

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: March 21, 2016**

**Members in attendance:** President William LaForge, Dr. Libby Carlson, Dr. E.E. Caston, Dr. Leslie Fadiga-Stewart, Mr. Keith Fulcher, Mr. Ronnie Mayers, Dr. Charles McAdams, Ms. Marilyn Read, Dr. Michelle Roberts, Mr. Jamie Rutledge, and Mr. Mikel Sykes (Ms. Claire Cole – recorder)

**Members not in attendance:** None

**Guests:** Dr. Eyad Youssef, President-Elect, Faculty Senate

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on March 21, 2016. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with President LaForge presiding.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- President LaForge asked Dr. Fadiga-Stewart to introduce her guest. Dr. Fadiga-Stewart introduced Dr. Eyad Youssef, President-Elect of Faculty Senate. She stated he will attend Cabinet meetings to begin the transition process.
- President LaForge informed Cabinet Members of the deaths of Judge William Bizzell and Mr. Albert McClellan (Mr. Steve McClellan's father).
- President LaForge informed Cabinet Members he will receive a report from the Vice President for Student Affairs Committee this week regarding our three finalists. President LaForge asked Dr. McAdams to give an update on the Vice President for Finance and Administration search. Dr. McAdams stated the search was narrowed to two candidates, Mr. Jamie Rutledge and Ms. Pamela Harrison. Both candidates will be on campus this week for interviews.
- President LaForge spoke to the Bolivar County Board of Supervisors recently, and is scheduled to speak to the Cleveland Board of Aldermen in a couple of weeks to give an update on DSU activities in an effort to maintain a strong town and gown relationship. Also, President LaForge met with local mayors Mr. Errick Simmons (Greenville) and Mr. Harvey Green (Renova).
- President LaForge met with Ms. Katie Blount and other representatives from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and Bureau of Buildings regarding the Young-Mauldin Dining Hall renovation project. Delta State wants to include two courtyards in the remodeling of the Dining Hall. The Department of Archives and History is considering the request.
- President LaForge stated the Grand Opening of the GRAMMY Museum Mississippi was a grand event, and he shared his appreciation for offices staying open during the weekend's events.
- President LaForge visited with several student groups during the last few weeks: Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, and God's Anointed Voices. He is scheduled to speak to Pan-Hellenic Council on Thursday.
- President LaForge gave an update on student Miss Anna Claire Stokes. President LaForge spoke with Anna Claire's mother last week, and she stated that Anna Claire has moved to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. She is in a regular room and is beginning therapy.

- President LaForge had his quarterly meeting with Diversity Committee Chair Arlene Sanders. He stated the Diversity Committee has been working hand-in-hand with the Race Conference Committee to prepare for this year’s conference.
- President LaForge traveled to Jackson last week for donor visits, IEO and IHL Board meetings, and Student Legislative Day. President LaForge visited with donor prospects Billy Pat Thomas and Ambassador John Palmer. The IEO meeting focused on the new weapons policy for university campuses. The policy states that no faculty, staff, or student is permitted to carry a weapon on campus. Each university is in the process of settling on which areas are deemed public. President LaForge thanked Mr. Sykes and Mr. Davlon Miller for their work in hosting Student Legislative Day, and he asked Dr. Roberts to give a report on the event. Dr. Roberts stated the legislators and staff were very complimentary of our students, and that this is one of their favorite events.
- President LaForge spoke to the Faculty Senate last week to give them an update on the State’s budget issues and the new weapon’s policy for universities.
- President LaForge met last Friday with Community College counselors from East Central CC, Hinds CC, Holmes CC, and Mississippi Gulf Coast CC. The President stated the biggest deficit of this program is that all Mississippi community colleges aren’t represented. President LaForge received advice from one of the counselors to write a note to the Presidents of community colleges not in attendance to let them know that their counselors were missed.
- President LaForge asked Mr. Mayers to give an update on Athletics. Mr. Mayers stated twenty one members of the swimming and diving team went to the National Championship and eighteen made All-American. The men’s team finished eighth and the women’s team finished 10<sup>th</sup>. The Lady Statesmen basketball team lost in the first round of playoffs to Nova Southeastern University. He stated they had a great season. The men’s and women’s tennis teams celebrated Senior Day on Saturday. The baseball team won all three of their games, and the softball team won two of their games. Mr. Mayers stated the softball team has had its best season in the history of the program.
- President LaForge discussed this week’s schedule. President LaForge invited Cabinet Members to attend the Colloquia lecture on Tuesday evening. U.S. Senator Roger Wicker will speak on “Working Together in a Divided Government.” President LaForge asked Cabinet Members to inform their circles of influence of the event and encourage them to attend. President LaForge will travel to Ruleville on Wednesday to meet with potential donor Mr. Hugh Arant. President LaForge will meet with the owner of Peter’s Pottery, Mr. Peter Woods, on Thursday. President LaForge reminded Cabinet Members of the Good Friday holiday this Friday, March 25.
- President LaForge asked Dr. McAdams to give an update on enrollment. Dr. McAdams stated we are on the path to having an increase of new students in the fall semester. The application fees and number of provisional admits for first time freshmen and transfer students have increased greatly from this time last year. He stated the recruiting office is utilizing new strategies to get students to commit to Delta State.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion by Dr. McAdams, seconded by Ms. Read, all Cabinet Members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on February 29, 2016.

