

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: October 19, 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 – Dr. Michelle Roberts)

Members not in attendance: None

Guest: Ms. Robin Douglas, COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Ms. Michelle Johansen, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held via Zoom video conference on October 19, 2020. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Word and seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on October 12, 2020.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from the last week. President LaForge continued his internal relations efforts with departmental visits, via virtual format, with HPER, Career Services, and Speech and Hearing Sciences. Dr. Temika Simmons provided President LaForge with an update on plans for the 2021 Winning the Race Conference, and she announced the Winning the Race Committee nominated Dr. Natasha Barnes as the new committee chair beginning in 2022. President LaForge spoke with staff at IHL regarding the Education Achievement Council's adoption of a state educational attainment goal. The IHL Board of Trustees had their monthly meeting and announced a CPA firm was hired to oversee CARES Act funds spending at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Alumni Affairs began filming the Alumni Awards Gala, and the Office of Admissions began filming their DSU Spotlight Day. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce announced their new CEO and Executive Director Lara Bowman. President LaForge participated in a drive-by birthday celebration for Delta State alumna Ms. Lucy Seaberry.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The cross-country team competed at University of Arkansas-Little Rock over the weekend. Their next meet is the GSC Championship at the end of the month. The golf team competes in their second tournament today at University of West Georgia. Their next tournament will be next Monday at the University of North Georgia. The women's swimming and diving competed against Tulane University over the weekend, and the men's swimming and diving team will compete this Friday at Missouri S&T. Both teams will compete again at the DSU Christmas

Invitational in December. The football team began practicing last Friday. The Hey Coach Radio show occurs tonight at 6:00 p.m.

- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The Mayers Aquatics Center HVAC project is on schedule. Mr. Rutledge will meet with staff from IHL and the Bureau of Buildings tomorrow to discuss the elevator project and the renovations for the residence halls. The elevator project will be released for bids next week. The residence hall renovations will be split into three projects: 1) dorm renovations, 2) HVAC, and 3) parking lots. The roofing project for the residence halls, Odealier Morgan Laundry Building, and Scott Hall Annex will be rebid soon in hopes of obtaining better prices than last year's attempt.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge participated in the weekly COVID-19 update conference call with Commissioner Al Rankins and the other Institutional Executive Officers (IEO) this morning. Tomorrow, President LaForge will meet with Mr. Gunner Goad of AT&T, and he will participate in the GSC Board of Directors meeting. The Education Achievement Council will meet on Thursday. The Okra Out Front event occurs on Thursday and will include a walk around the Quadrangle as well as a short program. The Foundation Board meets on Friday, and the Board will approve the Foundation budget and will recognize the eight new Board members.

CABINET TOPIC

Report from the Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion President LaForge

President LaForge invited the Coordinator of Diversity and Inclusion Michelle Johansen to Cabinet to provide an update on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Ms. Johansen and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee are building on the foundation of what the Diversity Committee and the Quality Enhancement Plan created by enhancing and revising some of the current practices to ensure the university aligns with national and local trends.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has considered several factors in their preparations for this semester and future preparations including: being proactive versus reactive; campus dynamics and feedback; varied opinions and ideas about what diversity, equity, and inclusion means on Delta State's campus; measurable success; budget restrictions, national and state trends; outside funding and resources; and, reasonable creation and implementation timelines with regards to COVID-19 continuation.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee believes Delta State should: 1) define what diversity, equity, and inclusion means and operate with a greater urgency and intentionality toward the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee's goals; 2) Reexamine curricula for narratives that exclude, erase, and/or diminish groups of people; 3) support faculty and staff engaged in developing or enhancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion courses; 4) expand outreach to and partnerships with the Delta community; 5) utilize compassion and empathy to guide faculty and staff to a better understanding of our implicit biases; 6) help students, regardless of their identities and backgrounds, feel welcomed, celebrated, supported, and included; 7) provide students, especially marginalized and underrepresented students, with equitable knowledge of and access to resources to be successful while at Delta State and beyond; 8) include and welcome undergraduate students, graduate students, non-traditional students, faculty, staff, retirees, and community members; 9) offer opportunities to learn, reflect, and grow; and, 10) prioritize diversity, inclusion, and equity courses, activities, and service through academic curricula, certificate programs, and other forms of recognition.

The proposed strategic objectives for 2020-2023 are: 1) engage students, faculty, and staff in diversity,

equity, and inclusion and cultural competence learning opportunities; 2) increase diversity of faculty and staff applicant and interview pools; 3) improve retention of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff; 4) utilize and provide diverse perspectives, inclusive materials, and equitable pedagogy within formal and informal curricula; 5) promote a safer and more supportive campus environment; and, 6) partner more visibly in Delta State and Delta communities' diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is broken down into six subcommittees representing students, faculty and staff, formal and informal curricula, campus climate, campus programming, and visibility and outreach. Each subcommittee has strategic objectives, an action plan, and measures of success until 2023.

This fall the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee reconvened to begin creating their action plans for 2020-21 and drafting their three-year plans, as well as soliciting feedback and creating a campus climate survey. In the Spring, the committee will continue with their 2020-21 action plans and implement and complete the campus climate survey. During the summer, the committee will utilize the data from the campus climate survey to finalize their three-year plan.

