

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: May 2, 2022**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vicki Bingham, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Dr. Andy Novobilski, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, Ms. Nakikke Wallace, Dr. Andrew Wegmann, and Mr. William Young (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Rick Munroe

**Guests:** Dr. Joshua Armstrong, President-Elect, Faculty Senate  
Ms. Lucia Chacon Habis, President-Elect, SGA  
Ms. Caroline Fletcher, Chair-Elect, Administrative Staff Council  
Dr. Leslie Griffin, Representative-Elect, Academic Council

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on May 2, 2022. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Novobilski and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on April 25, 2022.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge recognized outgoing and incoming Cabinet Members: Academic Council representative, Dr. Vicki Bingham (outgoing) and Dr. Leslie Griffin (incoming); Faculty Senate President, Dr. Andrew Wegmann (outgoing) and Dr. Joshua Armstrong (incoming); Staff Council Chair, Ms. Nakikke Wallace (outgoing) and Ms. Caroline Fletcher (incoming); and, SGA President, Mr. William Young (outgoing) and Ms. Lucia Chacon Habis (incoming). President LaForge expressed his gratitude to the outgoing members for the service they provided, and he welcomed the incoming members.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge continued his departmental visits with visits to University Advancement Development staff, Social Work Department, and Student Business Services. SGA inducted their new officers, and President LaForge hosted a dinner for incoming and outgoing officers after their inauguration. The Department of Athletics hosted the annual Green and White Awards Ceremony honoring their student-athletes. President LaForge visited with Delta State student Mr. Will Midlick. The NCAA DII Implementation Committee Co-Chairs provided an update to the NCAA DII Presidents' Council on their progress. President LaForge visited with Dr. Ali Reza to discuss his career change. President LaForge filmed another segment of his Statesmen Insider with Mr. Young and Ms. Habis regarding Spring 2022 Commencement. WLBT News interviewed President LaForge about his vast Beatles collection. DMI hosted their bi-annual Graduation Jam at Hey Joe's, and President LaForge participated.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. A substantial completion walk-through for the campus-wide roofing project will occur this week in Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, and Ward Hall. The roofs of Scott Hall and Morgan Laundry will be completed by the end of May. Mr. Rutledge requested from the City of Cleveland the closure of an alley on the north side of the School of Nursing project site for building equipment and materials, and they approved the request. The roof renovation for Whitfield Hall is out for bid. The project will be paid for with insurance funds. Other roof renovations to be paid for by insurance funds will be Kent Wyatt Hall, Jobe Hall, and the Dave “Boo” Ferriss Museum. Mr. Rutledge hopes to have all roof renovations completed by the end of FY23. Mr. Rutledge is finalizing: R&R projects schedule for FY23; a list of all projects to be funded by the \$5.4 million awarded to the university for “bond projects”; and, a list of FY24 bond fund priorities. Mr. Rutledge said he would share the information with the Cabinet, once complete. Dr. Roberts thanked Mr. Rutledge and Facilities Management staff for power washing the exterior of Cassity Hall in preparation for special guests who will be staying there for Commencement activities.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The baseball and softball teams hosted Christian Brothers University for their last regular season weekend. The baseball team won all games of their series, and the softball team won one game of their series. The baseball team travels to Alabama for the GSC Baseball Tournament this weekend as the number one seed. The golf team travels to Valdosta State University for the NCAA South/Southeast Regional Tournament tomorrow. The men’s tennis team will be alerted tomorrow night if they receive a regional bid. Two Delta State football players will be free agents in the upcoming NFL season, Mr. Marvin Terry and Mr. Julius Faulk. Delta State will host the DIII Fast Pitch Softball Tournament this weekend for Belhaven University.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge and Dr. Novobilski participated in an accreditation site visit meeting this morning for the Social Work Department. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meets on Tuesday. President LaForge and Dr. Novobilski will meet with Dr. Natasha Barnes and Ms. FaDerricka Harvey on Tuesday to debrief the Winning the Race Conference. The final performance for the 2021-22 BPAC season is Tuesday night and features the Waitress musical. President LaForge will provide a welcome to a Career Coach campus tour on Wednesday. Institutional Executive Officers, Chief Academic Officers, and Chief Information Officers of the IHL System will participate in a conference call on Wednesday with Ellucian officials to discuss leveraging technology within the IHL system. President LaForge and SGA are co-hosting a Graduation Celebration for international students on Wednesday evening. The Spring 2022 Commencement Dinner is scheduled for Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in the Leroy E. Morganti Atrium of Kent Wyatt Hall. The guest of honor for the dinner is Spring 2022 Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree recipient Mr. Walt Bettinger.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Campus Forum recap .....President LaForge**

