

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: July 25, 2016

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Mr. Keith Fulcher, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Chris Jurgenson, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Ms. Christie Rocconi, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (Ms. April Mondy – recorder)

Members not in attendance: Ms. Allie Rose Parker

Guests: Ms. Jennifer Farish, Director, Communications and Marketing
Mr. Bryce Anderson, Web Designer, Communications and Marketing

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on July 25, 2016. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Jurgenson, seconded by Dr. Bennett, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on July 11, 2016.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the Cabinet Advance and spoke about next steps. He said the Cabinet will discuss the Visioning process in detail at the August 15 Cabinet meeting to give everyone time to digest the information and to come back with ideas on how to transform the discussion into a road map. The next phase is the continuation of setting goals, objectives, and outcomes, and establishing priorities in each area. Going forward, President LaForge would like to assemble the ideas and come to a conclusion on what we can realistically accomplish this year.
- President LaForge gave an update on the hotel proposal since the last Hotel Task Force meeting. President LaForge had another conversation with the proposing group. They are still interested in the hotel, and are willing to talk with local business leaders who are investing in the downtown hotel to explore the possibility of a partnership with the two hotels. President LaForge and Mr. Rutledge participated in a conference call with IHL representatives concerning the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and President LaForge was advised not to sign the MOU because it would unfairly bind Delta State to this particular investor group. If Delta State leases or sells the land, it will require legislation because the hotel is a commercial, for-profit operation without an educational mission, unlike GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi, which is a non-profit corporation with an educational function. We will also have to issue a Request for Proposals. President LaForge and Mr. Rutledge are looking into the possibility of requesting an appraisal on the eight acres of land the hotel would sit on to determine the fair market value. These are two big hoops to jump through; therefore, this project will not be complete in the short term.

- The Summer Development Camp for the faculty from the Anyang Institute of Technology in China went very well. President LaForge stated that Delta State made an outstanding impression on the ten faculty members, and he thanked Dr. McAdams for opening the door for this partnership. Dr. McAdams shared that he appointed each of the faculty members as ambassadors for Delta State so that they can be advocates to their students. There are several other steps Delta State needs to take moving forward with this partnership. Dr. McAdams thanked Dr. Christy Riddle for the excellent job she did in planning and shepherding the visit.
- As President of the Gulf South Conference, President LaForge made a trip to Birmingham to visit with Commissioner Matt Wilson. President LaForge stated that the conference is in really good hands due to Mr. Wilson's leadership.
- President LaForge attended the recent Greater Jackson Alumni Meeting. Dr. Bennett and Mr. Rutledge accompanied him, and President LaForge introduced them to the Jackson-area alumni as the new Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice President for Finance and Administration. Mr. Fulcher commented that there was a very good turnout at the event, and he will give a report, once everything is collected, on how much money was raised at the silent auction.
- President LaForge and Mr. Mayers visited Coach Boo Ferriss recently. President LaForge updated Cabinet Members on the well-being of Coach Ferriss.
- President LaForge attended IHL's IEO meeting in Jackson. There were several topics on the agenda, including: Mississippi's student financial aid, affiliation agreements between universities and their foundations, tuition increases, MISSION IT, Mississippi's Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), shortage of teachers in Mississippi, and State Appropriations. Mississippi's student financial aid is under review by the Post-Secondary Board. Alcorn State University President Al Rankins serves as the IHL representative on that Board. A huge debate is ensuing on the use of merit-based aid versus need-based aid. Affiliation agreements between universities and their respective foundations are still in limbo. The larger universities want to raise the threshold of when the Board of Trustees has a say in a major decision by a Foundation Board. Delta State's tuition increase for FY18, approved by Cabinet Members, will be discussed at IHL's August Board meeting. Another concern addressed during the IEO meeting is MISSION IT, which deals with network bandwidth. There is a task force working to harmonize this issue, and it was made clear that the Regional Universities will have a seat at the table. Legislation has been drafted to request a change of the existing policy for state retirement in order to have a one-time opportunity for any participant to move into PERS. This does not include reducing the vestment years from eight back to four. Another important issue discussed was the shortage of K-12 teachers in the state. Some districts might not be able to fill their teaching positions without the use of Teach For America teachers. Five years from now, the State will not have enough teachers to meet demand. The discussion regarding teacher shortage has focused on the fact that the State's requirements for admission into the Teacher Education program is too high, which eliminates a large number of students who want to teach. IHL is going to request a 3.3% increase in State Appropriations for FY18, which will bring the system back up to the FY16 level. If there is another cut between now and the next legislative session, IHL will ask for the amount needed to restore the universities back to the FY16 level. IHL will request a three-year bond plan. For Repair and Renovation funds, IHL will request \$25 million, instead of the \$17 million requested the last few years.
- President LaForge welcomed a group of summer youth entrepreneurship participants this morning, and tomorrow he will welcome a similar group for the Sunflower County United for Children Education Summit.
- President LaForge shared that he and various members of the leadership team will be out of office next week.

CABINET TOPIC

Mobile Website Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts introduced Ms. Jennifer Farish, Director of Communications and Marketing, and Mr. Bryce Anderson, Web Designer. Ms. Farish shared that they will transition the Delta State website to a mobile friendly site during the next month and a half. The original timeline was the first of August, but due to the inability to anticipate what types of problems might occur, they postponed the transition to September, since most of the first-of-the-year web traffic would have slowed down by then. She stated that 46% of high school seniors only use mobile devices for college searches. Mr. Anderson said that in the past year, two million sessions have occurred on the Delta State website—with about 36% coming from mobile traffic. The top three cities that viewed Delta State’s website were Cleveland, Clarksdale, and Jackson—with 75% of the Jackson viewers being on mobile devices. Ms. Farish explained that the major focus of the mobile-friendly site will be to provide a more appealing site for external audiences and to incorporate more photography. She explained the need for all Cabinet members to communicate to their departments the need for them to register a Content Manager, who can be trained to update the website. Dr. Jurgenson asked if the mobile website would have a separate web address, and Mr. Anderson confirmed that it will be just one site which will be responsive to mobile devices. Dr. Roberts reiterated the need for departments to update their websites prior to going live with the mobile friendly website.

