

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Minutes

Meeting date: August 24, 2026

Members in attendance: Dr. Dan Ennis, Dr. Curtis Coleman, Dr. Edwin Craft, Ms. Evelyn Greer, Dr. Leslie Griffin, Mr. Mike Kinnison, Dr. Eddie Lovin, Dr. Suzette Matthews, Ms. Collins Phelps, and Dr. Jon Westfall (recorder – Ms. Claire Cole)

Members not in attendance: None

Guests: None

Call to Order: A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on August 24, 2026. The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Ennis presiding.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Lovin and seconded by Dr. Matthews, all Cabinet members present and participating voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on August 10, 2026.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Dr. Matthews shared preparations are underway for next weekend's Pig Pickin'. All hands are on deck to ensure the event is organized and ready for a successful weekend.
- Dr. Lovin shared that Okratation concluded last week with an excellent turnout for events and activities. Attention has now shifted to this week's Welcome Week programming. Sorority recruitment concluded with 21 participants completing the recruitment process, and an additional six students joining through Continuous Open Bidding (COB). Informal fraternity recruitment is currently underway with 25 students signed up as of the second day and additional interest expected.
- Ms. Greer announced NPHC Week is September 8-12, and the first annual NPHC Greek Picnic is September 12.
- Dr. Craft presented to the Finance Committee of the IHL Board last week about his findings regarding the funding formula, which is expected to be a key topic of discussion at the September retreat. The Commissioner is scheduled to present the proposed funding formula discussions to state legislators in October. If the current proposal remains unchanged, the university is expected to be held harmless under the revised formula. Renovations to the Wyatt Gym floor are currently underway. Bids for all flat-roof replacement projects are scheduled to be opened on August 27, and project work is expected to begin this fall. Roofing work on the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing building is anticipated to begin within the next one to two weeks. The project was delayed due to extreme heat conditions. Efforts to address fraudulent enrollment and "ghost student" activity continue. Multiple safeguards and monitoring measures have been implemented to identify and prevent fraudulent enrollment practices.

Budget and enrollment indicators remain positive. Revenue generated through assessed student fees is approximately \$600,000 higher than the same period last year and was nearly \$1 million higher prior to the purge. Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment has increased at a greater rate than overall headcount. Current revenue levels are approximately \$1 million above pre-COVID figures.

- Dr. Coleman provided an overview of Fall 2026 enrollment data. Overall enrollment is currently 12 students higher than at the same point last year. First-time freshman enrollment is down by 75 students. The target remains to maintain an entering freshman class of approximately 300 students. First-time graduate student enrollment is down by 76 students; however, overall graduate enrollment has increased. Transfer student enrollment is up by 20 students compared to last year. Returning student enrollment has increased by 95 students compared to last year. Fall 2027 recruitment and admissions activities have been added to Slate. Discussion was held regarding best practices of enrollment forecasting within Slate. The possibility of using Takin' Care of Business attendance as a confirmation indicator was discussed. Additional consideration will be given to identifying a more reliable confirmation measure. Questions were raised regarding whether students who do not ultimately enroll should be removed from confirmed enrollment counts to improve reporting accuracy. The upcoming Office of Admissions events are the Counselor Luncheon on September 9, Open House on October 1, and GEAR UP College Day on November 13.
- Dr. Westfall shared the Faculty Senate had their first meeting the week prior to school starting. Senators shared their concern over "ghost students" and no-show students. Dr. Westfall attended the University Faculty Senates Association of Mississippi meeting, and there was discussion over the possibility of 90 hour degree programs being offered and accepted by accrediting bodies.
- Mr. Kinnison gave an update on Athletics. The first two weeks of the semester have been particularly busy for Athletics. Due to ongoing facility issues, athletic operations remain spread across multiple buildings; however, there is hope that teams and staff will be able to return to their primary facilities soon. A permanent chiller was installed this morning, and this marks a significant step toward restoring normal operations. Athletic participation numbers remain strong, and team rosters are in good shape. Three athletic programs begin official competition this week. The football team will travel to Northeastern State University on Friday for a 6:00 p.m. kickoff. The game will be broadcast on 106.5 FM and streamed through the visiting team's website. The women's soccer team opens its season this week in Florida with a game against Saint Leo University on Thursday and Eckerd University on Saturday. The men's soccer team will host Harding University on Thursday and Central Baptist College on Saturday.
- Dr. Griffin shared updates about Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs had a successful opening faculty meeting with a practical session focused on the use of AI in higher education. Faculty development and training initiatives are ongoing to support instructors as they prepare for their roles and responsibilities throughout the academic year. A search for the next Dean of the College of Business is being initiated. The goal is to complete the search process and finalize the appointment by November. Dr. Griffin shared a PowerPoint presentation created by Director of the Student Success Center, Ms. Kristen Land. Ms. Land shared updates regarding AI powered analytics within the LMS system (Canvas); turnitin clarity, a composition space that provides transparency in the student writing process; and, Slate Student Success is in the expanded data integration phase.

