

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: July 29, 2020

Members in attendance: President William LaForge (via Zoom), Dr. Vernell Bennett-Fairs (via Zoom), Chief Jeffrey Johns (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: None

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom conference call on July 29, 2020. The meeting convened at 2:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Dr. Westfall, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on July 13, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last two weeks. President LaForge shared with Cabinet members that he is working to finalize the process for naming the new Coordinator of Diversity and Inclusion, which will include serving as Chair of the Diversity Committee. Mr. Word organized a Zoom conference call between President LaForge and the other SGA elected officers last week. Mr. Word stated his fellow officers were delighted to visit with President LaForge and have the opportunity to speak with him. He announced he will conduct interviews for the SGA appointed positions in the next week. President LaForge, Dr. McAdams, and others across campus filmed the Spring 2020 Virtual Commencement ceremony. The ceremony will premiere on Monday, August 3 at 1:00 p.m. The GSC Board of Directors held conference calls on July 21 and 28 to discuss fall competition. The Board of Directors decided to delay fall competition until the end of September or first of October. The Board of Directors will hold additional conference calls on August 11 and 25 to reassess the situation. Dr. Bennett-Fairs shared with Cabinet members 84 students participated in the final Virtual New Student Orientation for the season on Monday. We had 229 students to register for the session. Dr. Bennett-Fairs stated 360 students are enrolled in their Fall courses. Of that number, 265 students are waiting to be advised and to enroll in their Fall courses, and 206 students have applied for admission within the last week.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Student-athletes continue their voluntary, supervised workouts, in groups of 17 or less, with the strength and conditioning coaches. Mr. Kinnison and other

Athletic Directors in the Gulf South Conference continue to have weekly conference calls with GSC Commissioner Matt Wilson to discuss all aspects of sports for the Fall semester. Mr. Kinnison informed Cabinet members a student-athlete tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The Athletics Department conducted contact tracing, and the student-athlete came in close contact with eight people. Two of his close contacts have received negative test results, and the department awaits the remainder of the test results.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The storm damage projects— the press box and several roofs—are on schedule to be completed next week. The campus experienced an electrical outage between the Roberts-LaForge Library and the new President’s home this week, and it caused a delay on work inside the new President’s home. The contractor for the HVAC project in the Mayers’ Aquatics Center began putting up fence to block off the back road between the Mayers Aquatics Center and Foundation Hall. This area will be used for construction and the storage of construction materials. Mr. Rutledge stated the contractor is working on the units in order to cool the building. It should be complete next week. The compressor in Fugler-Hammett Hall failed; however, it was under warranty and will be replaced by next Friday. Mr. Rutledge announced the first movie of the BPAC Summer Movie Series went very well. Attendees complied with the required social distancing and wearing face masks. The plans for the elevator project are at the Bureau of Buildings, and we are waiting for approval. The plans for the roofing project were revised and will be advertised in November. The quarantine wing of Hill Apartments should be complete by August 15. Dr. Edwin Craft accepted the role as Chief Operating Officer for the university.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. He thanked those Cabinet members that provided him with information for his State of the University address. Mr. Jim Morhard, Deputy Administrator for NASA, accepted President LaForge’s invitation to be the virtual Fall Colloquia speaker. President LaForge filmed this week the first Fall installment of Statesmen Insider. The first segment will be with Mr. Jerry Frye of Sodexo and will showcase the renovated concessions area of the Union. Former Lady Statesmen basketball player and honorary degree recipient Dr. Lusia Harris was on campus today to film for a documentary, and President LaForge was able to welcome her back to campus.