**CABINET TOPIC**

**Visioning Process Presentation .....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams reminded Cabinet Members of the six questions used to guide the planning process in reaching academic excellence: (1) What should we do to recognize and encourage our best students?

(2) What should we do to improve student writing? (3) What should we do to create a capstone experience for every student in every degree? (4) What should we do to create the next generation of scholars? (5) What should we do to support professional development of faculty and to recruit and retain excellent faculty? (6) What should we do to raise the perception of academic quality of our programs?

Dr. McAdams stated that Delta State is committed to providing quality academic experiences for all students by creating a learning environment that supports and challenges our high-achieving students while at the same time providing a path for all students to be successful. The following strategies were collaboratively developed by faculty to create this environment and increase academic excellence.

- (1) Establish a Center for Teaching and Learning to organize and coordinate professional development. This Center is critical to faculty development and to show we are committed to learning. Dr. McAdams estimates this will cost the University \$75,000 - \$100,000 to cover the costs of a coordinator, graduate assistant, and operations. He stated this strategy was mentioned the most during the planning process.
- (2) Require all students in a degree program to participate in a capstone experience. Each department and dean is responsible to see to it that each student completes a capstone experience. Dr. McAdams believes this strategy would not cost the University any additional funds.
- (3) Integrate discipline-specific writing assignments in upper division/major classes. Professors hold their students accountable for written communication within their discipline, so students should be given more writing assignments in relation to their field of study to prepare them for life after graduation. Faculty members will need to participate in professional development courses in order to be able to implement this program.
- (4) Create a Student/Faculty Spotlight. Delta State's best students and faculty members need to be recognized through "Spotlights" and "Brag Facts" in marketing materials and display cases in academic buildings and other media outlets. The cost to the university would be \$10,000 for boards and cases to put into academic buildings.
- (5) Increase faculty research and grant writing support. This strategy would give release time and significant support for research for our faculty members. The estimated cost is \$50,000-\$75,000.
- (6) Student research and support funds to support travel, research, and the student research showcase. An initial \$13,000 is needed to begin this initiative. The funds needed to grow this initiative are \$25,000-\$30,000 per year, including the cost of the research showcase.
- (7) Increase marketing of the Honors Program to cultivate more interest for the program.

Other ideas to increase academic excellence in the next three to five years are establishing a new faculty mentorship program; piloting a living/learning community for freshmen, which would allow students with the same major to live together; increasing resources in the Roberts-LaForge Library for faculty and students; and, cultivating positive relationships with our state media. Two additional units that can help increase academic excellence are Enrollment Management and the Student Success Center. Enrollment Management can assist by targeting high school applicants with an ACT score of 24 or greater and Phi Theta Kappa members. The Student Success Center strives to improve retention of DSU Students and can continue to do so by improving and strengthening recently implemented retention efforts such as the S.O.S. Early Alert system and First Year Seminar. With additional resources, the Student Success Center can give funds to students in need, add additional tutors and counselors, and expand recruiting efforts for international students.