COVID-19 Plans for Fall 2020 President LaForge
President LaForge led Cabinet members in a discussion of the university's COVID-19 plans for Fall 2020. As mentioned earlier, President LaForge participated in a conference call with Commissioner Al Rankins and all IEOs this morning to discuss COVID-19 related issues. He shared with Cabinet members the update on current cases at all eight universities. Commissioner Rankins adjusted the weekly COVID-19 update conference schedule to every other week, and the IEOs will continue to provide a report to Commissioner Rankins each Monday morning on positive cases for students and employees within the past two weeks.

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 six students are in Hill Apartments, and no students are in the off-campus location. The university has no current hotspots. Ms. Douglas is still working on videos for students regarding promoting social distancing and wearing a mask. The contract with Dr. Steven Clark was finalized, and he will serve as the university physician. Ms. Douglas has several meetings this week to finalize this process prior to the Student Health Center providing medical services to employees and students. The Student Health Center provided 50 flu shots to employees, 24 flu shots to students, and 67 flu shots to student-athletes. The Student Health Center is also accepting appointments for Wednesday morning. 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 Hero of the Week" recognition. This week's selection is Mr. Craig Clemons.

Mr. Kinnison announced the Athletics Department had a good week overall last week with no positive tests to report. Mr. Rutledge provided Cabinet members with an update on CARES Act funds. Mr. Rutledge provided recommendations to Cabinet members on how best to spend the remaining State CARES Act fund including: video editing software, additional sanitizing supplies and personal protective equipment, TRACSYSTEM print software, temporary janitorial staff, additional Police Office staff, distance education technology support and training, additional meals for student-athletes, additional space for quarantine and isolation, student-athlete testing, cameras to monitor the entrances of buildings, and additional funding for computers and laptops.

BUSINESS

Action

None

Discussion

Campus Forums..... Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts reminded Cabinet members the forum for students will be held on Wednesday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m., and the forum for employees will be held on Thursday, October 29 at 3:00 p.m. Both forums will be held via Zoom. She requested help from Cabinet members in promoting the forums and encouraging employees and students to participate. Questions can be submitted to constituency group leaders prior to the forum or asked during the event. Dr. Roberts will provide a final, detailed agenda at next week's Cabinet meeting.

FY21 Budget Update..... Mr. Rutledge

Mr. Rutledge provided an update on the FY21 budget. Delta State's tuition and fees revenue in Fall 2019 was \$11,912,787.64. That amount, plus the 6% increase in tuition approved for FY21, totals \$12,576,002.64, which is the amount of tuition and fees revenue the university should have received had enrollment remained flat for Fall 2020. However, we have received \$11,542,383.00 in tuition and fees revenue. Mr. Rutledge provided Cabinet members with tuition and fees revenue projections for Spring 2021. The university budgeted for \$10,704,162.71 in tuition and fees revenue for Spring 2021, which is a 10% reduction from actual Fall revenue plus an adjustment for Summer school tuition and fees revenue of \$511,677. It is projected the university will receive only \$9,868,698.59 for tuition and fees revenue for the Spring 2021. The university budgeted to award \$2,387,908.00 in scholarships for Fall 2020; however, \$2,000,691.41 was awarded. This difference of \$387,217.00 decreases the university's deficit in tuition and fees revenue to \$646,402.64. The university budgeted to award \$237,908.00 for Spring 2021, but it is projected only \$2,000,691.00 will be awarded. Mr. Rutledge is hopeful a total savings of \$774,434.00 in scholarships will be realized at the end of the fiscal year, which will bring the deficit in tuition and fees revenue for the fiscal year to \$1,094,649.09. The university does have contingencies to help cover the loss in tuition revenue and fees including: \$500,000 contingency fund; delay of \$620,000 of capital asset purchases; \$452,000 balance of 5% budgeted decrease in State appropriations; \$500,000 cash contingency fund; and, \$113,700 savings in utilities, contract negotiations, and salaries from the months of July 2020 and August 2020. To maintain our days of cash on hand, Mr. Rutledge is going to add all contingencies to our budget to make up for the lost revenue and to keep our budget balanced. Also, the university budgeted for \$4,171,219.54 in housing revenue for FY21, but it is projected the university will only receive \$3,052,413.92, which is a decrease of \$1,118,806.00. Blansett Hall and Brumby-Castle Hall will be closed for occupancy beginning on January 1, and their residents will be moved to other residence halls. This will save 70% on utilities, and they will furlough or relocate the six custodial positions assigned to those two residence halls. The savings on utilities and custodial positions will allow the housing budget to balance.

Mr. Rutledge shared with Cabinet members the Cash Flow projections for September 2020. This report compares the current cash flows to the cash flows from September 2019. The university's cash balance has increased from July to September, and the main reason is a reduction in spending. One area showcasing the reduction in spending is in salaries. The university has more employees this fiscal year, but several are being paid with CARES Act funds.

Additional information

- Mr. Munroe announced he has two new staff members as of today. Ms. Corley Mullins is the new Campaign Coordinator, and Ms. Mary Parker Janoush is the new Academic Development Officer.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Statesmen Emerald Awards of Excellence, October 21, 7:00 p.m., BPAC
- Okra Out Front, October 22, 6:00 p.m.
- Foundation Board of Directors meeting, October 23

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, October 26 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – COVID-19 Plans for Fall 2020

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.