

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: November 30, 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

Guest: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on November 30, 2020. The meeting convened at 3:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Word and seconded by Dr. McAdams, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on November 16, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last two weeks. The Institutional Executive Officers and the IHL Board of Trustees held their monthly meetings. President LaForge had a phone call with Gulf South Conference Commissioner Matt Wilson to discuss nominations for a Region 2 vacancy on the NCAA DII Presidents Council. The Major Foundations Task Force reorganized, and it is now led by Dr. Lori Spencer. The group recently met for the first time under her direction. The Delta Center for Culture and Learning coordinated Delta State's participation in a virtual blues conference in Brazil. President LaForge recorded a virtual welcome for the conference and Delta State alumnus Mr. Keith Johnson performed. President LaForge attended a drive-by celebration for Delta State retiree Dr. Milton Bradley's 80th birthday. The Foundation Campaign Steering Committee met for the first time since February. This group will introduce the university to a prospect pool to jumpstart the Capital Campaign. The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing held their White Coat and Pinning Ceremonies prior to the virtual Commencement ceremony. President LaForge continued his NCAA Pathway Presidential mentorship program last week with Ms. Jackie Nicholson of Albania State University. The university's virtual commencement ceremony aired last Tuesday. The ceremony was produced by the Office of Information Technology and Communications and Marketing, and each department did a wonderful job. Dr. Billy Moore provided President LaForge a tour of the College of Business and Aviation's new finance lab. This lab is a great tool for teaching and research. President LaForge had a phone call with Mr. Daniel Schoolenberg to discuss President LaForge's work with the Peace Corps earlier in his career and their efforts in China.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams and men’s and women’s basketball teams reported to campus yesterday for practice today, and all student-athletes were tested for COVID-19 upon return. The men’s basketball team will host the University of West Alabama on December 11 and December 12. The swimming and diving teams will host their annual Christmas Invitational beginning on December 12. The Athletics Department met with Ms. Douglas, Facilities Management, and the Police Department to ensure all COVID-19 protocols are met prior to competition on campus. Additional competition dates for basketball are December 18, December 19, and January 8. The Coaches Club Radio Show airs tonight at 6:00 p.m. on 107.5 FM.
- President LaForge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The Mississippi Department of Transportation sidewalk project continues with the renovation of the H. L. Nowell Student Union entrance. Bids will be accepted for the elevator and roofing projects beginning tomorrow. President LaForge and Mr. Rutledge met with the contractors for the President’s home this morning to discuss the punch-list. A few changes will be made to the beams within the home. President LaForge extended his thanks to Mr. Rutledge, Dr. Edwin Craft, and Mr. Gerald Finley for their hard work with the project.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. The work from home schedule began today. On Wednesday, boxed lunches will be provided to Delta State employees who are unable to work from home. The Executive Committee will serve the boxed lunches to employees.

CABINET TOPIC

COVID-19 Response Update and Plans.....President LaForge

President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university’s COVID-19 response and plans. Ms. Douglas provided Cabinet members with an update on several items related to her efforts as the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. She shared the current number of positive cases among faculty, staff, and students, and she reported on the number of faculty, staff, and students in quarantine and isolation. Ms. Douglas reported there is one student in Hill Apartments, and no students are in the off-campus location. The university has no current hotspots. The paperwork for the practice agreement for the Healthcare Specialists was submitted to Dr. Steven Clark for review, and he will submit the paperwork to the Mississippi Department of Nursing. Once all paperwork is submitted, the Department of Nursing will provide a date by which the Healthcare Specialists can provide their new services to campus constituencies. Ms. Douglas announced the Student Health Center will be open during the “work from home” period — Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Douglas put together a COVID-19 Outbreak Plan that will take effect in Spring 2021. An outbreak comprises a group of three or more individuals, up to 5%, within a group or subset who test positive for COVID-19 or are being quarantined, within a 14-day time period. The steps that will be taken in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 cases in a group are:

1. The COVID-19 Response Coordinator (CRC) will contact the person in charge of the group (group leader) to determine the appropriate action for the group based on the number/percentage of individuals in the group who tested positive (see Section III below).
2. The CRC will work with the appropriate campus officials to identify individuals who had “close contact” with those who tested positive. University protocols will be followed for these individuals.
3. The CRC and group leader will monitor the group (to identify new/additional cases) until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak area”. o If new cases are identified within the group while the group is being monitored, the timeframe for the group being classified as an “outbreak area” will continue until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak area”.

