

**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PRESIDENT'S CABINET**  
*Minutes*

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**Meeting date: March 4, 2019**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Severine Groh, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Billy Moore, Mr. Rick Munroe, Dr. Christy Riddle, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Charlie King, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** None

**Guests:** Ms. Rebecca Bouse, Employment and Training Program Coordinator, Human Resources  
Ms. Lisa Giger, Director, Human Resources

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 4, 2019. The meeting convened at 12:00 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Rutledge and seconded by Dr. Groh, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on February 25, 2019.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge attended the HEADWAE luncheon last week. Delta State faculty member, Dr. Jon Westfall, and Delta State student, Mr. Charlie King, were recognized as Delta State's honorees. The BPAC featured a performance of The Wizard of Oz as a part of their Mainstage Series. President LaForge and Dr. Bennett spent time at Bayou Academy recruiting potential students, and he spoke at the Greenwood Lion's Club Youth Leadership Seminar on education. Cleveland State Bank created a scholarship in honor of Mr. Calvin Dye, and President LaForge attended the recognition ceremony. On Thursday, President LaForge traveled to Oxford to visit with Senator Thad Cochran and to have lunch with former University of Mississippi Chancellor Robert Khayat. On Thursday evening, President LaForge moderated the Spotlight with Dom Flemons at GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi. President LaForge and Dr. Kent Wyatt are working on a collective gift from all Delta State presidents and their families, and the two of them initiated a call to a family member of a previous president regarding the initiative. The Thacker Mountain Radio Show held its annual recording at the Delta Music Institute over the weekend. On Sunday evening, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Coleman hosted a welcome reception for Mr. Steve Forbes.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. Both basketball teams have advanced to the first round of conference play. The men's team will play Tuesday at Christian Brothers University and the women's team will play at home against Valdosta State University. The swimming and diving teams are gearing up for nationals. We have 22 members of the team who are advancing to nationals. Both the men's and women's tennis teams will play at the University of Alabama-Huntsville this weekend. The football

team has begun spring practices.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on facilities projects. On Thursday, the university will begin advertising, for the next three weeks, the various roofing projects. The goal is to put a new roof on the Holcombe-Norwood Hall and Hugh Smith Facilities Management building this summer. The roof of Walter Sillers Coliseum has been cored at the request of Archives and History, and the project is on hold until they approve the coring. Renovations to the Odealier Morgan Laundry building will begin once Archives and History approves the Intent Form. Aramark wants to exercise their right to relinquish their contract with the university early, and their last day will be May 31. Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Kelvin Davis will have a hand in choosing the manager for Sodexo.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet Members some of the meetings and events planned for the week. Mr. Steve Forbes is on campus today and tomorrow for the Colloquia Lecture Series. He will have a press conference with local media today at 2:30 p.m. followed by a campus tour and a filming of a Fireside Chat. At 5:00 p.m., Cabinet members are invited to attend a private, VIP reception in his honor in the President’s Conference room. The lecture begins at 6:00 p.m. in auditorium of Jobe Hall with a book signing immediately following. He has graciously agreed to have breakfast with the Business Student Advisory Council, and then speak to classes in the College of Business and Aviation. He will conclude the trip by having lunch with student leaders on Tuesday. On Thursday, President and Mrs. LaForge depart for Argentina as part of a Presidential Mission sponsored by AASCU. They will return later this month.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Budget: Phase I and Phase II ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge gave Cabinet members an update on Phase I and Phase II of the budget process. The priorities for Phase I (Facilities and Capital Improvements) will be met using bond funds. The priorities, previously approved by Cabinet members, include roofing projects, HVAC projects, Walter Sillers Coliseum renovations, upgrades to the Aquatics Center, and repairing the exterior walls of Broom Hall. Any additional priorities brought forth by the vice presidents were placed on a list for R&R funds for the upcoming fiscal year. A few priorities that did not fall under the bond priorities projects and meet the requirements for R&R funds were placed on a University funds list. Mr. Rutledge believes Delta State is set to receive approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 in R&R funds for the upcoming fiscal year. The priorities for Phase II (New and Expanded Activities) are university-funded projects, and, currently, there are no funds available to cover these priorities. If the university receives an increase in E&G funds, the priority list will be revisited. Mr. Rutledge reminded Cabinet members that Delta State is requesting approval to increase tuition 5% for the upcoming fiscal year, which will have a net return of \$859,000. Student housing rates will increase by 2%. Both the tuition and housing increases have to be approved by IHL.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**U.S., State, and Delta State University Flag Protocols policy (new – first reading) .....Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett brought to Cabinet for a first reading the U.S., State, and Delta State University Flag Protocols policy. Cabinet members have previously approved the protocols, but it was requested that the protocols be made into a policy.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Bennett to approve the U.S., State, and Delta State University Flag Protocols policy for a first reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Grades and Credits policy (revised – first reading) ..... Dr. McAdams**