**BUSINESS**

**Action**

**Contracts Policy (Final Reading) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge reminded Cabinet Members that the proposed changes include adding the statement, “and are subject to the Anti-Kickback Act of 1986” to the Policy Statement and adding “Anti-Kickback Act of 1986” to the “Related Documents” section of the Contracts Policy to better protect the university when entering into binding contracts.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the Contracts Policy for a final reading and seconded by Mr. Mayers. **The motion was approved.**

**Access to University Information Technology Resources policy (First Reading) ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the “Access to University Information Technology Resources” policy for a first reading. The policy specifies Delta State will provide access to University owned technology resources for the purposes of learning, service, and research if used consistently with the University mission. Employees are provided access to University email as a means of communication and should use this email account for official business only. Employees are granted additional access to technology based on need. An employee’s access to University systems is terminated upon leaving the University. If an employee requires special access to University systems beyond employment, it must be recommended by their supervisor and approved by the Vice President of their area. An extension lasting more than six months must be for a definite period of time and be approved by the President.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the Access to University Information Technology Resources policy for a first reading and seconded by Dr. Roberts. **The motion was approved.**

**Retiree Benefits..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge brought to Cabinet the Retiree Benefits policy to discuss an addition to the benefits. If requested, retirees can receive an email address that will provide limited access to the University email system. The email address will read: username@retiree.deltastate.edu.

**Motion:** Moved by Mr. Rutledge to approve the addition of a limited access email address for retirees to the Retiree Benefits policy and seconded by Dr. McAdams. **The motion was approved.**

**Discussion**

**Making prospective students feel welcome .....Dr. McAdams**

Dr. McAdams stated Delta State is working diligently to recruit prospective students, and the University needs to continue its diligence until the student is committed to attending Delta State. He proposed the idea of making prospective students feel more welcome while on campus. To begin this process, three parking spaces in the west parking lot of Kent Wyatt Hall will be reserved for prospective students. The reserved signs will have a space for prospective students’ names that can be interchanged. Dr. McAdams asked Cabinet Members to encourage their colleagues to welcome prospective student they see on campus. Prospective students and parents will appreciate an employee taking time to speak to them and welcome them to campus. If any Cabinet Members have any suggestions on ways to make prospective students feel welcome, Dr. McAdams asked that they inform Dr. Debbie Heslep of their suggestions.

**SGA Resolutions ..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge met with SGA Vice President Allie Rose Parker to discuss four resolutions drafted by the Student Senate. The first resolution asked for lights to be added to the Intramural field. Mr. Rutledge stated this resolution was not feasible due to the fact that different sports are played on the field and each have different lighting needs; however, a sprinkler system is in the works for the Intramural fields. The second resolution was to provide toilet seat covers in all bathrooms across campus and provide trash bags for receptacles in female bathroom stalls. The University has two types of toilets on campus: flush valve and tank. The flush valve toilets can dispose of the cover properly, but the tank toilets cannot. Toilet seat covers are being added to bathroom stalls containing the flush valve toilets. The trash bags for receptacles in female bathroom stalls are being added throughout campus. The third resolution was the addition of a recycling program. Mr. Rutledge wants to educate students on recycling before starting a campus wide recycling campaign. A pilot program will take place in a few dormitories to determine readiness. The last resolution is to work with Aramark on the all- access meal plan, which allows for unlimited meals in the cafeteria. However, students are only being allowed to swipe their card three times a day. Mr. Rutledge is working with Aramark to correct this matter.

**Audit Report..... Mr. Rutledge**

Mr. Rutledge reported Delta State had to complete its third 100% audit in three years. The State inventory auditor began his audit on February 23, and they had to locate 5,776 items worth over \$20 million. Only one item was not located during the audit. The book value on the missing item is \$3.90. Mr. Rutledge expressed his appreciation for everyone’s cooperation with the auditor and locating all items on their inventory lists.

**Other Discussion**

- President LaForge stated the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi has agreed to fund our purchase of the Haven and Transit Financial Wellness programs from EverFi for our use with the First Year Seminar program.
- President LaForge has asked his Vice Presidents to encourage their staff members to attend the Winning the Race Conference on Monday and Tuesday. Each office needs to remain open and staffed appropriately. President LaForge announced Cabinet will meet on Monday at its regular time, but he told Cabinet Members to attend the Conference if they need to be there.
- Ms. Read announced the Wayne Blansett Staff Development Day will be held on May 12.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Colloquia Lecture Series, Senator Roger Wicker, March 22, 6:00 p.m., Jobe Auditorium
- Winning the Race Conference, March 28-29
- International Business Symposium, March 30-31
- Beatles 2016: From Cavern to the Candlestick Symposium, April 1-2, GRAMMY Museum Mississippi
- Go Green Weekend, April 1-3
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- IHL Board meeting at DSU, April 21, 2016

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, March 28, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – Budget Priorities

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.