university logos or trademarks on Official University Social Media Accounts must have prior approval. Official university accounts must follow the respective terms of service for social media platforms, applicable state and federal laws, and NCAA regulations. Cabinet members discussed a few best practices for administering official social media accounts including: contacting Communications and Marketing for crisis or emergency communication needs; speaking with the media; and, knowing the university cannot repress faculty or staff from speaking to the media. Cabinet members requested the following: including official accounts must comply with IHL policy; strike TikTok from the definition of social media; change "Twitter" to "X" in the definition of social media; and, a minor be defined as anyone under 18 as a minor in Mississippi is anyone under 21. Additionally, Cabinet members discussed how to clearly distinguish a personal and professional social media account.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Novobilski to approve the new Social Media policy and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Academic Freedom policy (new).....Dr. Novobilski**

On recommendation of Academic Council and the Faculty Senate, Dr. Novobilski brought the new Academic Freedom policy to Cabinet for discussion. This policy is based on the most current iteration of the American Association of University Professors 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Delta State supports open and respectful dialogue, encouraging diverse perspectives and fostering an inclusive intellectual environment. Delta State rejects the idea of compelling any of its community members to adopt or express any belief that violates the individual's personal and legally protected freedom and/or beliefs. Although academic freedom provides latitude in the classroom and research, it does not justify discrimination, harassment, or the promotion of speech with the sole and deliberate intention of being hurtful. The creation of the Academic Freedom policy was driven by the university's SACSCOC review. Dr. Novobilski asked Cabinet members to submit any changes or questions to Dr. Josie Welsh, Dr. Chris Jurgenson, and himself by end of week, and he will bring the policy to Cabinet next week for a first reading.

**Proposed Email – Important Procedure Change: Transition to Purchase Orders and Increased Scrutiny of P-Card..... Mr. Wakefield**

Mr. Wakefield shared with Cabinet members a draft email to be sent to faculty and staff regarding the transition to purchase orders and increased scrutiny of p-card use. Effective immediately, the university will be limiting the use of direct pays by paper purchase requisition, and it will be implementing tighter scrutiny of p-card transactions. These changes are designed to enhance the university's procurement processes, increase efficiency, and ensure better financial control and accountability. Training sessions for entering purchase orders and the updated p-card guidelines will occur during the Fall semester.

**Budget Update..... Mr. Wakefield**

Mr. Wakefield shared a budget update with Cabinet members. The FY24 budgets have been disseminated, and the FY24 budget book will be completed soon.

**Recruitment Update/Overview..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin provided an update on recruitment and enrollment. The enrollment reports from last week stated enrollment for the Fall was at 2,112. The report to be disseminated tomorrow has enrollment at 2,200. Dr. Lovin stated several nursing students are being registered causing an uptick in headcount, and several students are returning to Delta State this fall.

**Institutional Effectiveness and Planning .....Dr. Novobilski**

The SACSCOC reaffirmation packet is being reviewed carefully. Dr. Josie Welsh will attend an Executive Committee meeting soon to discuss several remaining needs for the SACSCOC reaffirmation packet. Dr. Novobilski suggested a portion of the Fall Forum be on preparation for the on-site reaffirmation visit in the Spring to ensure the university has one voice.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Restructuring ..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin shared with Cabinet members the restructuring of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. All diversity, equity, and inclusion activities are now under the portfolio of Engagement and Advocacy in Student Affairs and directed by Ms. Tameka Curry-Bryant. Former Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Michelle Johansen accepted a full-time position in the International Student Services office.

**Legislative Update..... Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe provided a legislative update to Cabinet members. Following their meetings with Mississippi’s Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., Dr. Ennis and Mr. Munroe have worked with campus constituencies on federal aid requests that are of interest to our Congressional delegation. Mr. Munroe plans to submit requests for two federal earmarks to support the Planetarium and Statesmen Boulevard.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Summer Work Schedule ends, August 3
- Student Move-In Day, August 9
- Takin’ Care of Business Day, August 9
- New Student Orientation, August 10-12
- Faculty Development Day, August 10
- Convocation, August 10, 3:00 p.m., BPAC
- Chamber of Commerce Welcome Back Event for Faculty and Staff, August 10, 5:00 p.m., The Warehouse
- Luncheon for Faculty and Staff, August 11, 11:00 a.m., Nowell Union 2nd Floor
- Leflore County Alumni meeting, August 22, 6:00 p.m., Museum of the MS Delta

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, August 7, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.