On the recommendation of Academic Council, Dr. McAdams brought to Cabinet the revised Grades and Credits policy for a first reading. Dr. McAdams stated the one substantive change made to the policy was requiring faculty to report midterm grades for individual courses for all students in all courses.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the Grades and Credits policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. Groh. The motion was approved.

**Employment of Relatives policy (revised – first reading)..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Employment of Relatives policy for a first reading. The employment of a family member of a present employee or the appointment of a present employee to a new/different position is prohibited when such employment/ appointment would create a situation where one family member would be in a supervisory position over the other family member and/or influencing progress, performance, or welfare. Dr. Roberts recommended moving the third paragraph under Procedures and Responsibilities before the second paragraph and to use the same language as in the first paragraph.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the Employment of Relatives policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. Bennett. The motion was approved.

**Years of Service policy (revised – first reading)..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Years of Service policy for a first reading. This policy applies to full-time and part-time employees, including administrative staff, support Staff, and faculty, who work at least 20 hours or more per week and who have been in benefit-eligible positions at Delta State University. Adjunct, temporary, intermittent, time-limited, graduate assistants, and student worker service does not qualify as regular service. The Office of Human Resources will determine those who will recognition for their years of service.

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

**Employment Background Checks policy (revised – final reading) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Employment Background Checks policy for a final reading. The University requires a background check for each final candidate for all permanent, temporary, benefit-eligible, non-benefit eligible, full-time and part-time faculty, staff, hourly, adjunct teaching, and security- or safety-sensitive positions. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members the policy received extensive revisions to reflect current practices. The university may make a contingent offer of employment to an individual prior to the completion of a background check, but every effort to complete the background check prior to the first day of employment will be made. Suggestions were made to add the definition of contracted vendor, include a retraction statement, and to include a welfare check on abuse.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the revised Employment Background Checks policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Moore.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to table the Employment Background Checks policy until a later date due to the substantial number of changes that need to be made to the policy and seconded by Dr. Moore. The motion was approved.

**Employment of Foreign Nationals policy (revised – final reading)..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Employment of Foreign Nationals policy for a final reading. Employment at Delta State University is subject to verification of an applicant’s eligibility for employment as required by immigration laws. Applicants for employment at Delta State University may be asked whether they will be able to provide evidence of legal permissions to work in the U.S. Offers of employment will be contingent upon the ability to obtain appropriate work authorization in a timely manner. To reflect current practices, new definitions and language were added to the policy. The definition for J-1 Visa should be taken out as Delta State doesn’t host J-1 visa applicants, and the substantial presence test will be taken out.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the revised Employment of Foreign Nationals policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Groh.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to table the Employment of Foreign Nationals policy until a later date due to the substantial number of changes that need to be made to the policy and seconded by Dr. Moore. This motion was approved.

**Minimum Age for Employment policy (revised – final reading)..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the revised Minimum Age for Employment policy for a final reading. The policy is an older policy and does not include all components of the policy template, including the name of the policy owner, which will be Human Resources, nor the date the policy was approved date by Cabinet.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the revised Minimum Age for Employment policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Groh. The motion was approved.

