

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: September 27, 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: Dr. Shelley Collins, Co-Chair, International Conference on the Blues
Mr. Don Allan Mitchell, Co-Chair, International Conference on the Blues

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on September 27, 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 13, 2021.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- On behalf of Cabinet members, President LaForge wished Dr. Bingham and Mr. Young a belated happy birthday.
- President LaForge gifted Mr. Young with an Emerging Artist membership to GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi. President and Mrs. LaForge received this "gift membership" as part of their membership package, and they decided to gift this to the SGA president each year.
- President LaForge gave an overview of the activities and events from last week. In conjunction with their annual Board Retreat, the IHL Board of Trustees held a monthly meeting two weeks ago. More than \$10,000 was raised during Delta State's Day of Giving on September 15. Dr. Wegmann announced the Constitution Day Lecture with Dr. Ben Wright went well and was well attended. An Evening with Dionne Warwick at the BPAC was a wonderful event. President LaForge filmed a segment of his Statesmen Insider with Ms. Michelle Johansen about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce held their annual banquet, and Delta State purchased a table for the event to show support from the university.
- Mr. Rutledge gave an update on Facilities Management projects. The elevator project remains on schedule; however, there is a problem with receiving some parts and equipment. The estimated completion date for the roofing project is December. Mr. Rutledge has a meeting on October 7 to discuss the construction documents for the School of Nursing expansion and renovation project. He hopes to put the project out to bid in January. Mr. Rutledge is working with the architect for Foundation Hall renovations to finalize the plans in order to start the project. One of the next campus-wide projects will be to replace or fix all HVAC systems. This project will be funded by the next round of

bond funds. Mr. Rutledge announced the FY21 financial statements for the university were submitted early to IHL. The university met all expectations with the financial ratios except for the days of cash; however, the university is trending in the right direction. At the end of June 2021, the university had 59 days of cash. President LaForge commended Mr. Rutledge and his staff for keeping the university on a sustainable path.

- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The golf team hosted the Derrall Foreman Golf Invitational and placed second. The team is in Georgia today, and tomorrow they will play in an invitational hosted by Columbus State University. The men’s tennis team played in the DII South ITA Regional Championships at Florida Southern College last week. During the last two weeks, the men’s soccer team has won one of four games. They travel to Alabama this weekend to compete against University of West Alabama and University of Alabama-Huntsville. The women’s soccer team has won three of four games during the last two weeks, and they travel to Alabama this weekend to compete against University of West Alabama and University of Alabama-Huntsville. The baseball and softball teams have started their practice schedules. The biennial baseball reunion is this weekend on Friday and Saturday. The football team lost both games over the last two weeks, and they compete at home this weekend against University of West Florida.
- President LaForge shared with Cabinet members some of the meetings and events planned for this week. He participated in a weekly teleconference this morning with Commissioner Rankins and the IEOs to discuss COVID-19 related issues. President LaForge is scheduled to have lunch with Ms. Anita Bologna tomorrow. On Wednesday, Mr. Munroe and Mr. James Forte will meet with President LaForge to give him an update on Homecoming plans. President LaForge begins his departmental visits this week with a visit to Athletics and the Jimmy R. Williams Bookstore. The BPAC performance of Shake and Holla is scheduled for Thursday evening.

CABINET TOPIC

International Conference on the Blues President LaForge

President LaForge invited the co-chairs of the International Conference of the Blues, Dr. Shelley Collins and Mr. Don Allan Mitchell, to give Cabinet members an overview of the upcoming conference. The conference is Friday, October 1 and the committee has planned a full day of paper sessions, presentations, a keynote speech by Reverend Dr. Dwight Andrews, and performances by the Coahoma Community College Concert Choir and Jontavious Willis. The majority of the conference will be held virtually on the Whova platform, and attendees can find additional information about the platform on the International Conference of the Blues webpage on the Delta State website. Students in the Digital Media Arts program, along with Professor Ted Fisher, will operate the livestream throughout the day, and Delta Music Institute students will be technicians for the musical performances. Prior to the conference, the International Conference of the Blues is sponsoring on Thursday evening Shake and Holla, a performance at the BPAC, with the North Mississippi All Stars and Cedric Burnside. President LaForge thanked Dr. Collins and Mr. Mitchell for their hard work in planning the conference, and he invited Cabinet members to attend a post-conference reception at his home beginning at 5:00 p.m.

