

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

---

**Meeting date: August 8, 2022**

**Members in attendance:** Dr. E.E. Caston, Dr. Joshua Armstrong, Dr. Caroline Fletcher, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Ms. Lucia Chacon Habis, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Dr. Andy Novobilski, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Rick Munroe

**Guests:** None

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on August 8, 2022. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Caston 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 25, 2022.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Caston gave an overview of the activities and events from the last two weeks. An End of Summer School Grill and Chill Block Party was held for the inaugural JumpStart program participants. Dr. Caston met with Ms. Cayce Friesenhahn of the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, First Lady of Cleveland Becky Nowell, and Dr. Novobilski to discuss partnership opportunities and ways to increase town-gown relations. Dr. Caston had a departmental visit with the Police Department, and he met with the football team. Cabinet members attended the annual Cabinet Advance last week, and a follow up discussion will occur next week. The Administrative Staff Council invited Dr. Caston to their August meeting for introductions. Dr. Caston attended an orientation meeting for new Foundation Board members. Delta State alumnae Nan Sanders hosted an opening reception for the next cycle of Mathews-Sanders Sculpture Garden sculptors, and Dr. Caston and Dr. Novobilski attended. Dr. Lovin hosted a dinner for SGA officers at the conclusion of their annual SGA Retreat.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The Athletics Department hosted their Annual Back to School meeting on July 28. The football team, soccer teams, and cross-country teams have reported for the Fall semester and are practicing for their upcoming seasons. The Athletics Department has four unfilled positions: the Head Golf Coach and three in sports information and marketing.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Mr. Rutledge participated in a walk-through of the university's sidewalks with the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT.) Due to the amount of additional funds received for the MDOT project, the university will be able to update some doorways and entrances to be ADA compliant. Draft plans for the project will be available soon. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History did a walk-through of Court of Governors last week to determine if the university can demolish the building. Mr. Rutledge believes the university should receive a letter conveying approval for demolition soon. Upon approval of the Mississippi Department

of Archives and History, the Bureau of Buildings and IHL have to give approval, as well. Once all approvals are received, Mr. Rutledge hopes to bid out the project in December. Mr. Rutledge met with the architect for the BPAC's ADA compliance project to discuss preliminary drawings. The Foundation Hall renovations project will be bid out in November. The School of Nursing renovation and expansion project is behind schedule, and Mr. Rutledge will meet with the contractors this week to discuss their progress. The Whitfield Hall roof repair project will begin within three weeks.

- Dr. Caston shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Dr. Caston will be the guest speaker at Rotary Club on Wednesday, and Dr. Lovin will also attend to speak on recruitment and enrollment. New Student Orientation begins Wednesday evening and continues through Sunday evening. Dr. Lovin believes approximately 374 to 400 students will participate. The GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi Board of Directors have their quarterly meeting on Thursday. Convocation will take place on Thursday at 3:00 p.m. in the BPAC. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce will host a Welcome Back Reception for faculty and staff Thursday evening at The Warehouse beginning at 5:00 p.m. Dr. and Mrs. Caston and the Administrative Staff Council will host the Opening Session Luncheon on Friday beginning at 11:30 in the H. L. Nowell Student Union, second floor lobbies.

### **CABINET TOPIC**

None

### **BUSINESS**

#### **Action**

#### **2022-23 Course Optional Fees (ratify August 2, 2022 vote) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet for ratification the 2022-23 Course Optional Fees. He reminded Cabinet members of the vote on August 2, 2022 to approve a portion of the 2022-23 Course Optional Fees.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to ratify the August 2, 2022 vote to approve the 2022-23 Course Optional Fees and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Mr. Rutledge reminded Cabinet members a second motion was made to approve three course fees for the Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art (low residency) program. The motion was approved with one vote of no and one member abstaining from the vote.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to ratify the August 2, 2022 vote to approve three course fees for the Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art program and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

#### **Pandemic Pay for Law Enforcement Officers ..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin shared with Cabinet members the Mississippi Legislature passed Mississippi House Bill 1427 and Mississippi House Bill 1542 creating the "Mississippi Law Enforcement and Firefighters Premium Pay Program." The program provides premium payments to all eligible law enforcement officers and firefighters who are serving the State of Mississippi for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Lovin informed Cabinet members their approval is needed in order for Delta State to participate in the program and be able to provide the hazard premium payments to our University Police Department officers. Upon approval, the university will receive funds from the Mississippi Department of Public Safety for distribution. University police officers will receive approximately \$3,000.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to approve Delta State participating in the “Mississippi Law Enforcement and Firefighters Premium Pay Program” and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

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

Dr. Novobilski shared with Cabinet members that the consultant Delta State hired to evaluate our SACSCOC accreditation needs begins next Monday. The consultant will ensure Delta State’s reaccreditation process continues smoothly after Dr. Beverly Moon’s retirement. Discussions will begin soon on how to proceed with creating the university’s next strategic plan.

**Enrollment Update/Overview ..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin provided an enrollment update. Currently, 673 students have committed to attend Delta State this Fall; however, 88 students are not registered yet. Currently, 51 students are scheduled to participate in Takin’ Care of Business Day tomorrow, and 15 of those students are not registered yet. Enrollment efforts have gone well this cycle, but the university has to continue its efforts and more for the next cycle.

**Budget Status Update ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge gave an update on the FY23 budget status. Mr. Rutledge shared his tuition calculations, and at this time, the university is short \$1.5 million in tuition revenue. His calculations show the university has 1,685 full-time students registered at this time. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the university is applying for a tax credit from the IRS that will reimburse the university for payroll taxes paid during COVID-19. The first portion of the application is complete. If the IRS approves the first portion of the application, the university has the information needed for the second portion of the application ready for submission. The university will request \$7.9 million in unrestricted funds. Mr. Rutledge stated the best use of these funds, if received, would be to fulfill IHL’s requirement of 90 days of cash on hand.

**Additional Information**

- Dr. Caston shared with Cabinet members the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce wants to purchase 40 Delta State flags for the City of Cleveland to hang on Court Street and downtown Cleveland for big events for the City of Cleveland and Delta State. Dr. Roberts will work with Communications and Marketing and the Chamber of Commerce on this project.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Takin’ Care of Business Day, August 9
- Student Move-in Day, August 10, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- New Student Orientation, August 10 - 14
- Convocation, August 11, 3:00 p.m., BPAC
- Chamber Welcome Back Reception for Employees, August 11, 5:00 p.m., Warehouse
- Convocation Lunch, August 12, 11:30 a.m., Nowell Union, Second Floor Lobbies
- Classes begin, August 15

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, August 15, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.