- Ms. Phelps shared the Administrative Staff Council meets next week for their monthly meeting, and one of their topics of discussion will be their Thanksgiving and Christmas projects.
- Dr. Ennis attended the Institutional Executive Officer meeting, the IHL Board of Trustees meeting, and the MS Horizons Workforce Strategy Symposium last week. Dr. Ennis is speaking to all First Year Seminar classes this year about maintaining academic progress and graduating in four years. Dr. and Mrs. Ennis will host the Statesmen Pioneers at their home tonight. The Exchange Club of Cleveland has asked Dr. Ennis to be their speaker on Thursday. The Department of Education issued a national call to action to university presidents and governing boards urging them to reaffirm higher education's foundational commitments to academic excellence, pathbreaking research, and national service. The MS Institutions of Higher Learning are working together to release their response to the call of action. Dr. Lovin is serving as part of the committee working on the response.

CABINET TOPIC

None

BUINESS

Action

Adjunct Faculty policy (final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Adjunct Faculty policy to Cabinet for a final reading. This policy outlines the procedures to govern practices at Delta State University related to search processes, appointments, contracts, and conditions of employment for adjunct faculty. The goal of the policy is to assure a high quality of instruction by individuals with appropriate credentials and experience and to provide a set of baseline procedures that will lead to continuous improvement in the status of adjunct faculty at the university.

**All policies to be voted upon in bulk. The action taken can be read under the Instructional Resources policy.*

Academic Records Retention policy (final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Academic Records Retention policy to Cabinet for a final reading. This policy defines the minimum retention periods, maintenance, storage, and authorized destruction of official academic records maintained by Delta State University. The policy shall be administered in accordance with applicable federal and state law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Mississippi Public Records Act, and other applicable records management requirements.

**All policies to be voted upon in bulk. The action taken can be read under the Instructional Resources policy.*

Faculty Positions policy (final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Faculty Positions policy to Cabinet for a final reading. This policy defines and establishes the qualifications for faculty positions at Delta State University. Faculty positions are distinguished by type and rank, with qualifications consistent with the University's mission, disciplinary standards, and accrediting expectations.

**All policies to be voted upon in bulk. The action taken can be read under the Instructional Resources policy.*

Grievance policy (final reading)..... Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Grievance policy to Cabinet for a final reading. Delta State University provides a formal process through which students may seek resolution of academic grievances related to instructional decisions or academic actions that directly affect the student's academic record, academic standing, degree progress, or continued enrollment. This policy applies to academic matters such as grading disputes, alleged arbitrary or capricious evaluation, or other academic decisions affecting a student's academic standing. Non-academic grievances are addressed through other university procedures. The purpose of this policy is to ensure fairness, due process, and compliance with applicable federal regulations, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) policies, and the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation DBA the Commission on Colleges and Universities.

**All policies to be voted upon in bulk. The action taken can be read under the Instructional Resources policy.*

Instructional Resources policy (final reading) Dr. Griffin

On behalf of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Instructional Resources policy to Cabinet for a final reading. Delta State University provides or facilitates access to instructional publications, digital learning formats, instructional materials, and academic support services to assist faculty and students in the instructional process. Some instructional materials, including textbooks, courseware, access codes, and other required resources, may require student purchase or payment of applicable fees. Instructional resources should be provided in a manner that supports student access and complies with applicable accessibility requirements.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffin to consider the proposed policy revisions in bulk and approve them as a single motion and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion: Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the revisions to the Adjunct Faculty, Academic Records Retention, Faculty Positions, Grievance, and Instructional Resources policies and seconded by Dr. Westfall. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

None

INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:

- Redistricting Hearings, September 1, 6:00 p.m., Bologna Performing Arts Center
- Pig Pickin' Weekend, September 4-5
- Delta State vs. Wingate University, September 5, 6:00 p.m., Parker Field-McCool Stadium
- Labor Day Holiday, September 7

NEXT MEETING:

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.