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a recap of the Campus Forum held last Tuesday. During the Forum, the Executive Committee presented information on the FY22 budget, the 2022 legislative session results, budget impact for FY23, admissions and enrollment, campus projects and initiatives, and the university’s SACSCOC reaffirmation process. The Executive Committee was hopeful that the message was delivered and understood since there was a fewer number of questions received. Cabinet members discussed the avenues by which faculty and staff can ask questions during a forum. Currently, faculty and staff can ask questions directly or send them anonymously via text messaging to their constituent group leader. Cabinet members stated it is important to faculty and staff to have an anonymous option in asking questions.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Naming Proposal ..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin brought to Cabinet a naming proposal. According to the Naming Opportunities policy, requests to name a building, facility, program, or other space on campus in recognition of a financial gift, recognition of service, or achievement must be approved by the President of the University in conjunction with the President’s Executive Committee and majority vote of the President’s Cabinet. Considering the sensitivity of the matter under consideration, all stages of the proposal, review and recommendation process must be conducted in confidence.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to close the Cabinet meeting and enter into Executive Session to discuss the naming proposal and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

During Executive Session, Cabinet members deliberated on the naming proposal and made a recommendation to President LaForge.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to recommend to President LaForge the naming proposal for consideration and action and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Lovin to close the Executive Session and reconvene the open Cabinet meeting and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

**Discussion**

**Employee morale.....Ms. Wallace**

Ms. Wallace was tasked at the Cabinet Advance last summer to examine employee morale (staff) and provide a report to Cabinet members. Ms. Wallace worked with the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning to design a survey to ask staff anonymously about their work-life environment. The final survey was comprised of 31 questions: 24 on a Likert-scale; six open-ended; and, one multiple choice. Staff were given the option to skip the open-ended questions. There were 128 staff members who participated in the survey; however, 21 staff members opted to skip the six open-ended questions. Ms. Wallace shared an overview of the results with Cabinet members. Cabinet members requested the raw data for review. President LaForge requested Ms. Wallace and Ms. Fletcher work with the Administrative Staff Council to analyze the data further to develop a list of priorities and action items and provide an update to Cabinet members at a future Cabinet meeting.

**FY23 Budget..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge stated that his PowerPoint presentation from the Campus Forum last week will not be uploaded to the transparency page; however, he will add the presentation to his Finance and Administration webpage on the Delta State website. His office will send out an email with this information later today or tomorrow. At the next Cabinet meeting, Mr. Rutledge will seek Cabinet approval of the FY23 Annual Operating Budget (AOB), which is due to IHL by May 19.

**Enrollment Update/Overview..... Dr. Lovin**

Dr. Lovin reviewed with Cabinet members the enrollment update and overview from Thursday, April 28: 188 enrolled students; 153 confirmed students; 680 admitted students; 1,210 incomplete applications (missing documents); 533 online applications started; and, 22,180 prospects — for a total of 24,944 students being targeted for undergraduate admissions. Dr. Lovin shared with Cabinet members he doesn’t

provide regular updates on Graduate enrollment due to Graduate Admissions exceeding all marks. He shared with Cabinet members a Fall enrollment comparison report for Graduate Admissions, and enrollment has increased by 55 students from this time last year.

**Institutional Effectiveness and Planning update .....Dr. Novobilski**

Dr. Novobilski announced five Delta State employees will attend the 2022 Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation this summer to help with the developmental of the university's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) proposal. The QEP committee plans to present their proposal in June.

**Commencement Plans .....Dr. Novobilski**

Dr. Novobilski reminded Cabinet members the Spring 2022 Commencement ceremony will take place on Friday, May 6 at 10:00 a.m. in Walter Sillers Coliseum. There are 70 faculty members who will participate in the ceremony. For this ceremony, Dr. Novobilski has arranged for the deans to shake hands with their respective students while he helps with diploma covers.

**Additional Information**

- Ms. Habis shared with Cabinet members she is excited for her term as SGA President. She will be meeting with her officers soon to create goals for the upcoming year.
- Dr. Griffin stated that she and her faculty are vigorously planning for the next academic year. She asked Cabinet members to provide to her any event dates in their areas so that she can include them on the College of Education and Human Sciences' academic calendars.
- Dr. Bingham announced the Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society will host an induction ceremony on Thursday at 9:00 a.m. for 20 School of Nursing students. On Thursday afternoon, the School of Nursing will host a badge ceremony for RN to BSN students.
- Dr. Novobilski announced three faculty members are doing summer research programs. He has received positive feedback on departmental accreditation visits.
- Mr. Young distributed thank you notes from his SGA Cabinet to Cabinet members.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Dinner for Graduating International Students, May 4, 5:30 p.m., President's Home
- Reception and Dinner for Walt Bettinger, May 5, 6:00 p.m., Leroy E. Morganti Atrium, Kent Wyatt Hall
- Spring Commencement, May 6, 10:00 a.m., Walter Sillers Coliseum

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.