

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: October 9, 2017**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. George Beals, Dr. Vernell Bennett, Dr. Dave Breaux, Ms. Ashley Griffin, Mr. Patrick Hundley, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Michelle Roberts, and Ms. Caitlyn Thompson (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

**Members not in attendance:** Mr. Jamie Rutledge

**Guests:** Dr. Christy Riddle, Director, Student Success Center  
Dr. Jon Westfall, Director, First Year Seminar

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on October 9, 2017. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

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

On motion by Mr. Mayers, seconded by Dr. Breaux, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on October 2, 2017.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge continued his residence hall visits last week with Cain-Tatum Hall. He stated it was a great visit. His residence hall visits will conclude with Foundation Hall in a couple of weeks.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the International Conference on the Blues. He stated it was a remarkable conference. Dr. McAdams reiterated President LaForge's remarks and stated the programming improves each year. This year was the first time the conference has collaborated with GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi and the BPAC. President LaForge attended the BPAC performance of Aaron Neville Duo at the conclusion of the conference. He stated it was a great show.
- President LaForge worked a half-day with Facilities Management staff last week. This provides him with an opportunity to see all aspects of the campus community. Following his work with the Facilities Management staff, President LaForge and Mr. Rutledge hosted a cookout to thank them for all they do on campus.
- President LaForge and Mr. Fulcher visited Mr. and Mrs. George Bryan last week. President LaForge informed Cabinet Members Mr. Bryan has provided funding to the Delta Music Institute in the past. President LaForge updated Mr. and Mrs. Bryan on the Delta Music Institute and invited them to visit campus.
- Mr. Hundley gave a recap of Pig Pickin'. He stated it was a great weekend and a great experience for visitors. He was very pleased with all aspects of the weekend and those that contributed to it. He plans to work with Student Affairs and Athletics on keeping Statesmen Park open a few hours on Saturday evening next year. President LaForge stated it was a great weekend.
- Ms. Thompson reported DSU Day had a record attendance of 174 students. The students and their

guests enjoyed all of the activities.

- In Mr. Rutledge’s absence, President LaForge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Contractors for Zeigel Hall have informed Mr. Rutledge the facility will re-open in March or April. President LaForge stated limestone was poured on Statesmen Boulevard. Contractors for Young-Mauldin Cafeteria have informed President LaForge it will be open in August or September.
- Mr. Mayers gave an update on Athletics. Mr. Mayers was very pleased with the crowd at the football game on Saturday. Athletics changed their schedule slightly and inducted their Hall of Fame members during Pig Pickin’ instead of Homecoming, as it has been in the past. The Baseball Alumni reunion went very well and was well attended, with approximately 250 alumni participating.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities for next week. President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members of the Colloquia Series Lecture on Tuesday with Dr. Rod Paige. He encouraged everyone to attend and to invite their constituency groups. He also invited Cabinet Members to attend the pre-event reception for Dr. Paige in the President’s Conference Room at 5:00 p.m. The College of Business and Aviation Lecture Series hosts Mr. Marvin Dennis on Wednesday. President LaForge and Mr. Dennis are old friends, and President LaForge helped to host him this past weekend. President LaForge travels to Desoto County for recruiting visits on Thursday. He will visit with Hernando High School and Olive Branch High School. On Friday, President LaForge and Mr. Fulcher will visit with Mr. Roy Collins and Mr. Chris Collins to discuss visioning. Cleveland’s annual Oktoberfest is Friday and Saturday.

