

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: September 25, 2017

Members in attendance: President William LaForge, Dr. George Beals, Dr. Dave Breaux, Ms. Ashley Griffin, Dr. Charles McAdams, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, and Ms. Caitlyn Thompson
(Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

Members not in attendance: Dr. Vernell Bennett, Mr. Patrick Hundley, and Mr. Ronnie Mayers

Guests: Ms. Lee Aylward, Program Associate for Education and Community Outreach, The Delta Center
Dr. Shelley Collins, Co-Chair, International Conference on the Blues
Mr. Don Allan Mitchell, Co-Chair, International Conference on the Blues
Mr. Mike Smith, Director, Honors Program

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on September 25, 2017. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Roberts, seconded by Mr. Rutledge, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on September 11, 2017.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- President LaForge expressed his gratitude to the Delta State family for the generous support of the Alvarez family during their time of need.
- President LaForge expressed his condolences to the family of Dr. Lucy Janoush. He stated the services were a great celebration of her life. Delta State offered assistance with additional parking for her funeral service and her celebration of life service at GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi.
- President LaForge reported to Cabinet Members he had seven recruiting visits during the last two weeks. He visited Center Hill High School, Pillow Academy, North Sunflower Academy, Lake Cormorant High School, Desoto Central High School, and Lewisburg High School. He stated all of the visits went well, and each Desoto County school has a great list of provisionally admitted students.
- President LaForge began his annual dorm visits with Lawler-Harkins Hall and Brumby-Castle Hall. He will continue his visits later this week with Blansett Hall.
- The Chick-fil-A Leaders Academy held their annual kickoff event on Delta State's campus last week. President LaForge welcomed the high school students in attendance. He stated this event was a great recruiting opportunity for Delta State.
- President LaForge attended Delta State's 92nd Anniversary celebration in Whitfield Hall last week. He stated it was a great event and well attended.
- President LaForge hosted the annual Ice Cream Social for new students last week and there was a great

turnout. He thanked Cabinet Members for their willingness to help serve and meet Delta State's new students.

- The Cleveland Music Foundation Board met two weeks ago for their monthly meeting. The Board members will meet again tomorrow to discuss new leadership for the Board.
- The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce held a Welcome Party for Delta State's International students. President LaForge stated it was a great way to show our new International students our southern hospitality.
- President LaForge and Mr. Rutledge attended a meeting in Jackson to discuss the new President's home with IHL staff members and Bureau of Building representatives. The meeting took place to discuss financing options for the project.
- President LaForge attended the Joint Legislative Budget Committee Hearing last week. IHL Commissioner Glenn Boyce, along with a couple of IEOs, made the presentation to the committee.
- President LaForge had a great visit with the Languages and Literature Division a couple of weeks ago. He looks forward to continuing his visits.
- President LaForge attended the BPAC performance of Tracy Lawrence last week. The event was well attended. President LaForge informed Cabinet Members he uses his tickets primarily for donor cultivation.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. Construction on Zeigel Hall is ahead of schedule, and it should be completed in March. The construction on the cafeteria started last week, and it should be finished in 300 days. The drainage portion of the Statesmen Boulevard project is finished.
- In Mr. Mayers absence, President LaForge gave an update on Athletics. He stated it was a tough weekend for soccer as both teams played ranked teams. The football team won against Shorter University.
- President LaForge hosted his first Faculty and Staff Lunch today. His guests included: Ms. Barbara Ann Beckham, Mr. Luke Sheekey, Mr. Levi Pressnell, and Ms. Judy Haney. The purpose of the luncheon is to get acquainted with employees. He stated this luncheon went very well, and it was a great start to the series.
- President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities (MAC) conference hosted at Mississippi State University takes place next week. Mr. Jamie Rutledge and Dr. Leslie Griffin will attend for Delta State.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities for the next week. President LaForge will attend the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Annual meeting tonight. On Tuesday, President LaForge will speak to the Gertrude Ford Foundation Board at their monthly meeting and meet with Mr. Lester Diamond, CEO of St. Dominic's Hospital, to discuss the vision for Delta State. On Wednesday, Mr. David Shufflebarger and Mr. Mark Belcher will present the results from the feasibility study to President LaForge and members of the Foundation staff. President LaForge will travel to Jackson on Thursday for recruiting visits to Canton Academy and Canton High School. On Friday, President LaForge will give remarks at the Academic Support Lab Open House. Delta State's football team plays Mississippi College on Saturday. President and Mrs. LaForge will have dinner with Dr. and Mrs. Royce, prior to the game.
- President LaForge introduced Mr. Don Allan Mitchell, Dr. Shelley Collins, and Ms. Lee Aylward to give an update on the International Conference on the Blues, which is scheduled for Monday, October 2 and Tuesday, October 3. Dr. Collins asked all Cabinet Members to register for the conference and informed them the conference will be in memory of Dr. Lucy Janoush. To date, 212 people have registered for the conference. The fourth annual Blues Conference has a twofold focus: Alan Lomax and John Lee Hooker. Delta State, the BPAC, and GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi have partnered for this year's conference. The BPAC has graciously allowed their Tuesday evening performer, Mr. Aaron

Neville, to provide a keynote address on Tuesday at lunch. Dr. Collins asked for Ms. Griffin’s help in getting students to the conference. President LaForge thanked the chairs and staff for their dedication to this project. He said he’s pleased to see great progress with this event and is excited to see what can happen in the future.

