

# William N. LaForge

## PRESIDENT



**William N. LaForge**  
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Delta State University  
Kent Wyatt Hall, Suite 255  
Cleveland, MS 38733

**P:** 662.846.4000  
**F:** 662.846.4014  
**E:** [president@deltastate.edu](mailto:president@deltastate.edu)

### CONNECT WITH DELTA STATE:



## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

### PRESIDENT

- President William N. LaForge was elected to serve a two-year term as president of the Gulf South Conference.
- Hosted each year by President LaForge, the annual Mayors' Summit at Delta State University brings together mayors from across the Delta region to discuss challenges and to form partnerships.
- The NCAA selected President LaForge to serve on the Presidents' Council for Division II beginning in April of 2016 and continuing through the 2020 NCAA Convention.

### CENTER FOR MUSIC AND CULTURE

- Continuing its path as a leader in music-related courses, Delta State launched a program on Delta Blues that is open to blues scholars all over the world. The graduate certificate program will expand to include an undergraduate component.
- The Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State hosted its seventh annual "Most Southern Place on Earth" workshop drawing 36 educators from 20 states.
- The Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with students in the Delta Music Institute (DMI) Entertainment Industry Studies Program, launched a "Wired for Sound" series of live music events. For 12 weeks, local venues featured students performing a well-known repertoire of popular music.
- Students from the DMI had the opportunity to travel to Los Angeles in 2017 to participate in events leading up to the 59th annual GRAMMY Awards. This is the fifth consecutive year that DMI students have performed during the annual Mississippi Night at GRAMMY Week.

### CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS AND ADDITIONS

- The Roy L. and Clara Belle Wiley Planetarium, housed in the Caylor-White-Walters complex, celebrated a grand re-opening after major renovations to the facility.
- The Division of Health, Physical Education and Recreation opened its new Dave Heflin Outdoor Recreation Laboratory. A total of 637 students have enrolled in outdoor recreation trips over past the 12 years.
- A campus street paving project was completed.
- Renovations to the Caylor-White-Walters complex were finished.
- Zeigel Hall renovation project began, with the first step to build an addition on the west side of the facility.
- Young-Mauldin Dining Hall renovation is scheduled to begin.
- Statesmen Boulevard construction is scheduled to begin and will connect Highway 8 to the athletic facilities.

### SIGNATURE CONFERENCES

- Delta State University hosted its fourth annual Winning the Race conference in 2017. The conference, "Winning the Race: Advancing Education in the Mississippi Delta," was presented in partnership with the Casey Family Programs and the Mississippi Humanities Council. Highlight speakers included Dr. Ivory Toldson, President and CEO of the Quality Education for Minorities Network, and Dr. William C. Bell, a Delta State graduate and President and CEO of the Casey Family Programs.
- In 2016, Delta State hosted the third annual International Conference on the Blues, drawing blues scholars and fans from all over the world. Headliners at the event included GRAMMY award winner and Royal Studios owner Lawrence "Boo" Mitchell and GRAMMY nominee and four-time Blues Music Award winner Cedric Burnside.
- Delta State alumnus David Abney and his wife Sherry were on campus in 2017 for the 12th annual International Business Symposium. David, who is CEO and Chairman of the Board for UPS, has generously sponsored and attended the conference during the past 12 years.



## 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

### SERVICE AND OUTREACH

- The Center for Community and Economic Development is one of 11 Mississippi organizations receiving grant funding from a \$3.3 million AmeriCorps campaign to support nonprofit and educational organizations across the state.
- The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, which is administered by the Delta Center for Culture and Learning on campus, recently awarded nearly \$160,000 in grants for 11 cultural heritage development projects in the Mississippi Delta.
- The Child Development Center in the College of Education and Human Sciences has been identified by the Early Years Network Special Needs Division as one of only two highly-qualified centers serving special needs in the state of Mississippi.
- Delta State's Center for Community and Economic Development received a \$1.2 million grant from the Department of Education to establish the Delta Educational Opportunity. The overall goal will be to increase the number of adults who enroll in postsecondary education institutions.
- Nearly 500 high schoolers from across the state were on campus in 2016 for the Chick-Fil-A Leadership Academy, a program held in over 15 Mississippi high schools that teaches leadership skills.
- A \$10,000 grant from Monsanto funded the first S.T.E.A.M. Camp at Delta State. S.T.E.A.M. stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. Campers were 30 fourth through sixth graders with interest in the arts and sciences.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- In a span of only three years, Delta State has doubled its international student population to more than 140.
- Delta State continues to build on its international partnerships and exchange opportunities for our students, most recently entering into a partnership with Daffodil International University in Bangladesh.
- A delegation from Delta State visited Perm State University in Perm, Russia in 2016 to attend the university's centennial celebrations.

### DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLOQUIA LECTURES

The Delta State University Colloquia Distinguished Speakers Lecture Series continued this year featuring:

- Dr. LouAnn Woodward, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Woodward's speech titled "Health Care in Mississippi: What You Need to Know" was an insightful look at the past, present and future of healthcare in Mississippi.
- Judge Gustavo A. Gelpi, who currently presides over the nation's largest police department reform case, spoke on "Police Reform Through the Eyes of a United States District Judge."
- U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson provided a timely look back at the national elections.

### RANKINGS

- Delta State was one of 14 institutions nationwide recognized for its commitment to great teaching and student success by the American Council on Education.
- #2 in nation - Most Affordable Online Master's Degree in Nursing (bestmastersdegree.com)
- #15 in nation - Most Affordable Online Graduate Schools (College Choice)
- #6 nation - Most Affordable Online Degree in Elementary Education (Best College Values)
- #42 of 1,200 national schools for Best Online Graduate Nursing Program (U.S. News & World Report)
- #3 in nation - Most Affordable Counseling Online Degree (SR Education Group)
- #4 in nation - Most Affordable Business Online Degree (SR Education Group)
- #5 in nation - Most Affordable Education Online Degree (SR Education Group)
- #5 in nation - Most Affordable Master's of Business Administration Online Degree (SR Education Group)
- #7 in nation - Most Affordable Nursing Online Degree (SR Education Group)
- #14 in nation - Most Affordable Teaching Online Degree (SR Education Group)
- #6 in nation - Most Affordable Online Master's Degree in Elementary Education (Best College Values)
- #1 in Mississippi - Master's of Counseling Program (topcounselingschools.org)
- #2 in nation - Most Affordable RN to BSN Degree (College Choice)
- #1 in nation - Most Affordable Nurse Practitioner Program (College Choice)