

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: June 21, 2021**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge (via Zoom), Dr. Vicki Bingham (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), Ms. Nakikke Wallace (via Zoom), Dr. Andrew Wegmann (via Zoom), and Mr. William Young (via Zoom) (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Jamie Rutledge

**Guests:** None

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on June 21, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Munroe and seconded by Dr. McAdams to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on June 1, 2021. Dr. Bingham requested a non-substantive change to the minutes regarding nursing certification rates instead of NCLEX pass rates. All Cabinet members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes as amended.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge announced Cabinet meetings will return to in-person meetings in the President's Conference Room on Tuesday, July 6.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last three weeks. President LaForge filmed a Statesmen Insider with the S.E. Kossman Outstanding Faculty Award and H.L. Nowell Outstanding Staff Award winners. The winners of the awards are Dr. Joseph Bentley and Ms. Lee Aylward, respectively. Dr. Eddie Lovin was on campus to begin the transition process with Dr. Keppler. President LaForge and President's Office staff celebrated Dr. Kent Wyatt's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Gulf South Conference Board of Directors held their annual meeting virtually. Delta Council hosted their annual meeting on campus, and President LaForge provided the welcome on behalf of the university. President LaForge participated in alumnus Trey Labella's ceremony for promotion to Colonel in the Air Force. The Office of Student Life hosted the first two Orientation Sessions. They had 87 students to register for their Fall courses during the first session; and, 116 students participated in the second session, which took place virtually. The BPAC hosted its second in-person event with a performance by Clay Walker. President LaForge gifted his tickets to the performance to Facilities Management staff. The Institutional Executive Officers and the IHL Board of Trustees met for their monthly meetings. President LaForge shared with Cabinet members the major topics discussed during the Institutional Executive Officers meeting. The IHL system plans to request a 9.9% increase in State funding from the

legislature during the FY23 legislative session to help implement salary increases to match the Southern Regional Education Board averages for faculty. Additionally, the IHL system plans to request \$14.5 million in Repair and Renovation funds during the FY23 legislative session. Each university is required to disclose fees charged to all students in order for a fair comparison of tuition to be made among the universities. This topic will be discussed further at the September IHL Board Retreat. Community colleges are seeking to harmonize fees for dual credit among all higher education institutions in Mississippi. All universities are following current Center for Disease Control and Preventions' guidelines for COVID-19. All non-vaccinated persons should continue to wear a mask and maintain social distancing. The IHL Board requested a report from all universities on their plan to boost enrollment in light of the decreasing number of high school graduates. President LaForge asked Dr. Keppler to work with Mr. Merritt Dain on developing the plan, which is due to the Commissioner by August 1. During the IHL Board meeting, the Board of Trustees approved Delta State's Annual Operating Budget; our request to hire Dr. Eddie Lovin as Vice President for Student Affairs and Dr. Andy Novobilski as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; our request to rehire retirees; the proposed FY23 legislative funding priorities for the IHL system; an extension to the Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project; and, an extension to our contract with Sodexo as our food service provider.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The Athletics Department staff are busy planning for the upcoming academic year, and they anticipate a return to normal competition. Following the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, many student-athletes will be on campus for summer workouts. Mr. Kinnison informed Cabinet members the Gulf South Conference does not have an official policy on student-athletes being vaccinated against COVID-19. Some schools are requiring their student-athletes to vaccinate. Other schools are strongly encouraging vaccination and requiring non-vaccinated students to cover their COVID-19 test expenses. Currently, Delta State strongly encourages its student-athletes to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. Dr. Andy Novobilski is on campus this week to begin the transition process with Dr. McAdams. Orientation Session #3 occurs on Tuesday. Dr. Keppler announced 129 students and 160 parents/guests are registered to attend tomorrow's session. The Major Foundations Task Force meets on Wednesday. The annual Legislative Facilities Tour occurs on Thursday. The second Visioning event for the Capital Campaign is scheduled for Thursday evening at the home of Delta State alumnus Mr. Peter Woods.
- President LaForge announced today's Cabinet meeting is Dr. McAdams' last meeting and final week on campus. President LaForge expressed his appreciation for Dr. McAdams' service to the university and the impact he made on the academy during his seven and half years' tenure. Cabinet members shared their appreciation and well wishes with Dr. McAdams. Dr. McAdams thanked Cabinet members for their kind comments and allowing him the opportunity to make a difference at the university.

**CABINET TOPIC**

None

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Graduate Course Repetition and Grade replacement policy (new – first reading) .....Dr. McAdams**

On the recommendation of the Academic Council, Dr. McAdams brought the new Graduate Course Repetition and Grade replacement policy to Cabinet for a first reading. The Graduate Course Repetition and Grade replacement policy describes the avenues for course repetition and grade replacement for

graduate courses. Credit hours for repeated courses are only applied once towards overall required hours for the degree. Graduate students who repeat courses taken at Delta State and who earn a higher grade the second time may submit a Grade Replacement Request form for the lower grade to not be counted. The grade replacement policy may be used a maximum of two times during the student's graduate academic career. An exception will be made for cohort-based, linked courses for which one common grade is given up to a maximum of four courses.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the new Graduate Course Repetition and Grade replacement policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. Wegmann. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Organizational Chart..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts shared with Cabinet Members the draft FY22 organizational chart. She asked Cabinet Members to review the organizational chart and to send changes — including new hires, new positions, new titles, or any reorganization in the upcoming fiscal year — to Ms. Cole. The revised organizational chart will be presented to Cabinet one final time on Monday, June 28 before being made final on July 1.

**Additional information**

- Dr. Keppler announced Orientation Session #3 concludes with a reception for parents in the Kent Wyatt Hall Atrium tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. while students are being advised on their Fall courses. He invited Cabinet members to attend.
- Dr. Keppler will provide an update on the Higher Education Emergency Relief III funds allocation plans at the next Cabinet meeting.
- President LaForge asked Dr. Keppler to convene the COVID-19 “Return to Normal Operations” Taskforce to consider additional changes needed for the Fall semester.
- Mr. Munroe announced he is working with the City of Cleveland and GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi to plan a Delta Legislative Day for Delta area legislators for August 4.
- Ms. Wallace announced the first phase of competition for the Miss Mississippi Pageant began today. Delta State is represented by Miss Delta State University Taylor Street, as well as, Miss Magnolia Rachel Stephens and Miss Delta Crossroads Chesney Mardis.
- Mr. Young informed Cabinet members former SGA President Richard Word is working for Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity as a chapter consultant.
- Dr. Wegmann shared with Cabinet members his opportunity to review a book for The Journal of American History. While reading the acknowledgments listed in the book, an acknowledgement for Dean William LaForge and Ms. Martha Davis was included. The author of the book, Mr. John Eugene Rodriguez, graduated from Delta State in 1975.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Orientation Session #3, June 22, in-person
- Summer Session II begins, June 28
- Orientation Session #4, June 29, in-person
- Cabinet Advance, July 20-21, President’s Home

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, June 21 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.