

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

---

**Meeting date: February 16, 2015**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Wayne Blansett, Mr. Keith Fulcher, Dr. Debbie Heslep, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Mr. Steve McClellan, Ms. Marilyn Read, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jeff Slagell, Mr. Mikel Sykes, Dr. Myrtis Tabb, and Ms. Claire Cole (for Ms. Leigh Emerson).

**Absent:** Dr. David Hebert

**Guests:** Mr. Mike Bomhoff and Mr. Peter Reeves, Sightlines  
Mr. Greg Korb, Director of Facilities Management

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on February 16, 2015. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge announced Mr. Kelvin Davis as the new Director of Student Business Services.
- President LaForge announced that Dr. Jim Borsig, current president at Mississippi University for Women, will be the new Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Commissioner. He will begin his term on April 15, 2015.
- President LaForge announced that the Governor plans to appoint Mr. Chip Morgan to the IHL Board, and his term will begin in May.
- President LaForge met with Webster Franklin and other business leaders from Tunica County last week. He will attend the grand opening of The Gateway to the Blues Museum on Thursday at 3:30 pm.
- President LaForge was the guest speaker for the Rotary Club in Hernando on Wednesday.
- President LaForge met with James Huffman, CEO of Baptist Hospital-DeSoto. He has an interest in visiting our campus, possible internships with our Robert E. Smith School of Nursing, and hiring our graduates.
- President LaForge asked for input from Cabinet members regarding the current weather situation. Cabinet members agreed to close the University at 3:00 pm and re-open at 10:00 am on Tuesday, with classes resuming at 10:50 am.
- President LaForge met with faculty members on Friday in the Union for the First Friday Series.
- President LaForge met with Margaret Ferris White and Kim Sessums to look at a model of the Boo Ferriss statue. He visited Coach Ferriss in the hospital over the weekend, and reported that Coach Ferriss is doing better and hopes to come home soon.
- The annual Higher Education Appreciation Day, Working for Academic Excellence (HEADWAE) luncheon will be held on Tuesday in Jackson. Mr. Mikel Sykes, SGA President, and Dr. Rebecca Hochradel, Chair of the Division of Management, Marketing, and Business Administration, will be recognized from Delta State.

- President LaForge will be the guest speaker at Mississippi Delta Community College’s Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony on Tuesday night. He will be unable to attend the farewell dinner for Commissioner Hank Bounds because of this conflict.
- Dr. Noah Lelek, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, will be recognized at the IHL Board Meeting on Wednesday with the IHL Diversity Award for Excellence. He was also President LaForge’s guest for this week’s Fireside Chat.
- The Hearin Foundation’s pre-proposals are due this week, and we will submit three:
  1. MS Entrepreneurial Center for Creative Activities (MECCA) incubator
  2. TFA Alumni Internship and Graduate Study Program
  3. Geospatial Technologies as an Economic Force Multiplier
- President LaForge will introduce Mr. David Abney at Greenwood’s Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting. Mr. Abney is being inducted into their Hall of Fame.
- President LaForge announced the Alumni Association will have their Board meeting on Friday in the Simmons Room.
- President LaForge announced that Delta State has sponsored a table for Junior Auxiliary’s annual Charity Ball event on Friday evening.
- President LaForge asked Dr. Heslep to give her weekly enrollment report. She said that she is pleased with the transfer numbers. The application fees are up by 33% for transfers, and the applications fees for first time freshman are positive for the first time. She will have a better comparison on Friday. Dr. Heslep announced March 24 as the tentative date for our “Preview Day in Jackson” (similar to the recent Memphis event).

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Mr. Slagell, seconded by Dr. Blansett, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on February 10, 2015.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Sightlines Presentation ..... Mr. McClellan**

The IHL Board hired Sightlines to review the buildings at all eight of the universities, and to come up with a plan to keep buildings up-to-date and functional. Sightlines conducted a “Return on Physical Assets” analysis, and Mike Bomhoff and Mr. Peter Reeves presented their findings to the Cabinet. They compared Delta State to seven other institutions and looked at the following: How has our campus been changing?, How has our campus been funded?; and, How have our facilities been performing? They reported that 65% of our campus is over 25 years old, which makes our buildings high risk. Also, 57% of our campus was constructed during low quality periods. We have a significant amount of deferred maintenance and upcoming needs, and it is getting increasingly more difficult to get ahead of the issues. We need to establish a plan to keep up with maintenance on our younger facilities and to catch up on our older ones. We also need to divide the campus into different investment categories, which will allow us to maximize our investments.

**BUSINESS**

**Honorary Degree ..... Dr. Roberts**

The Honorary Degree Committee met last week, and made a recommendation to President LaForge regarding the recipient for the May 2015 Commencement. Cabinet members agreed with the recommendation. We will submit the recommendation to IHL for approval at their Board meeting in March. The recommendation will be kept confidential until the Board takes action.

**Discussion**

- Dr. Tabb announced the Ellucian Contract will be on the February IHL Board Agenda for approval. If approved, the contract will begin on June 1, 2015.
- Mr. Sykes announced that he and Mr. Caleb Chambers were chosen for an internship this summer at the Washington Center.
- Mr. Sykes announced election results for Mr. and Mrs. DSU and class favorites. He said 18% of the student body voted for a total of 601 votes cast.
- Mr. Sykes shared with Cabinet Members information about a video project they have underway, which will be shown at a pre-conference event during the Race Conference. It was developed based on survey results taken earlier in the year.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Student Lunch with Legislators (Brown Bag), Tuesday, February, 24, 11:30 am-1:00 pm
- The Great Gatsby, Thursday, February 26, 7:30 pm, BPAC
- Go Green Weekend, March 27-28, Campus
- Race Conference, March 30-31
- Retirement and Service Award Program, April 24, 2:00 pm. Union 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lobby

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, February 23, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Student Retention Initiatives (Charles)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm.