

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: October 10, 2016**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dr. Chris Jurgenson, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Ms. Allie Rose Parker, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Ms. Christie Rocconi, and Mr. Jamie Rutledge (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Keith Fulcher and Dr. Charles McAdams

**Guests:** Mr. Bryce Anderson, Web Designer, Communications and Marketing  
Dr. Edwin Craft, Chief Information Officer, OIT  
Ms. Jennifer Farish, Director, Communications and Marketing  
Mr. Chris Giger, Director of Enterprise Applications, OIT

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on October 10, 2016. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Dr. Jurgenson, seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on October 3, 2016.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge attended several sessions of the International Conference on the Blues. He said it was a great event with good attendance.
- The BPAC hosted two performances last week: The Avett Brothers and The Los Angeles Guitar Quartet. President LaForge stated The Avett Brothers show was a big hit, and The Los Angeles Guitar Quartet was a wonderful show with very talented musicians.
- President LaForge visited with the Diversity Committee last week to share with them the purpose of the Diversity Task Force. Dr. Bennett stated she would have a report from the Task Force for the Executive Committee to review on Friday.
- President LaForge attended the Cleveland Music Foundation Board meeting last Thursday, and he reported to Cabinet Members that GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi is experiencing a high volume of venue rentals and that a large number of guests visited the museum in September.
- President LaForge had lunch on Saturday with Dr. McAdams, Dr. Rolando Herts, Mississippi Humanities Council Director Dr. Stuart Rockoff, and National Endowment for the Humanities Director Dr. William Adams. Dr. Adams was in Mississippi for a visit with the Mississippi Humanities Council, and he stopped by Cleveland to spend time with Dr. Herts and tour the Delta.
- President LaForge met with University Press of Mississippi Director Craig Gill, and learned about the role of the University Press of Mississippi and the services they provide for the university system.
- President LaForge attended the grand re-opening of the Wiley Planetarium on Sunday. The planetarium is now open and available for shows.

- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. Men’s and women’s soccer had matches on Friday and Sunday. The men’s team won both of their games and the women’s team fell to two tough opponents. Dr. Bennett took two buses of fans to the University of West Alabama Football game on Saturday. The football team experienced a loss, but the support from the attending fans was greatly appreciated. The Athletics staff is preparing for homecoming and the Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Friday. The Induction Ceremony will be held in the BPAC in conjunction with the Alumni Award Gala.
- President LaForge met with members of the “International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators” (IACLEA) Board this morning. He asked Dr. Bennett to give an update on their visit. Dr. Bennett said the IACLEA representatives are here to assess the operations, staffing, equipment, protocols, etc. of the Delta State Police Department. They will be here until Wednesday, and will give feedback and provide a report of their findings.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the upcoming week’s activities. The BPAC has a performance of the Shanghai Acrobats of the People’s Republic of China on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, President LaForge will visit Desoto County for recruiting trips, and will attend the “Take Me to the River” event at GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi. President LaForge stated the Levitt AMP Music Series concert is Thursday evening with Street Corner Symphony. On Friday, President LaForge will speak to the Noon Lion’s Club, and will host his Friday Faculty meetings. Saturday is Homecoming and several events are taking place. The parade begins at 10:00 a.m., the President’s Football reception begins at 3:30 p.m., and kickoff against the University of West Florida is at 4:00 p.m.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Mobile Website ..... Dr. Roberts**

Dr. Roberts introduced Ms. Jennifer Farish, Director of Communications and Marketing, Mr. Bryce Anderson, Web Designer, Mr. Chris Giger, Director of Enterprise Applications, and Dr. Edwin Craft, Chief Information Officer as her guests. She stated the launch of the mobile friendly website was postponed until after the beginning of the fall semester to ensure registration and payment processes would not be affected. Mr. Anderson showed Cabinet Members the new design for the homepage of Delta State’s mobile friendly website and pointed out changes made during the redesign. New features of the website include: a slider bar promoting events on campus, a new location for quick links, Twitter feed, and an Academics tab that lists all colleges and departments. Also, part of the redesign includes tabs at the bottom of each main page linking guests to Admissions and MyDSU, which is the most visited page on the website. Mr. Anderson showed Cabinet Members how the redesigned homepage will look on a mobile device. He said the website is responsive and realigns to fit the screen of a tablet or cellphone. The scheduled launch date for the mobile friendly website is November 17. Dr. Roberts asked Cabinet Members to relay to their constituencies the importance of updating their webpages with correct information and checking for broken web links to ensure no information is lost in the conversion. Ms. Farish said she will send the URL of the updated website to Cabinet Members, and she asked them to review it and report any concerns or changes.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters facilities request ..... President LaForge**

President LaForge announced Delta State will host the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet on June 3. MIAL is an outcropping of the university system dealing with arts and letters and was advised by Dr. Aubrey Lucas, past Delta State president, for many years. MIAL is requesting a waiver of facility fees for the use of two facilities. During the annual

meeting and banquet, Jobe Hall Auditorium will be used for readings and the Leroy E. Morganti Atrium will be used for the dinner. The Annual Meeting is hosted by a university every other year, and, as a host, the universities typically do not charge MIAL for the use of facilities.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the waiver of facility fees for the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters' Annual Meeting and seconded by Dr. Bennett. **The motion was approved.**

**Discussion**

**Mississippi Flag..... President LaForge**

President LaForge asked Cabinet Members several questions to elicit information to help make a more informed decision regarding the state flag. President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to give reasons as to why the flag should come down or continue to be flown. Reasons given as to why the flag should be taken down are: it is a polarizing, divisive, and unwelcomed symbol throughout the state and country; it is a barrier to progress and understanding; it is contrary to the university's core values; it impedes an accurate understanding of who we are and what we stand for as a university; it makes a portion of the campus community feel disconnected; and, it is offensive to citizens of Cleveland. Reasons given as to why the flag should continue to be flown are: the discussion about the need for change will continue; Delta State is a public university supported by state tax dollars and citizens of the state; and, Delta State will continue to pay respect to the state of Mississippi as a state institution. President LaForge asked Cabinet Members what Delta State receives if the flag is taken down or continues to fly. Cabinet Members agreed that Delta State will receive criticism no matter if the flag is taken down or continues to be flown, that we may lose current and future students either way, and that we may alienate some alumni regardless of the decision. The continued discussion over the state flag is a distraction to university progress, and it is ultimately up to State officials to make the change. The Cabinet will continue the discussion at a future meeting.

**Personnel Changes ..... Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members of the resignation of the Deputy Chief of Police. The resignation will occur at the end of October. Dr. Bennett will review the suggestions of the IACLEA Board report before making a decision regarding filling the position.

**Other Discussion**

- Dr. Bennett reminded Cabinet Members of the Statesmen Pride on Parade beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday. She is very excited about the response with regards to entries: 52 entries with nine bands. If anyone would like to volunteer, please let her know.
- Ms. Parker gave an overview of the student activities sponsored by SGA for the week. A Silent Disco will be held in Wyatt Gym on Monday evening at 9:00 p.m., and a t-shirt swap is scheduled for Tuesday to gather donations of t-shirts for charity. Also, SGA will be giving away cups of sweet tea on Tuesday. On Wednesday, Lip Sync is scheduled for 9:00 p.m. in the Coliseum. The Homecoming Pep Rally will be held on Thursday evening at 9:00 p.m. on the Quad, and tailgating for Homecoming will begin on Friday at 9:00 p.m. in Statesmen Park.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Homecoming, October 14-15
- DSU vs. Univ. of W. Florida, October 15, 4:00 pm (Wear Green), Reception – 3:30 pm
- Mavis Staples and the Blind Boys of Alabama, BPAC, October 20, 7:30 pm
- DSU vs. Univ. of N. Alabama, October 29, 2:00 pm (Wear White), Reception – 1:30 pm
- Colloquia Lecture Series, Congressman Bennie Thompson, November 9, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, October 17 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.