BUSINESS

Action

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

On Monday, September 20, Cabinet members voted by email to approve the revised Financial Assistance policy for a final reading. Eight members voted to approve the final reading; one member voted not to

approve the final reading; and, two members did not vote.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Lovin to ratify the electronic vote of the Cabinet on September 20 to approve the final reading of the revised Financial Assistance policy and seconded by Mr. Rutledge. The motion was approved with one vote of nay.

Request for use of Hill Apartments Mr. Kinnison

Mr. Kinnison brought a request to Cabinet members for the new Head Coach of the golf team to live in Hill Apartments during his transition to Cleveland. According to the Family and Apartment Housing policy, a full-time university employee may be eligible for occupancy of Hill Apartments after review of application and availability, and approval by the President’s Cabinet. Dr. Roberts requested that employees be placed in a separate section of Hill Apartments from the students.

Motion: Moved by Mr. Kinnison to approve the new Head Coach of the golf team to live in Hill Apartments and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved.

Discussion

None

Additional Information

- Mr. Munroe announced the alumni tailgating event at the Delta State vs. Jackson State University football game had more than 100 alumni in attendance.
- Mr. Rutledge announced the Jimmy R. Williams Bookstore purchased a trailer to park at university events from which to sell Delta State merchandise.
- President LaForge requested the vendors of the H. L. Nowell Union (Bookstore, Food Court, etc.) remain open during Homecoming. Mr. Kinnison requested additional dates for it to remain open for upcoming Athletics’ reunions.
- Dr. Lovin announced the release of Okra Stream is scheduled for Friday. Okra Stream is Delta State’s Residence Life Cinema program. When released on Friday, students will be able to stream more than 200 movies and 15 television series. Additional information will be released on Friday. The university will be able to use this platform for Public Service Announcement (PSA) information.
- The Statesmen Shelf is open, and now has a digital grocery list option for students to complete an order. The Statesmen Shelf webpage has a local Smart Shopper’s list for donors to donate to the food pantry, as well as an Amazon list from which to purchase items.
- Dr. Lovin Announced the Vax It to Win It campaign ends on Thursday.
- Ms. Wallace announced the Miss Delta State University Pageant is scheduled for November 9 in the BPAC.
- Mr. Young announced SGA has reached out to students and student organizations to encourage them to tailgate for the football game this weekend. Also, SGA will be distributing t-shirts to students upon their entrance to the game.
- Mr. Young announced his fraternity, Pi Kappa Alpha, chapter won a national excellence award for the second year in a row.
- Dr. Lovin and Dr. Novobilski met with an ad hoc group to discuss enrollment. Some of the items the group plans to focus on include recruiting students prior to the admissions process and how to keep students engaged during their time of acceptance and arriving on campus. Dr. Novobilski will send to Cabinet members his raw notes form the meeting.

- Mr. Kinnison expressed his appreciation for a student bus traveling to the football game last weekend. Also, the swimming and diving teams had a great experience at the University of Alabama last weekend.
- President LaForge announced a reception will be held at his home next Monday beginning at 5:00 p.m., prior to the “Voices from the Sit-In” screening.

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- 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 2, 6:00 p.m., Parker Field
- “Voices from the Sit-In” screening, October 4, 6:00 p.m., BPAC
- Fall Break, October 11-12
- Martina McBride, October 14, 7:30 p.m., BPAC

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, October 4, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.