

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: February 22, 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), Mr. Jeff Slagell (via Zoom), Dr. Jonathan Westfall (via Zoom), and Mr. Richard Word (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on February 22, 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 Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 15, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The Gulf South Conference Board of Directors met last week. The HPE&R Department sponsored "4 Statesmen & 5 Dogs + 1 Trail & Goal = 2,193 Miles" via Zoom, and President LaForge provided the welcome. Three Delta State alumni and one current student, along with their five dogs, will tackle a six-month journey to hike the Appalachian Trail starting on February 23. The Institutional Executive Officers and IHL Board of Trustees met last week. A major discussion regarding sabbatical leave occurred at both meetings. B
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Several cancellations and changes in game sites occurred last week due to the winter weather. The men's basketball team competes against the University of West Alabama this weekend at the University of West Alabama. The women's basketball team competes at home against the University of West Alabama. The GSC Tournament begins next week. The men's soccer team competed and lost to the University of West Alabama over the weekend, and they will compete at home against Mississippi College on Sunday. The women's soccer team will compete against the University of Alabama-Huntsville on Saturday at the University of Alabama-Huntsville. The golf team is competing in Georgia against Georgia Southwestern State University today and tomorrow. The baseball team competed against the University of West Florida in Florida yesterday and will finish the series today. The baseball team will host the University of West Georgia this weekend. The softball team competed in a series with Mississippi College over the weekend and won one of three games. The softball team will host the University of West Georgia this weekend. The New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference meet began this week and will continue through Saturday. Mr. Kinnison announced

Ms. Britnee Smith, an instructor in HPER, was chosen as the new cross country coach.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Mr. Rutledge shared a list of damages caused by the winter weather last week. Buildings and areas affected include: Caylor-White/Walters Hall, Whitfield Hall, Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, Foundation Hall, Brumby Castle Hall, Delta State Airport, McCool Stadium, H.L. Nowell Student Union, and the Crawford Building. ServPro is on campus today to help Facilities Management with our cleanup efforts. Mr. Rutledge has meetings planned this week to establish protocols on how to prevent this type of damage in the future. One such protocol is a system being installed that will alert the Director of Facilities Management any time a building falls below a certain temperature. If the director doesn't respond within an hour, the system will notify Mr. Rutledge. The university will file a claim on our insurance for the winter weather damage, and Mr. Rutledge has been working with IHL's Director of Risk Management David Buford on the claim. Due to the winter weather last week, Mr. Rutledge doesn't have updates on the current Facilities Management projects; however, the IHL Board of Trustees approved Delta State's residence hall roofing and renovations and elevator projects at their meeting last week. Mr. Rutledge hosted a virtual pre-bid conference meeting this morning and will host another this afternoon for the residence hall roofing and renovations projects.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Delta State chose Dr. Tomeka Harbin as its nominee for the IHL Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award, and President LaForge will present Dr. Harbin with her plaque this afternoon. President LaForge will provide the welcome for the Mississippi Humanities Council Teach of the Year presentation to Dr. Andrew Wegmann tonight. President LaForge and Mr. Munroe are scheduled to speak to Senator Josh Harkins and Senator John Polk this week about Delta State's appropriations and bond funds. The Large Foundations Task Force will meet on Tuesday. President LaForge has a phone call with Ms. Jackie Nicholson on Tuesday for the NCAA Pathway Presidential mentorship program. The Social Work Department is hosting a Virtual Dementia Tour, and President LaForge will participate on Wednesday. President LaForge will provide a welcome for the virtual Margaret Tullos Field Symposium on Friday.

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 two students in Hill Apartments, and there are no students in the off-campus location. The university had no hotspots last week. The Bolivar County vaccine distribution site opens tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. and is scheduled to operate each Tuesday and Friday until further notice. Vaccine appointments will be uploaded to the COVID-19 Vaccine Patient-Screening – UMMC COVID Scheduling link each Tuesday. A link to the COVID-19 Vaccine Patient-Screening – UMMC COVID Scheduling website will be added to the Delta State website COVID-19 webpage. Additional information about other vaccine distribution sites will be on the webpage. Ms. Douglas shared her appreciation for GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi and Cleveland State Bank for donating supplies and volunteering at the vaccine distribution site. Ms. Douglas has partnered with the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce to help gather volunteers for the vaccine distribution site. Dr. Roberts shared with Cabinet members the layout of the Bolivar County Vaccine Distribution Site and how operations would flow. On behalf of all the Bolivar County Vaccine Distribution Site Committee, Dr. Roberts thanked Mr. Rutledge, Facilities Management staff, Mr. Kinnison and his staff, Chief Johns, Ms. Robin Douglas, and Dr. Vicki

Bingham and her faculty and student-nurses for going above and beyond to ensure the vaccine distribution site opening day operated without a hitch. President LaForge expressed his gratitude to Dr. Roberts and Ms. Douglas for their hard work behind the scenes in getting Bolivar County a vaccine site. 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. Jessica Jarvis will be the "COVID-19 Hero of the Week" for February 22-26. Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members the remaining CARES Act funds will be distributed to students this week. The next round of Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds will be distributed to eligible students broken down into four categories: non-FAFSA, Pell eligible, non-Pell eligible, and zero family contribution. Their main goal is to provide support to as many eligible students as possible, recognizing some students have a higher need of support. Students will receive between \$300 to \$750. The application for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds will be released by email on March 1, and it must be submitted by March 15. Students will be encouraged to apply any funds received to their student account to pay their existing account balances; however, a student is not mandated to put any funds towards their account. Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members an update on how the \$3,010,494 of newly allocated Higher Education Emergency Relief grant funds will be spent. One new item to be funded by the grant funds was discussed and approved by the Executive Committee last week. The Office of Academic Affairs will receive \$108,328, which leaves \$430,840 that is currently unobligated.