**Staff Emeritus recommendations..... Dr. Riddle**

Dr. Riddle shared with Cabinet members the names of four staff members who have been recommended for Emeritus status by the Administrative Staff Council. All staff members listed were unanimously approved for Staff Emeritus status by the Administrative Staff Council Executive Committee and have been approved by their respective Vice President.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Riddle to approve the four staff members recommended for Emeritus status and seconded by Dr. Bennett. The motion was approved.

**Hiring Requests ..... Cabinet Members**

In response to the Cabinet’s decision that all requests to search for and fill vacant positions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Cabinet, Dr. McAdams Mr. Munroe, and Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet positions for consideration. The positions presented do not impact the salary savings identified previously to address the budget shortfall.

**Academic Affairs Faculty Request**

Dr. McAdams presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire an Assistant Professor of Nursing and an Instructor of Nursing.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of an Assistant Professor of Nursing and an Instructor of Nursing and seconded by Dr. Groh. The motion was approved.

**Academic Affairs Staff Request**

Dr. McAdams presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Senior Secretary for the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. McAdams to approve the searching and hiring of a Senior Secretary for the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and seconded by Dr. Groh. The motion was approved.

**University Advancement Request**

Mr. Munroe presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Director of Annual Fund. This position currently has a temporary, part-time employee, and their contract ends in June.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Munroe to approve the searching and hiring of a Director of Annual Fund and seconded by Mr. King. The motion was approved.

**Finance and Administration Request**

Mr. Rutledge presented to Cabinet members the request to search for and hire a Coordinator of Third-Party Billing/Assistant Head Cashier.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the searching and hiring of a Coordinator of Third-Party Billing/Assistant Head Cashier and seconded by Dr. Roberts. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Cleveland’s Long-Range Planning Committee ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts informed Cabinet members the City of Cleveland has created a Long-Range Planning Committee, and the committee wants representatives from across the city to aid in planning Cleveland’s future. Dr. Roberts polled Cabinet members for suggestions for a representative from Delta State to serve on the committee.

**Campus Forums ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts announced President LaForge will host the Faculty, Staff, and Student forums on Tuesday, April 16. As in past forums, the constituency group leaders will be asked to host their respective forum and mediate the question and answer portion. The main topic of the forum will revolve around the budget.

**Commencement Speaker ..... Dr. McAdams**

President LaForge announced Dr. Fred Pittman was asked to be Delta State’s Spring Commencement speaker. He was very honored and will give his final answer by the beginning of April.

**Admissions Update ..... Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett shared with Cabinet members an update on the Office of Admissions. Several personnel changes have been made. The Office of Admissions and OIT have formatted the Recruit software to help advance their communications plan with students. In the Fall of 2018, Delta State gained 288 first-time freshmen; 201 of those students received a scholarship with 108 being academic scholarships and 93 being Foundation scholarships. Dr. Bennett stated the university needs more first-time freshmen and the recruiters are working to get the 723 provisionally admitted students to commit to Delta State. With the success of the first free application day, a second free application day will occur on April 1.

**Economic Impact Report.....Mr. Munroe**

Mr. Munroe shared with Cabinet members a PowerPoint presentation, which was prepared by Mr. Kevin Stokes of EconIMPACT, LLC, on Delta State's economic impact on the Mississippi Delta. Delta State's economic impact on the Mississippi Delta is \$175 million, which includes direct spending secondary spending, increased alumni earnings, social benefits, and cultural benefits. Mr. Munroe will send the full report to Cabinet members through email, and it will show how the figures were reached.

**Additional information**

- Dr. Roberts thanked Cabinet members for giving to the Art Keystone Fund in order to fund the Cabinet Art Award.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Colloquia Lecture Series with Mr. Steve Forbes, March 4, 6:00 p.m., Jobe Hall
- Spring Holidays for faculty and students, March 11-14
- Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE performance, March 21, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- Winning the Race Conference, March 24-26
- Trace Adkins concert, April 4, 7:30 p.m., BPAC

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Wednesday, March 27 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Budget: Scholarships (Mr. Rutledge)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.