BUSINESS

Action

New policy: Video and CCTV Security Systems policy (final reading)Dr. Bennett

Dr. Bennett brought to Cabinet the “Video and CCTV Security Systems” policy for a final reading. A few changes were made to the initial draft, including: adding the need for department heads to submit in writing their understanding of the policy and that they are responsible for educating their employees on the protocols for the system. She stated that the Police Department will oversee the policy and will have a list of all systems in use throughout campus.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Bennett to approve the “Video and CCTV Security Systems” policy for final reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

New policy: Awarding Degrees Posthumously (first reading)Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet the “Awarding Degrees Posthumously” policy for a first reading. The policy provides guidance on awarding degrees posthumously and determines the appropriate point in the program for awarding the degree to a deceased student. The student’s department or family will initiate the awarding process.

Motion: Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the “Awarding Degrees Posthumously” policy for first reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. **The motion was approved.**

New policy: Conflict of Interest (first reading) Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the “Conflict of Interest” policy for a first reading. The policy provides that DSU employees are not to use their position to obtain any financial gain for themselves or family, other than the employee’s compensation. The policy highlights areas considered a conflict of interest.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the “Conflict of Interest” policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. McAdams. **The motion was approved.**

New policy: Employee Separation/Transfer Clearance (first reading)..... Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the “Employee Separation/Transfer Clearance” policy for a first reading. Mr. Rutledge said that the policy provides for an electronic process for employees who leave Delta State or transfer to another department. This policy states that the department head is responsible for notifying Human Resources in a timely manner of any termination or transfer in order to begin the separation/transfer process. Dr. McAdams suggested the use of the word “resignation” or “retirement” instead of “termination” for faculty.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the “Employee Separation/Transfer Clearance” policy for a first reading and seconded by Mr. Mayers. **The motion was approved.**

Revised policy: Child Protection Policy/Minors on Campus (first reading)..... Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the “Child Protection Policy/Minors on Campus” policy for a first reading. The policy provides for the protection of minors participating in events on campus. Mr. Rutledge said the name of the policy will be changed to just “Minors on Campus”, based upon a recommendation from Human Resources. Dr. Bennett suggested a few grammatical corrections. Dr. McAdams suggested that training be provided to everyone on campus who works with minors.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the “Child Protection Policy/Minors on Campus” policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. McAdams. **The motion was approved.**

Discussion

Diversity Committee..... President LaForge

President LaForge reported that he had a conversation with Ms. Arlene Sanders, and she would like to Chair the Diversity Committee again. He asked her to discuss with the Committee the Chair selection process and membership expansion in the interest of giving all employees an opportunity to participate. President LaForge plans to appoint a task force to discuss the need to have a single person/committee who manages all of our diversity efforts. President LaForge asked Cabinet members to make sure we are doing what we need for our culture to be inclusive.

Mississippi Today Event..... President LaForge

President LaForge informed Cabinet Members of a new online publication, *Mississippi Today*, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Barksdale. The new publication, which is a nonpartisan, nonprofit digital news and information resource, is the creation of Andrew Lack, who works with NBC News. President and Mrs. LaForge had dinner with the Barksdales, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Sanders, Mr. John Palmer, and Ms. Carol Puckett, and they want to do something at the GRAMMY Museum Mississippi on August 30 to raise awareness for the publication. They would like to partner with Delta State and feature a “Face the Nation” type event. The event could lead to internships, especially for minorities.

Engage Mississippi President’s Summit on Community Engagement.....Dr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams stated that Delta State was contacted by the Engage Mississippi group, and asked if we were interested in hosting a presidents’ group on campus. Last fall, they held a presidents’ summit at Mississippi State, and, in April, the University of Southern Mississippi hosted one. Engage Mississippi will provide the majority of speakers and will pay for the conference with a grant. Dr. Rolando Herts and the Delta Center would be the liaisons for this group. President LaForge said the event fits nicely with Visioning Principle #10 “Community Engagement and Outreach.” He asked Cabinet Members to voice any concerns regarding the event, especially if they thought it would interfere with our classroom mission.

Other Discussion

- President LaForge emphasized the importance of getting as many faculty and staff as possible to attend Convocation. He urged Cabinet Members to encourage those in their respective departments to attend. He wants to make sure the message about visioning and the plans for the start of the year are heard by all employees. He suggested that the offices that must remain open for student services operate with a skeleton crew. Dr. Roberts suggested putting signs on office doors early to let people know that offices will be closed during Convocation.
- Mr. Mayers was approached by a Homeland Security representative regarding conducting an “active shooter” exercise in an athletic facility on our campus on August 17. The exercise would be for their training purposes and not for the campus. He told them the Coliseum would be available, and he referred them to Dr. Bennett and Chief Buford for coordination. Dr. Bennett indicated that there would need to be some communication to the campus so everyone is aware of what is happening during the exercise.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Chamber Welcome Back Reception for Faculty/Staff, August 18, Warehouse Restaurant, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- Convocation, August 19, 10:00 am, BPAC
- Convocation lunch, August 19, 12:00 pm, H.L. Nowell Union, Second floor lobbies
- Fall Semester begins, August 22

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, August 8 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Student Success 2.0 (Charles)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.