## **CABINET TOPIC**

### **Student Retention Initiatives and Statistics.....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams introduced Dr. Christy Riddle and Dr. Jon Westfall and asked them to give an overview of the student retention initiatives. Dr. Riddle provided Cabinet Members with a PowerPoint presentation, which outlined each area of the Student Success Center and included a report on their current initiatives. She also distributed a written report outlining the Student Success Center’s accomplishments. Since its opening in 2010, the Student Success Center has grown from one division to seven divisions including: Academic Advising Services, Academic Support Services, First Year Seminar, International Student Services, Okra Scholars, Student-Athlete Support Services, and Study Abroad. The first division was Academic Support Services — a program mandated by the Institutions of Higher Learning to help those students with low subtest scores on the ACT or SAT. The Student Success Center began co-requisite remediation this fall. This program allows for a student to take a remedial course and the corresponding college-level course simultaneously. Co-requisite remediation courses are offered in math and English. Dr. Riddle stated one of the most important areas within the Student Success Center is the S.O.S. Early Alert Program. This program takes a proactive approach to connecting university resources with the individual needs of students who are faced with academic and institutional obstacles. The Student Success Center created a new strategy for proactive advising by partnering with Financial Aid to implement a financial aid probation program. Any student placed on academic probation with the Financial Aid Office has to work with Student Success Center a few hours a week. Dr. Riddle stated another great initiative within the Student Success Center is the supplemental instructors program. Students receiving an ‘A’ in a gateway course are qualified to serve as a supplemental instructor. These students go to every class meeting and provide assistance to students through review sessions and tutoring. Another exciting new edition to the Student Success Center came through a grant provided by the Mississippi Department of Human Services — the Student-Athlete Support Services. This program provides resources to student-athletes to help retain them and to help them graduate. The next step for this program is obtaining funding for year two. Dr. Riddle stated the Student Success Center has collaborated with many offices and will continue to do so in order to help students be successful and graduate.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

None

**Discussion**

**New Student Orientation.....Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members of Student Affairs' plans to reorganize the summer orientation program for new students. Dr. Bennett created a task force to review the current system and to brainstorm new ideas. The task force proposed the following: hosting three, one-day orientation sessions for freshmen and transfer students instead of four, and combining freshmen and transfer sessions.. The dates for Orientation 2018 are Monday, June 11, Thursday, June 28, and Monday, July 16.

**New Student Week.....Dr. Bennett**

Dr. Bennett and the Student Affairs Division want to create a New Student Week for incoming freshmen and transfer students planning to live on campus. The New Student Week will occur the week prior to the beginning of classes, will give new students an opportunity to learn more about what Delta State has to offer, and will help to acclimate them to college life. During the day, there will be seminars on advising, counseling and health, student engagement, and spirit 101. At night, there will be social aspects for interaction. Dr. Bennett informed Cabinet Members the only cost to the university would be the social aspects. Ms. Griffin believes this is a great initiative. Mr. Mayers said that the Soccer, Cross-Country, and Football teams will also be on campus that week.

**Additional Information**

- Dr. Bennett encouraged Cabinet Members to attend the Midnight Madness event on Friday. She stated it would be a fun evening and will involve welcoming back our men and women's basketball teams. The event begins at 7:00 p.m. in Walter Sillers Coliseum.
- Mr. Mayers informed Cabinet Members that Delta State will host the North Half Swimming Championship for high school students on Saturday. He stated more than 500 students qualified for the championship. Admissions staff will be on site to recruit and promote Delta State.
- Dr. Beals informed Cabinet Members the date for the annual F.E. Woodall Conference was set for March 23. The keynote speaker will be Mr. Dan Buckner, creator of the Swiffer. Mr. Buckner has agreed to be available for meetings the day before.
- Ms. Thompson informed Cabinet Members the Staff Council initiatives for food and toy drives are coming up soon.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Pre-Event Reception for Colloquia Series speaker Dr. Rod Paige, October 10, 5:00 pm, President's Conference Room.
- Colloquia Lecture Series, Dr. Rod Paige, October 10, 6:00 pm, Jobe Auditorium.
- Brothers Osborne with special guest, Ashley McBryde, October 19, 7:30 pm, BPAC.
- Delta State vs. Valdosta State, October 21, 2:00 p.m. (wear pink), Parker Field. President's Reception at 1:30 p.m., Dorgan Center.

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, October 16
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Enrollment and Recruitment (Dr. McAdams)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.