BUSINESS

Action

None

Discussion

Cabinet Art Award Dr. Roberts

The Art Department has begun collecting funds for their annual art awards for students. The Cabinet award is a \$500 cash award that goes to the student with the second-best piece in the student art show. The top prize is the President's Award, which is a \$1,000 cash award. The art work selected for the Cabinet Award and the President's Award will be displayed in the President's Office for one year, and then each piece will become a part of the university's permanent collection. Dr. Roberts asked Cabinet members to consider donating for the Cabinet award. Ms. Claire Cole will send to Cabinet Members an email with the link for donations. Also, Cabinet Members may give their donation to Ms. Cole. The donations are due by Monday, March 8.

DSU CARES Funds for Students Dr. Keppler

See COVID-19 Response Update and Plans discussion above.

Creation of Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) Dr. Keppler

Delta State University has a referral system called CARES (Campus Action Referral and Evaluation System) that allows faculty, staff, or students to refer anonymously any student who in distress or need. A student may be referred to CARES for a financial, physical, mental, or academic issue. Dr. Keppler would like to expand upon DSU CARES and create a Behavior Intervention Team (BIT). The BIT team will act as a retention mechanism to keep students from falling through the cracks. The BIT team will be composed of representatives from the Police Department, Student Life, Housing and Residence Life, and Student Success Center. This team will meet regularly for case management. Dr. Keppler does not want to alter or

diminish the success the Stay Okra Strong (SOS) Early Alert system, but he would like DSU CARES to be seen as three branches: academic, judicial, behavioral. The BIT would oversee the referrals and ensure the referred students get the attention needed from the appropriate area.

Children’s Advocacy Center Mr. Rutledge

Dr. Jana Donahoe, Associate Professor of Social Work, began conversations with the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Mississippi in Spring 2019 about partnering together to get a Children’s Advocacy Center in Bolivar County. The Children’s Advocacy Centers of Mississippi would like to rent the house on Delta State’s campus that was used by the previous Police Chief’s to use as their Bolivar County location. Mr. Rutledge has spoken to the IHL attorney about liability issues and zoning issues for Delta State if the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Mississippi had their Bolivar County location on Delta State’s campus. The IHL attorney will help draft a contract for Delta State that takes all liability from us, and Delta State would be covered by the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Mississippi’s liability insurance. The house will need some renovations, and Mr. Rutledge will use the rent money to pay for the renovations. Delta State will not be providing any funds for this venture. Dr. McAdams shared with Cabinet members Delta State offers a Child Advocacy Studies Training (CAST) Certificate program to students and practitioners in the field. By having this center on Delta State’s campus, the certificate program will become more robust. President LaForge asked Dr. McAdams to reach out to Dr. Donahoe for information on the project in order for President LaForge to make preliminary calls to the Mayor of Cleveland, the Bolivar County Administrator, and President of the Bolivar County Board of Supervisors.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget, and he stated that all expenses and revenues are on target with his original projections. Mr. Rutledge thanked Dr. Keppler for issuing the remaining CARES Act funds to students as Mr. Rutledge can now request the \$3 million Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds.

FY22 Budget Plans Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge announced the Executive Committee will review Phase I and Phase II budget requests and scholarships in their weekly meeting on Friday. Cabinet members will review the final priority list requests for Phase I and Phase II and scholarships at their next meeting.

Legislative Update Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe provided Cabinet members with an update on the 2021 Legislative session. Mr. Munroe stated the appropriations and bonds bills were introduced last week and they are being reviewed by the House and Senate Committees this week. Mr. Munroe has scheduled calls with Senator Josh Harkins and Senator John Polk this week for President LaForge to discuss Delta State’s needs for appropriations and bond funds.

Additional information

- Dr. Keppler gave kudos to Mr. Rutledge and the Facilities Management staff for removing the ice around the H. L. Nowell Student Union this morning. Also, Dr. Keppler thanked Chief Johns for his expert travel guidance in avoiding the winter weather on his return last week.
- Mr. Kinnison announced the Hey Coach Radio Show broadcasts tonight from Lost Pizza Co. beginning at 6:00 p.m. The broadcast will be on 107.5 FM.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Annual Margaret Tullos Field Symposium, February 26, 8:30 a.m., Virtual
- Statesmen Kickback Admissions event, March 6, 2:00-8:00 p.m., Statesmen Park
- Winning the Race Conference, March 29-30, Virtual

NEXT MEETING:

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

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.