

# William N. LaForge

## PRESIDENT



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## 2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

### PRESIDENT

- William N. LaForge was selected to serve a two-year term as vice president of the Gulf South Conference, and will serve as president in 2017.
- He was also selected as a Fulbright Scholar, and returned to Perm State University in Russia this past May to teach a course on U.S. business-government relations.
- 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.

### DELTA MUSIC INSTITUTE - ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES STUDIES

- DMI students performed at "Mississippi Night" during Grammy Week in L.A., and also participated in an educational program at the White House in April.
- The Mobile Music Lab continues to provide an after-school curriculum that teaches the basics of songwriting, music performance, and audio engineering skills to upper elementary and secondary students throughout Mississippi.

### GRAMMY MUSEUM® MISSISSIPPI

- March 5 marked the long-awaited opening of GRAMMY Museum Mississippi on the Delta State campus, which promises to be a major force in the Delta in the areas of educational programs, tourism, and music.
- Special guests at the Grand Opening included Recording Academy President Neil Portnow, and Bob Santelli, Executive Director of GRAMMY Museum at L.A. LIVE.
- Nearly 50,000 visitors already have visited the Museum.
- Delta State enjoys a formal educational partnership with the Museum to support jointly-sponsored programs.

### CENTER FOR MUSIC AND CULTURE

- Delta State secured a second year of funding from the Levitt Amp Grant Awards which will fund a series of 10 free outdoor concerts in Cleveland, produced by students from the Delta Music Institute. The opportunity offers real world experience in staging, promoting, and producing concerts, while providing the advantage of free music for the entire community.
- Continuing its path as a leader in music-related courses, Delta State will launch a program on Delta Blues this summer that will be open to blues scholars from all over the world. The graduate certificate program will expand next year to include an undergraduate component.
- In April, Delta State hosted some of the top authors and scholars in the world for a symposium on the musical band, the Beatles, and their music. The symposium drew international guests and was the first of many educational partnerships between the university and the new GRAMMY Museum Mississippi.

### CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS AND ADDITIONS

- A statue commemorating legendary baseball Coach Dave "Boo" Ferriss was dedicated October 3.
- A massive campus repaving project has been completed and plans for a new Statesmen Boulevard are underway.
- An open house for the newly-renovated Caylor-White-Walters Hall, the home of mathematics and sciences at Delta State, was held in early April. The renovations included the addition of a two-story wing on the east side of the building which houses laboratories for general biology, anatomy and physiology, DNA technology, and chemistry in addition to a planetarium, research space, computer laboratories, science education facilities, lecture rooms, faculty offices, and a museum. Delta State is the only state university to house a planetarium.

### ALUMNI GIVE BACK

- Delta State hosted alumnus Walt Bettinger on campus in October. Bettinger is the CEO and President of Charles Schwab, and he spoke to students about his path to success.
- David Abney, DSU graduate and CEO of UPS, was on campus in March to speak during the 11th annual International Business Symposium, an event that he sponsors each year.



### RACE RELATIONS CONFERENCE

- In its third year, Delta State's Winning the Race conference took place March 28-29 and featured two nationally-recognized authors on issues related to race relations, as well as panels of academic scholars and community leaders on the issue of race relations.

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE BLUES

- The second annual conference was held October 5-6, 2015
- Blues greats Bobby Rush and James "Super Chikan" Johnson performed at the conference, which brought blues scholars and fans from all over the country to the Delta to participate in academic discussions and to hear live performances from both students and blues musicians.

### HEALTHY CAMPUS INITIATIVE

- DSU's acclaimed Healthy Campus/Community Initiative programs were recognized with a 2015 Governor's Award from the Mississippi Association of Partners in Education.

### DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLOQUIA

- The distinguished speakers lecture series brings top speakers to campus.
- In September, Joe Turner, the owner of more than 50 Wendy's franchises shared his business knowledge with students, faculty, and staff as part of the series.
- In October, Delta State hosted U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, a native of Gulfport, who is also the Poet Laureate for the State of Mississippi.
- In March, U.S. Senator Roger Wicker appeared as the third lecturer for the academic year.

### OKRA SCHOLARS

- The inaugural class of Okra Scholars was announced this year, funded through a \$1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. DSU is one of only 24 institutions in the country to receive a USDE First in the World grant.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

- Delta State continues to build its international partnerships. Visitors from Perm, Russia, visited for a week of meetings with students and faculty to explore ways to broaden exchange opportunities for students.
- In May, Delta State students will make their first visit to Lublin, Poland, to visit John Paul II Catholic University.
- Both President LaForge and Delta State Provost Charles McAdams made trips to Cuba this academic year to explore the opportunity for educational partnerships.

### CAMPUS RADIO STATION

- Thanks to a number of private donations of funding, equipment, and expertise, Delta State has launched its own low-powered radio station - 88.1 WDSW-LP. The signal is broadcasted worldwide through an online app, and student involvement in the station's programming and operations is expanding.

### SERVICE AND OUTREACH

- The Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial Information Technologies worked with volunteers to provide map-making to aid relief efforts in Nepal following a series of devastating earthquakes in April 2015.
- In February, Delta State hosted Tech Savvy, a one day STEM conference for girls in grades six through nine that provided hands-on activities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

### RANKINGS, HONORS AND AFFORDABILITY

- Delta State was named one of the Top 10 Colleges with the most affordable Out-of-State tuition and fees by *U.S. News and World Report*.
- The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing was ranked first in the country for providing online RN to BSN education by RNtoBSN.org.
- The School of Nursing also was listed as the second most affordable online master's degree program in nursing by BestMastersDegrees.com.
- The independent college search and rankings website College Choice recently tabbed Delta State as No. 15 on its 2016 ranking of Most Affordable Online Graduate Schools for Master's Degrees.
- Ranked alongside some of the nation's largest institutions, Delta State University was recently included in a list of Top 20 Online Master's of Elementary Education Degree Programs.
- Delta State University's Robert E. Smith School of Nursing was recently recognized in *U.S. News & World Report's* ranking of "Best Online Graduate Nursing Programs."
- Online programs ranked 8th overall for their quality and affordability by SR Education Group. Individually, four different programs ranked in the top five including counseling, business, education and Master of Business Administration.
- Best College Values recently ranked the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing program in its national list for Top 10 Most Affordable online Master's Degrees in Nursing. Delta State came in at No. 5 and was the only program from Mississippi to make the ranking.
- Delta State's online graduate program in Nursing ranked third in the nation in a recent list from TopMastersInHealthcare.com.
- Delta State University ranked 14th in a list of the top 50 Most Affordable Small Colleges for a Master's in Education in a recent national ranking by Top Education Degrees.