

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT'S CABINET
Minutes

Meeting date: February 8, 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: Mr. Merritt Dain, Director, Admissions
Ms. Brittany Davis, Director of Media Relations, Communications and Marketing
Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Ms. Holly Ray, Marketing Coordinator, Communications and Marketing

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on February 8, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Mr. Word, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 1, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met last week. President LaForge participated in a conference call with Commissioner Al Rankins and the other Institutional Executive Officers (IEO) to discuss the sabbatical leave policy. The Vice President for Student Affairs Search Committee had their initial meeting last week. Dr. Leslie Griffin will serve as chair of this search. The committee members are: Dr. Chris Jurgenson, Dr. Donna Ossorio, Mr. Richard Tremmel, Ms. April Mondy, Mr. James Forte, Dr. Zina Taran, Mr. John Alvarez, Dr. Natasha Barnes, Dr. Vicki Bingham, Dr. Beverly Moon, Ms. Emily Dabney, Dr. Christy Riddle, Dr. Andrew Wegmann, Dr. Edwin Craft, and Ms. Isabella Escobedo. President LaForge and Mr. Munroe had a call with Representative Mac Huddleston, House of Representatives Universities and Colleges Committee Chairman, to discuss Delta State's appropriations budget and bond issues.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Eight athletic teams are in competition right now. The men's basketball team competed over the weekend and won two games against Christian Brothers University. They compete against University of Alabama-Huntsville tomorrow and Union University this weekend. The women's basketball team competed against Christian Brothers University over the

weekend and won one game. They compete against Union University over the weekend. The baseball team competed with Shorter University last weekend and won one of three games. They are competing against University of Arkansas-Monticello this weekend. The softball team won four games at a tournament at the University of Alabama-Huntsville over the weekend. They will not compete this weekend. The women's soccer team competed and won against Ouachita Baptist University over the weekend and will compete against Mississippi University for Women on Wednesday. The men's soccer team competed in their first game last week against Mississippi College, and will compete again this Friday against Union University.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The HVAC project at the Mayers Aquatics Center continues. A change order has been requested to replace the door in the Mayers Aquatics Center as the HVAC unit is larger than the previous one. A larger door and entrance will allow Facilities Management full access to all parts of the HVAC unit. The final unit has been placed, and the scoreboard will be installed in the next couple of weeks. The brick laying portion of the Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project is almost complete, and the remaining portion of the project will be dirt work and landscaping. The contract for the sidewalk project will be signed this week. Bids for the residence halls' roofing project will go out this week. The residence halls in this project are Lawler-Harkins Hall, Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, Ward Hall, and Scott Hall. Mr. Rutledge stated the bond funds for the residence hall roofing and renovation projects should be available in March.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge will film another segment of his Statesmen Insider this week focusing on the golf team. Black History Month events continue this week with Living the Dream: Black History Month Oratorical Contest and Black History at Delta State: The 1970's Conversations with Black Staff Members. On Wednesday, Delta State will host the Raise the Flag ceremony to hoist Mississippi's new flag on the Quadrangle Flag Plaza. President LaForge and Mr. Munroe are scheduled to call Senator Josh Harkins, Chair of the Finance Committee, to discuss Delta State's appropriations and bonds. The GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi Board of Directors will meet on Thursday. President LaForge will send out a campus update later this week to update employees and students on the vice presidential searches and Bolivar County's vaccine site, which will be hosted on Delta State's campus.

CABINET TOPIC

Marketing Plans.....Mr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe introduced Ms. Brittany Davis-Green, Ms. Holly Ray, and Mr. Merritt Dain for them to share with Cabinet members the new marketing plan, which will be a partnership between the Office of Admissions and Communications and Marketing. Ms. Davis-Green shared with Cabinet members the details of the digital marketing strategy Communications and Marketing is collaborating with the Office of Admissions to kickstart. Their campaign is designed to help turn online inquiries of interested students into enrolled students, and the way this will occur is by meeting students where they spend most of their time – online. This digital campaign includes three strategies: IP address targeting, social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, and website retargeting. The IP address targeting serves ads to students and their influencers based on their home address. The website retargeting takes students or their influencers to the Delta State website after clicking on a Delta State ad that interested them. After visiting the Delta State website, the student or their influencer will continue to see ads for a week or two following their visit. Communications and Marketing is working with MediaCross of St. Louis, Missouri on the marketing campaign, and they had their initial strategy meeting last week. Currently, Communications and Marketing is compiling messaging, videos, and photos for the campaign. The campaign is set to begin at the end of February. Communications and Marketing is diligently working with the Office of Admissions to ensure the

campaign contains the information students want to hear. As results from the campaign are available, Mr. Munroe will provide Cabinet members with an update.

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 is one student in Hill Apartments, and there are no students in the off-campus location. The university had no hotspots last week. Bolivar County will be a secondary vaccine site, with Delta State serving as the physical site. President LaForge has had calls with Mayor Billy Nowell and County Administrator Will Hooker to discuss cost sharing of the vaccine site expenses, with hopes that the expenses will be split in thirds. All expenses incurred by Delta State will be covered by CARES funds. The approved vaccine site schedule will begin on February 23 and will take place on Tuesdays and Fridays through the end of August. Appointments will be available from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Ms. Douglas still needs additional medical staffing for the vaccine site. Mr. Jerry Frye of Sodexo graciously volunteered to donate meals for the vaccine site staff. Bolivar County is now listed on the COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Screening – UMMC COVID Scheduling link. 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. Dr. Michelle Roberts will be the “COVID-19 Hero of the Week” for February 8-12. Dr. Keppler worked with Dr. Megan Smith in the Office of Student Financial Assistance on a plan to distribute the remaining CARES Act grant funds to students in a three-tiered approach. Dr. Smith provided financial support to 800 undergraduate students and 300 graduate students. Their next step is to create a strategy on how best to distribute the next round of CARES Act funds. Their main goal is to provide support to as many CARES eligible students as possible, recognizing some students have a higher need of support.

