

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: February 6, 2023

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, Mr. Rick Munroe, Dr. Andy Novobilski, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Mr. Larry Wakefield (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: Dr. Josie Welsh, Associate Provost

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 6, 2023. 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 Meetings held on January 23, 2023 and January 27, 2023.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Caston extended a belated happy birthday to Mr. Kinnison on behalf of Cabinet members.
- Dr. Caston gave an overview of the activities and events from the last couple of weeks. The Steering Committee for the Centennial Campaign met to discuss the progress of the campaign. The Gulf South Conference Board of Directors met for their quarterly meeting. Dr. Caston met with Mr. Ron Nurnberg and Mr. James Forte of Teach For America. Dr. Caston attended a Delta Council officers meeting to provide an update on the university.
- Ms. Chacon announced SGA elections will be held Thursday, March 2 and Friday, March 3. The Student Legislative Day at the Mississippi Capitol is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 1.
- Mr. Kinnison provided an update on Athletics. The men's and women's basketball teams are entering the final three weeks of their regular season. Both basketball teams will host Shorter University and Lee University this week. All spring sports opened over the weekend. The baseball team competes tomorrow against University of West Alabama and hosts Missouri Southern State University this weekend. The softball team will compete in a tournament in Alabama.
- Mr. Wakefield shared an update on Facilities projects. IHL representatives provided training on real estate projects and the policies in their respective areas to members of Delta State's Finance and Administration and Facilities Management staff.
- Dr. Caston shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday for their monthly meeting. Dr. Caston, Dr. Novobilski, and Director of Institutional Grants Heather Miller will meet on Wednesday to discuss proposals Delta State will submit to the Robert Hearin Foundation for

funding consideration. An Athletic Vision Event will be held on Thursday in Gulfport with Dr. Caston, Mr. Kinnison, and Mr. Munroe attending.

CABINET TOPIC

None

BUSINESS

Action

None

Discussion

The Big Green Event..... Ms. Chacon Habis

Ms. Chacon announced the 2nd Annual Big Green Event will be held April 15, 2023. Delta State students will come together on this day to complete a campus and Cleveland community service day. Ms. Chacon requested help from Cabinet members in sharing the handout provided and encouraging employees and community members to contact SGA with personal projects or ideas for community service. All requests for personal projects must be submitted by Friday, March 10.

Mission Statement..... Dr. Novobilski

Dr. Novobilski invited Dr. Josie Welsh, Associate Provost, to Cabinet to lead a discussion on the university's mission statement. Cabinet members discussed the university's mission statement during the recent Strategic Plan Steering Committee meeting, and they were informed the Writing Team for SACSCOC Reaffirmation has had difficulty relating their reports to the current mission statement. Several Cabinet members stated the current mission statement is long and not memorable. Dr. Welsh posed questions to Cabinet members on what a mission statement should be and what questions it should answer: does Delta State want its mission statement to answer how we contribute to the end goal of our students; what we provide our students; what are we the best at doing; and, should the guiding principles or values be referenced in the mission statement? Overall, the mission statement should showcase who the university is and not what we aspire to be. Cabinet members want to change the mission statement, and they tasked Dr. Welsh with creating a project plan to gather information on revising the mission statement from faculty, staff, and students; and, she is to provide an update to the individual constituency groups in April. A formal committee will take all potential ideas for the mission statement revision and produce a draft in May. Information on the mission statement revision will be included in the White Paper published in September. Before the project plan is put in motion, Dr. Caston will reach out to the IHL Commissioner to get approval on revising the university's mission statement.

Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Dr. Novobilski

Dr. Novobilski invited Dr. Welsh to Cabinet to provide an update on the university's institutional effectiveness and planning. The next meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee is Friday, February 17. The topic of discussion will be the presidential priority of increasing enrollment. Dr. Welsh reminded Cabinet members to send a representative if unable to attend.

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

Dr. Lovin provided a recruitment update to Cabinet members. At the end of the recruitment cycle last year, 923 students were admitted to Delta State. Thus far this year, 822 students have been accepted to Delta State. A large increase in open graduate opportunities occurred over the last week. International

students from Ghana applied to Delta State using an application fee waiver code Dr. Lovin shared on Twitter and was retweeted by The Fred Effect. Dr. Novobilski and Dr. Lovin will work together along with their staff to determine how best to recruit those that have applied to Delta State from the application waiver code. Delta State’s enrollment partners from EAB will be on campus Wednesday, February 8 to present data on the work that has been done with Delta State thus far and will share information about the overall higher education enrollment landscape.

Legislative Update.....Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe provided an update on the Mississippi Legislative Session. Wednesday, February 15 is Delta Day at the Mississippi Capitol. Key stakeholders of the Delta will be present including GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi, Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, City of Cleveland, and Delta State. Thursday, February 9, is the deadline for original floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments that originated in their own chamber. Some legislation topics being tracked by IHL are: House Bill 279 prohibiting state employees who have been issued electronic devices for work purposes from downloading or using TikTok; House Bill 1141 providing health insurance to contract workers who work more than 30 hours per week; and, legislation that could alter financial aid programs available to students.

Budget Update Mr. Wakefield

Mr. Wakefield provided an update on the university budget. To better understand the status of the FY23 budget, Mr. Wakefield has met with the direct reports of the President to discuss their area’s budget. He advised Cabinet members to be frugal in spending for the remainder of the semester.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Blue Man Group, February 7, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Statesmen Sweethearts Valentines Social, February 10, 6:00 p.m., Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni-Foundation House

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, February 20, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.