4. The CRC has the authority to analyze any DSU population to determine groups, identify a subset of group, and administer the appropriate response to an outbreak.

The actions the COVID-19 Response Coordinator and Group Leader will take based on the category of the outbreak are based upon the category of the outbreak. The levels of outbreak are: Category 1 “Hotspot”, Category 2 “Low Risk Outbreak”, Category 3 “Moderate Risk Outbreak”, and Category 4 “High Risk Outbreak.”

Category 1: “Hotspot” – defined as 3 or more individuals, up to 5%, within a group or subset testing positive or being quarantined within a 14-day time period.

1. CRC will classify the group as a “Hotspot.”
2. Isolate identified positive cases (follow university protocols re. isolation)
3. Follow university protocol regarding the identification and processing of “close contacts”
4. CRC will identify possible sub-sets. When absolute certainly that a subset of the group has had no contact with a positive case, that subset may be excluded from quarantine precautions.
5. The group can continue to operate.
6. All group members must participate in a virtual educational session with the CRC within 2 business days of the group being classified as an “Hotspot.”
7. The group leader will monitor the group closely for symptoms.
8. The CRC and group leader will monitor the group for 14 days (or until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak area”) to identify new/additional cases.
 - a. If new cases are identified within the group while the group is being monitored, the timeframe for the group being classified as an “outbreak area” will continue until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak”.

Category 2: “Low Risk Outbreak”– defined as 6% - 14% of group testing positive or being quarantined within a 14-day time period.

1. CRC will classify the group as a “Low Risk Outbreak” area.
2. Isolate identified positive cases (follow university protocols re. isolation)
3. Follow university protocol regarding the identification and processing of “close contacts”
4. CRC will implement “cease and desist” restrictions for all group activities and interactions for 14 days from the date of the group’s last exposure to the group members who tested positive.
5. CRC will consult with the group leader to determine if there are possible subsets. When there is absolute certainty that a subset of the group has had no contact with a positive case, that subset may be excluded from “cease and desist” restrictions. However, the subset will not be placed in quarantine, but should self-monitor for symptoms and limit their contact with others for 14 days.
6. The CRC and group leader will monitor the group for 14 days (or until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak area”) to identify new/additional cases.
 - a. If new cases are identified within the group while the group is being monitored, the timeframe for the group being classified as an “outbreak area” will continue until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak”.

Category 3: “Moderate Risk Outbreak” – defined as 15% - 24% of group testing positive or being quarantined within a 14-day time period.

1. CRC will classify the group as a “Moderate Risk Outbreak” area.
2. Isolate identified positive cases (follow university protocols re. isolation)
3. Follow university protocol regarding the identification and processing of “close contacts”.

4. CRC will identify possible sub-sets. When absolute certainly that a subset of the group has had no contact with a positive case, that subset may be excluded from the quarantine precautions.
5. CRC will implement “cease and desist” restrictions for all group activities and interactions for 14 days from the date of the group’s last exposure to the group members who tested positive.
6. All group members must quarantine until further notice (follow university protocols re. quarantine).
7. Conduct surveillance testing as quickly as possible for 50% of the group (except for those who have already tested positive):
 - a. If all tests within the group are negative, the quarantine is lifted. Those individuals who had “close contact” with the positive case will remain in quarantine regardless of test results (per university protocols)
 - b. If any of the surveillance tests are positive, the entire group must quarantine for a full 14-day period.
8. CRC will consult with the group leader to determine if there are possible subsets. When there is absolute certainty that a subset of the group has had no contact with a positive case, that subset may be excluded from “cease and desist” and quarantine restrictions.
9. The CRC and group leader will monitor the group for 14 days (or until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak area”) to identify new/additional cases.
 - a. If new cases are identified within the group while the group is being monitored, the timeframe for the group being classified as an “outbreak area” will continue until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak”.

Category 4: “High Risk Outbreak – defined as 25% or more of group testing positive or being quarantined within a 14-day time period.