Ms. Douglas recommended Cabinet members revise the COVID-19 Protocols for Employees and Students to reflect new practices for the Daily Symptom Checker and current Centers for Disease Control guidelines for those who are not able to wear masks due to medical conditions.

- Daily Symptom Checker
 - All employees (part-time and full-time) are to complete the Daily Symptom Checker every scheduled workday, whether they are working on or off-campus, as well as any non-scheduled workday when an employee visits campus
- Persons not able to wear masks due to a documented medical condition
 - Delta State University will abide by the CDC guidance for those who cannot wear a mask due to a documented medical condition. A person who cannot wear a mask due to medical condition should contact the Director of Human Resources or the ADA Coordinator.
 - Reasonable accommodations could include the following:
 - Providing the employee an unpaid leave of absence until face masks or covering are no longer required at work;
 - Allowing the employee to work remotely; or
 - Providing an alternative face mask or covering that is allowed by the employee’s medical condition. Example: face shield with a drape on the bottom edge.

BUSINESS

Action

COVID-19 Protocols - revised President LaForge

Ms. Douglas provided an overview of the recommended revisions to the COVID-19 Protocols for Employees and Students (as listed above). Once approved, Ms. Douglas will post the updates to the COVID-19 webpage on the Delta State website, and the revised protocols will be sent to faculty, staff, and students.

Motion: Moved by Chief Johns to approve the recommended revisions to the COVID-19 Protocols for Employees and Students and seconded by Dr. McAdams. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Enrollment Review Process..... Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts shared with Cabinet members that the Executive Committee has changed the way their weekly meetings operate. The new format allows the Executive Committee to use the bulk of their time during their weekly meetings to discuss priority topics in detail. The first topic being discussed is enrollment. The Executive Committee will look at how the university can address enrollment issues campus-wide. All campus constituencies will provide feedback to ensure all groups are represented. Once a plan is in place, the Executive Committee will roll it out to Cabinet members for feedback. The next priority topics are housing, alumni affairs, and fundraising.

Student Union Task Force Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler created a task force to determine the best uses for the H. L. Nowell Student Union, post COVID-19. The task force consists of six employees housed in the Student Union who are charged with finding the best way the building can serve more students. Delta State students will be involved throughout the process. Dr. Keppler will provide updates as available.

New Mississippi State Flag Unveiling Ceremony Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler shared with Cabinet members that the ceremony for raising the new Mississippi State Flag will take place on Wednesday, February 10th at 12:00 p.m. The ceremony will consist of remarks from President LaForge, Mr. Word, and Ms. Michelle Johansen. Dr. Keppler requests assistance from Cabinet members to spread the word about the event. The Office of Communications and Marketing and University Archivist will be involved in this significant event for the university. The Student Government Association will distribute souvenir Mississippi State flags to those in attendance. Dr. Keppler thanked Chief Johns for his efforts in planning the event.

Posting policy for Flyers Dr. Keppler

Dr. Keppler requested guidance from Cabinet members on moving forward with creating a policy for posting flyers on campus. Dr. Roberts stated the university has a policy, and she will forward it to Dr. Keppler for review and revisions.

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Mr. Rutledge received the bank reconciliations this morning, and he hopes to have the “Budget to Actual report” and the January Cash Flow report finalized for the next Cabinet meeting. The Executive Committee began an analysis on the average tuition and

scholarships over the past five years to help with FY22 budget planning. During the FY22 budget planning process, Cabinet members will discuss budgeting for a flat enrollment (FY21 enrollment figures) and scholarships leading to a \$2.1 million decrease. There are still unknowns from the State with regards to increases in insurance and the amount of state appropriations the university will receive. Mr. Rutledge is set to receive Phase I and Phase II requests next Monday, and he will bring a listing to an upcoming Cabinet meeting. 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. Several items to be funded by the grant funds were discussed and approved by the Executive Committee last week. Those items are: \$1,505,247 for lost revenue recovery; \$360,850 for the continuation of COVID-19 related positions to December 31, 2021; \$200,229 for the replacement of old file servers; \$80,000 for additional desktop computers for computer labs; \$25,000 to cover the Student Health Center expenses through June 30; and, \$100,000 to cover any expenses related to the vaccine site. Additionally, the Executive Committee approved the university use some of the Higher Education Emergency Relief grant funds to cover advanced budget items from the FY21 budget. Those items are: \$150,000 for six university vehicles and \$50,000 for marketing.

Legislative UpdateMr. Munroe

Mr. Munroe provided Cabinet members with an update on the 2021 Legislative session. Mr. Munroe has scheduled calls with legislators for President LaForge to discuss Delta State’s needs for appropriations and bond funds. They have a call this week with Senator Josh Harkins. Mr. Munroe shared with Cabinet members a few bills that could affect Delta State such as a procurement bill for aviation, gun legislation, and a sexual assault bill.

Additional information

- Mr. Kinnison announced the Coaches Club Radio Show is tonight at 6:00 p.m. on 107.5 FM and will broadcast from Lost Pizza Co.
- Dr. Keppler will participate in the Bologna Performing Arts Center Advisory Board meeting tomorrow. The topic at hand is Spring and Summer event dates.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Annual Margaret Tullos Field Symposium, February 26, 8:30 a.m., Virtual
- Winning the Race Conference, March 29-30, Virtual

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, February 15 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Response Update and Plans (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.