

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: September 13, 2021

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. Vicki Bingham, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Mr. Rick Munroe, 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: None

Guests: Ms. Michelle Johansen, Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on September 13, 2021. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Dr. Novobilski, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on September 7, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Cabinet members participated in a moment of silence in memory of Dr. Ethan Schmidt. The six year anniversary of his death is tomorrow. Ms. Johansen announced that a remembrance ceremony will be held at 3:00 p.m. tomorrow at the Broken Arrow sculpture outside of Jobe Hall.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. President LaForge visited with Entergy President Haley Fisackerly and other community leaders last week. He traveled to Hernando High School for a recruiting visit. The Office of Student Life hosted a Student Leadership Conference. Cabinet members gave a recap of the Pig Pickin' event, which was well attended.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The materials for the roofing project were delivered, and the project will begin on Wednesday. The materials for the roofing project are located in parking spaces behind Cain-Tatum Hall, Fugler-Hammett Hall, and Lawler-Harkins Hall, and the parking spaces will be blocked off during the duration of the project. The campus-wide elevator project is on schedule. The expansion and renovation of the School of Nursing will be bid out in November, and the project will begin in Spring 2022 with a completion date of 2025. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet members Facilities Management has a reduced staff, and supervisors are struggling to fill positions. Mr. Rutledge plans to send a memo to faculty and staff soon about fixed assets, and he will share the memo with the Executive Committee prior to distributing it.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The football team won against McKendree University. The team's conference games begin this week on the road against University of West Georgia. The men's soccer team tied against Ouachita Baptist University over the weekend, and their match with Hardin University was cancelled. The men's team has three matches this week: Mississippi University for Women on Tuesday at home; University of Montevallo on Friday away; and, Auburn University –

Montgomery on Sunday away. The women’s soccer team lost to Palm Beach Atlantic University and Lynn University over the weekend, and they will compete this weekend against University of Montevallo and Auburn University – Montgomery. The cross country team finished tenth in their race last week, and they compete at University of Montevallo this Friday.

- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. President LaForge filmed a Statesmen Insider this morning with Offensive Coordinator Jon Fletcher and two of his offensive linemen. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee held at lunch today a public viewing of the “Queen of Basketball” documentary featuring Dr. Lucy Harris. President LaForge has a teleconference with Commissioner Rankins and IEOs re. COVID-19 on Tuesday. The IHL Board of Trustees have their annual retreat this week. Delta State celebrates its 96th Anniversary on Wednesday. Mr. Munroe announced Giving Day is on Wednesday in conjunction with the university’s birthday. Dr. Wegmann announced the Constitution Day Lecture is scheduled for Thursday beginning at 4:00 p.m. in Jobe Hall Auditorium. The lecturer is Dr. Ben Wright. An Evening with Dionne Warwick is scheduled for Thursday night at the BPAC.

CABINET TOPIC

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plans for FY22..... President LaForge

President LaForge invited the Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Ms. Michelle Johansen, to today’s Cabinet meeting to provide an overview of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee’s plans for the upcoming year. The committee has 40 members, and it has expanded its campus representation for FY22. A big focus for the committee this year is collaborations with various departments. Plans for FY22 included: professional development workshops to educate faculty on how to teach inclusively for equitable learning; creating book clubs; finalizing the campus climate survey for distribution in Spring 2022; and, a robust Hispanic Heritage month. The big event for the semester is the Voices from the Sit-In film screening. The short-film centers on an event that took place on Delta State’s campus in 1969, and it was filmed and produced by people with a Delta State connection. The committee wants to review the Ethnic Studies minor to ensure it is all encompassing and make students aware of the minor. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has an array of social media applications, and the committee allows students to post content aimed at students. The social media applications, as well as, Ms. Johansen’s emails are used to update the campus community on all of the committee’s events.

BUSINESS

Action

Financial Assistance policy (revised – first reading)Dr. Lovin

Dr. Lovin brought to Cabinet the revised Financial Assistance policy for a first reading. The revision to the policy lies within the policy statement. In order for a student to receive financial aid, the student must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), if they are eligible to do so, for the academic year in which they desire to receive aid. No federal, state, institutional, or Foundation aid will be awarded until a FAFSA is on file, for those eligible to submit one, for the proper academic year. Dr. Novobilski inquired about the possibility of removing some text within the policy as it relates to the Flight Operations’ students. Dr. Novobilski and Dr. Lovin, with the help of Financial Aid Director Megan Smith, will discuss this matter, and bring a recommendation to Cabinet at a later date.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to approve the revised Financial Assistance policy for a first reading and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved.

Discussion

Enrollment UpdateDr. Lovin and Dr. Novobilski

Dr. Novobilski announced the university 's enrollment, as of September 13, is 2,502 students, not including Dual Credit students. The total headcount with Dual Credit students is 2,762. Full-time student enrollment is down 268 students not including Dual Credit students, and full-time student enrollment is down 295 students including Dual Credit students. Enrollment is down 9.5%. Dr. Lovin announced there are 665 students living in the residence halls this Fall. Also, the Office of Admissions has more than 1,289 contacts for Fall 2022. Of those contacts, 283 have applied to the university.

Additional Information:

- Mr. Rutledge announced the attorney who has been hired to help create the MOU for the golf course development project will meet with the Executive Committee on Friday.
- President LaForge discussed with Cabinet members the need for a Cabinet meeting on Monday, September 20. Cabinet members decided to postpone a meeting until Monday, September 27.
- Dr. Novobilski announced he would be out of office the remainder of the week, and he stated Dr. Bingham would be available for meetings and events in his place.
- Dr. Wegmann announced Dr. Novobilski attended the Faculty Senate meeting last week, and he provided faculty members with beneficial information. The Faculty Senate have a supplemental meeting this week.
- Mr. Young thanked Dr. Lovin and Mr. Rutledge for their help in getting approval for the new volleyball court.
- Dr. Lovin gave kudos to students for their behavior at Pig Pickin' events.
- Mr. Rutledge announced he will email faculty and staff this week to encourage their consideration of local vendors for purchases.
- Mr. Rutledge announced alcohol sales on Saturday were approximately \$4,000, and food sales were approximately \$8,700.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Constitution Day, September 16, 4:00 p.m., Jobe Hall Auditorium, Speaker – Dr. Ben Wright
- An Evening with Dionne Warwick, September 16, 8:00 p.m., BPAC
- Shake and Holla, September 30, 7:30 p.m., BPAC
- International Conference on the Blues, October 1
- DSU Football vs. University of West Florida, October 1, 6:00 p.m., Parker Field

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, September 27, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.