CABINET TOPIC

COVID-19 Plans and Protocols for Fall 2020 President LaForge

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university’s response to COVID-19, and the plans and protocols for Fall 2020. Dr. Bennett-Fairs and Mr. Jamie Rutledge provided an update on the CARES Act funds. So far, \$420,348 has been awarded to students, and a balance of \$800,000 remains. The Executive Committee will contemplate a plan for the remaining funds and bring it to Cabinet for approval. The university received \$1.2 million in Federal CARES Act funds, and it was spent on PPE, additional computers, and used to refund the university for student refunds on parking decals, housing, and meal plans. Approximately \$180,000 to \$200,000 remains for any additional needs. The university received an additional \$248,000 for Minority Service CARES Act funds. The State provided the university \$1.9 million in CARES Act funds. The majority of the funds have been obligated, including salaries for the COVID-19 Coordinator and Healthcare Specialist, but \$570,000 remain should additional needs arise. These funds must be spent by December 30. Governor Tate Reeves released Executive Order 1509 on July 19 that amends the “Safe to Return” order. The three primary changes to the “Safe to Return” order that affect Cleveland and Bolivar County are: 1) masks are required; 2) gatherings are reduced to 10 people indoors and 20 people outdoors; and, 3) local jurisdictions were granted the authority to enforce quarantine and isolation orders. Dr. Roberts shared with Cabinet members the university will hire two individuals to help combat the additional needs of the COVID-19 virus on campus—a COVID-19 Response Coordinator and a

Healthcare Specialist. Dr. Roberts hopes to provide a recommendation to the Executive Committee tomorrow regarding the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. The Healthcare Specialist position has received zero applications thus far, so Dr. Roberts is going to elicit the help of the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and local doctors to help get the word out. President LaForge participated in a conference call with IHL Commissioner Al Rankins and other university presidents to discuss each university's plans on reopening for the Fall. Each university plans to use a hybrid approach to classes. The IHL Safe Start Task Force will be reprised on Monday to participate in a conference call with Dr. Thomas Dobbs. Dr. McAdams and Dr. Roberts will provide Cabinet members with an overview of the call the next Cabinet meeting. Cabinet members discussed and edited the COVID-19 Action Plan for Fall 2020. The action plan will be an internal, living document and will be updated as new information arises. President LaForge asked that whenever changes are made, Cabinet members send the edits to Ms. Cole. All changes will be tracked and documented within the action plan.

BUSINESS

Action

COVID-19 Action Plans (external and internal) and COVID-19 Protocols (employees and students) for Fall 2020..... President LaForge

President LaForge presented the final draft of the internal COVID-19 Action Plan for Fall 2020 to Cabinet members for approval.

Action on the external COVID-19 Action Plan for Fall 2020, the COVID-19 Protocols Guide for Employees, and the COVID-19 Protocols Guide for Students was postponed until the next Cabinet meeting.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Bennett-Fairs to approve the final draft of the internal COVID-19 Action Plan for Fall 2020 and seconded by Dr. McAdams. The motion was approved.

FY21 Annual Operating Budget Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge presented the FY21 budget to Cabinet members for approval. Delta State's E&G budget for FY21 will be \$51,495,060. The budget has increased from FY20 due to CARES Act grant funds, an increase to Dual Enrollment fees, an increase in international student tuition, and a 6% increase in tuition. With the COVID-19 crisis still looming, it is uncertain how the Fall semester will take shape. If additional expenses arise due to the COVID-19 virus, the budget will be adjusted accordingly. The annual operating budget will be voted on by the IHL Board of Trustees in August, and will be final upon their approval. President LaForge thanked Mr. Rutledge and his staff for their outstanding work on preparing the FY21 budget. *(see handout)

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the FY21 operating budget as presented and seconded by Dr. McAdams. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Enrollment Update Dr. Bennett-Fairs

An update on enrollment was postponed until the next Cabinet meeting.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Summer Work Schedule ends, August 6
- Virtual Spring 2020 Commencement, August 3, 1:00 p.m.
- Virtual Convocation, August 13, 3:00 p.m.
- Move In Day (Freshmen), August 14, 10:00 a.m.
- Move In Day (Juniors), August 15, 10:00 a.m.
- Move In Day (Sophomores, Seniors, and Graduates), August 16, 10:00 a.m.
- Day and night classes begin, August 17
- Welcome Week, August 17-21

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, August 3 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.