1. CRC will classify the group as a “High Risk Outbreak” area. Isolate identified positive cases (follow university protocols re. isolation). Follow university protocol regarding the identification and processing of “close contacts”
2. CRC will implement “cease and desist” restrictions for all group activities and interactions for 14 days from the date of the group’s last exposure to the group members who tested positive.
3. All group members must quarantine until further notice (follow university protocols re. quarantine)
4. Conduct testing as quickly as possible for 100% of the group (except for those who have already tested positive):
 - a. If all tests within the group are negative, the quarantine is lifted. Those individuals who had “close contact” with the positive case will remain in quarantine regardless of test results (per university protocols).
 - b. If any of the tests are positive, the entire group must quarantine for a full 14-day period.
5. Conduct testing one week later for 100% of the group (except for those who have already tested positive)
6. Continue testing 100% of the group (except for those who have already tested positive) each week until the new number of positive tests within the group has decreased to less than 25% of the group.
7. CRC will consult with the group leader to determine if there are possible subsets. When there is absolute certainty that a subset of the group has had no contact with a positive case, that subset may be excluded from “cease and desist” and quarantine restrictions. However, the subset should self-monitor for symptoms and limit their contact with others for 14 days.
8. The CRC and group leader will monitor the group for 14 days (or until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak area”) to identify new/additional cases.

- a. If new cases are identified within the group while the group is being monitored, the timeframe for the group being classified as an “outbreak area” will continue until the group is no longer classified as an “outbreak”. Outbreak plan – what do we if we have an outbreak plan in the Spring. This broken down by a percentage of group. See documents.

Ms. Douglas created a plan for the holiday break for students who cannot safely quarantine or isolate off campus. If a student cannot safely quarantine or isolate off campus, a student can stay in Hill Apartments. The student will be provided meals and monitored daily for symptoms. Ms. Douglas met with staff from South Delta Planning and Development District to discuss the point-of-entry screeners and to see if they are able to provide funds for our point-of-entry screeners for Spring 2021. A definitive answer was not provided on the renewal of providing funding for the point-of-entry screeners as of yet; however, Ms. Douglas stated there may be some CARES Act grant funds available to pay for the point-of-entry screeners if South Delta Planning and Development District cannot provide the funds. In an effort to recognize employees for going above and beyond the call of duty with regards to COVID-19, Ms. Douglas created the “COVID-19 Response Team Hero of the Week” recognition. Ms. Abby Havard was the “COVID-19 Hero of the Week” for November 23-27. Mr. Willie Gant will be the “COVID-19 Hero of the Week” for November 30-December 4. Facilities Management staff will be the “COVID-19 Hero of the Week” for December 7-31. Mr. Kinnison stated the Athletics Department continues their surveillance testing, but there have not been any positive tests in the last two weeks. Mr. Rutledge provided Cabinet members with an update on CARES Act funds. The university has not yet received its reimbursement from the State for our CARES Act purchases, and the deadline for spending was pushed back. At this time, the university hasn’t spent \$67,000 of our State CARES Act funds.

BUSINESS

Action

None

Discussion

FY21 Budget Update Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Mr. Rutledge and his staff are waiting for the December bank statements in order to provide a current update. The university’s cash position has increased from this time last year. A few items that will influence our cash balance for December will be the State CARES Act funds reimbursement as well as payments for the university’s workman’s comp and insurance to IHL.

Additional information

- Dr. Bennett-Fairs and Chief Johns will present the 360° Review on parking at the next meeting.
- Cabinet members agreed not to meet on Monday, December 7. The next and final meeting of the semester will be Monday, December 14.
- Mr. Kinnison announced the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce will not use university space to host Christmas floats.
- Mr. Rutledge announced the only entrance to the H. L. Nowell Student Union while the sidewalks are being constructed will be on the West side of the building, through the Post Office.
- Mr. Munroe announced Giving Tuesday is tomorrow, and the big focus is on Academic Departments.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Winter Holidays for Students, November 25 – January 11
- Thanksgiving Holidays, November 26-27
- “Work from Home” schedule, November 30 - January 8
- Winter Holidays for Staff, December 23-January 1

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, December 14 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Response Update and Plans

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.