CABINET TOPIC

Honors ProgramDr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams introduced Mr. Mike Smith and gave a background on the Honors Program. The honors program needed to be revitalized with new leadership, a new purpose, and new dynamics. Dr. McAdams created a task force to chart a path to a program of which the university could be proud. The Task Force came up with goals for the new program, and Mr. Mike Smith became the advisor last year. Mr. Smith stated the first priority was to build a freshmen class. He reached out to qualifying students and recruited nine for the freshmen class. The freshmen class for Fall 2017 has 15 students. One goal of the task force was to have 20 students in each class. Mr. Smith wants to make the program attractive to transfer students since the financial incentive is not available to them. Freshmen enrolled in the Honors Program receive a \$500 scholarship, but most transfers qualified to enter the Honors Program are capped out in scholarships due to the Phi Theta Kappa scholarship. We want to make the Honors Program campus wide, but we will have to build flexibility into the program. Mr. Smith wants to garner more general education course sections for honors students including Chemistry, Biology, History, and Speech. Beginning in the Spring of 2018, a section of Psychology and Astronomy will be for honors students. The contract course within a student’s major was preserved, and an Honors Forum course was created. The Honors Forum course was created to expand the scholarly range and vision of honors students. This will be done through a speaker series. Also, freshmen cohorts will be enrolled in a course in the spring, allowing them to give back to the community through a service project. In the long term, Mr. Smith would like to have a residential/living experience for the Honors Program, student travel grants, and an annual retreat. Mr. Smith contacted the Ole Miss Honors Program and they are interested in bridging a connection to all public universities in Mississippi. President LaForge stated this program will be a huge attraction for the university and a distinguishing factor for our academic programs. The Honors Program can become an incubator for students wanting to apply for post-graduate fellowships. President LaForge recommended marketing the Honors Program as a two-year or four-year track to help garner interest with transfer students. Mr. Rutledge requested Mr. Smith give him the criteria needed for a meeting space and he would try to find something for him. Dr. Roberts suggested Mr. Smith give transfer students a scholarship towards their on-campus housing fees since most transfer students are capped out on tuition scholarships. Dr. Beal offered the services of his counselors to make presentations on wellness. He would also like to develop a way for faculty and staff members to nominate successful current students to the program.

BUSINESS

Action

Request from Community Foundation of NWMS President LaForge

President LaForge brought to Cabinet a request made by the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi to utilize Jacob Conference Center and four classrooms for a conference on community engagement for non-profit leaders on November 1. The Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi inquired about Delta State waiving the facility rental fees as part of an in-kind donation. President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi partners with Delta State on several projects. Mr. Rutledge informed Cabinet Members the cost of the rental would be approximately \$350.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Rutledge to waive the facility rental fees for the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi and seconded by Dr. Breaux. **The motion was approved.**

Discussion

Enrollment Report analysisDr. McAdams

Dr. McAdams distributed a report on enrollment figures and retention rates. A semester-to-semester comparison (Fall 2016 to Fall 2017) of the credit hours attempted for highest dates of enrollment shows a decrease of 106 credit hours; however, the revenue Delta State receives based on credit hours increased. This is due in part to the fact that students pay the same tuition for twelve to eighteen hours. Dr. McAdams stated retention rates for first-time, full-time, degree seeking freshmen increased 6.0% from Fall 2015-2016 to Fall 2016-2017 and 14.8% from Fall 2014-2015 to Fall 2016-2017. This statistic remains the most reported information to IPEDS and IHL regarding retention rates. The report also shows that 71.4% of students who entered Delta State as freshmen in Fall 2016 returned in Fall 2017. Dr. McAdams stated Delta State has room for improvement, but we are trending upwards. In a few weeks, Dr. McAdams will provide a detailed report that identifies the growth areas.

Additional Information

- Dr. McAdams informed Cabinet Members of Academic Council’s recommendations on the Capstone experience for students. Academic Council believes we should add a sentence in the narrative section of the course catalog to identify capstone courses. Also, Academic Council believes a student should list their capstone course on their resume and any letter of intent instead of listing the capstone course on the transcript in order to have a better impact. Dr. McAdams will work with Dr. Heslep to make sure the capstone course is a part of all recruiting materials.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- International Conference on the Blues, October 2-3, GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi.
- Aaron Neville Duo, October 3, 7:30 pm, BPAC.
- Pig Pickin’ Weekend, October 6-7, Statesman Park.
- DSU vs. University of West Alabama, October 7, 6:00 pm (Wear Green), Parker Field. President’s Reception at 5:30 pm in the Dorgan Center.
- 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.

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, October 2
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Campaign Strategy Study Report (President LaForge)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.