

# DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

### *Minutes*

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**Meeting date: June 29, 2026**

**Members in attendance:** Dr. Dan Ennis, Dr. Curtis Coleman, Dr. Edwin Craft, 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:** Ms. Evelyn Greer

**Guests:** Mr. Ray Wolfe

**Call to Order:** A regular meeting of the President's Cabinet was held in the President's Conference Room on June 29, 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 May 18, 2026.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

- Dr. Matthews shared updates for the Office of Marketing. A new contract with Collegiate Licensing Company is being negotiated. The Office of Marketing is contracting with Hunt Marketing Firm and Carnegie to assist with marketing and brand management. The Office of Marketing staff is working on the style guidelines for university branding, and it will be finalized soon. Delta State has seven new billboards highlighting the university throughout the state. The Social Media Specialist position within the Office of Marketing is being reworked to include a wider array of responsibilities and will be posted for hiring soon. The Delta State Foundation is preparing to close out the fiscal year. As of today, the Foundation has had its best financial year since 2023.
- Dr. Lovin announced lights have been added to the William H. Young Outdoor Recreation Area. The Forest Wyatt Center is undergoing renovations, including updates to the fitness center and gymnasium. Okra Threads continues to receive donations. The space is undergoing renovations before students arrive in August. The Statesmen Shelf is open three days a week, and students continue to drop in as needed. Housing and Residence Life is going digital. All applications and records will be maintained digitally going forward.
- Dr. Craft invited Cabinet members to attend the BPAC Annual Member Reception on July 7 at The Farm Rows. Dr. Craft announced construction continues on the HVAC system in Ewing Hall and Walter Sillers Coliseum. Trees are being planted around campus to replace ones removed earlier this year. A tree in front of Roberts-LaForge Library is dead and will be removed soon. The fiscal year ends tomorrow, and the finance and accounting staff are working on the MBR report and finalizing the financial statements for publication. Upon completion of the MBR and publication of the financial statements, the annual financial audit will begin. Lastly, the university is changing its contract software to Agiloft.

- Dr. Craft invited Mr. Ray Wolfe to Cabinet to discuss potential threats to the university's firewall protections.
- Dr. Coleman shared an update on fall enrollment. Delta State has seen a year-over-year increase for four consecutive terms, and Dr. Coleman is optimistic that this fall will be the fifth. Recruiters received over 6,000 inquiries this year, up 30% from last year. Applications increased by approximately 1,000 from last year, and admissions have increased by 47% from this time last year. A virtual Takin' Care of Business session is scheduled for tomorrow, and 245 students are registered to participate.
- Dr. Westfall announced that grades for the first summer session are due today, and the second summer session begins tomorrow. He is working on the Faculty Senate schedule for the year and planning a meeting a week before the semester begins.
- Mr. Kinnison shared that the Athletics Department is experiencing personnel changes. The coaching staff is recruiting potential student-athletes and hosting the student-athletes on campus this summer. The football team returns next week for voluntary summer workouts, and they will remain on campus until July 29. The football, cross country, and soccer teams will return the week of August 5 to begin practicing for their seasons.
- Dr. Griffin shared her experience at the Slate Summit last week. She announced the Mississippi Department of Education extended the teacher residency grant for an additional two years. The Ag simulator was delivered, is being built, and will be tested soon. Dr. Griffin will begin searching for a new dean for the College of Business as the College of Business and Aviation is splitting, with Dr. Joe Childs serving as dean of the College of Aviation. Academic Affairs is frequently discussing AI use, and representatives are meeting with a consultant to review policies and recommendations for syllabi. A faculty member from Mississippi State University, well-versed in AI use at the course level, will be the speaker at Faculty Development Day in August.
- Ms. Phelps announced the Wayne Blansett Staff Appreciation Week was well received by staff members. She is looking to expand the planning committee to enhance the experience of staff members for next year. Staff Council meets next week for their July meeting.
- Dr. Ennis announced the Board of Trustees adopted a new funding formula at the June IHL Board meeting. The new formula will reward enrollment and degree production. He met with the newly formed Scholarship Task Force and charged them with developing policies and procedures to reduce the number of students receiving four to six foundation and institutional scholarships, thereby expanding the reach of scholarship dollars to more students. Dr. Ennis travels to Birmingham tomorrow for in-person interviews to fill the next GSC Commissioner position. The next Cabinet meeting will be Monday, July 13.

#### **CABINET TOPIC**

None

#### **BUINESS**

#### **Action**

**Applicant Agent for MEMA and FEMA for Disaster #4489..... Dr. Craft**

Dr. Craft requested Cabinet members appoint Mr. Cecil Barnett, Director of Facilities Management, the applicant agent for disaster #4489 for the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Craft to approve Mr. Cecil Barnett as the applicant agent for disaster #4489 and

seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

**Revisions to the 2026-2027 Academic Calendar..... Dr. Griffin**

Upon the approval of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Academic Calendar for the 2026-2027 academic year to Cabinet for approval. The recommended revisions to the 2026-2027 Academic Calendar are:

- Removal – Summer Session 2026 dates
- Addition – All progress grades recorded by faculty by 12:00 noon; September 14
- Revision – Early spring and spring intersession semester registration begins on September 28 instead of October 26
- Addition – Fall commencement; December 10 and December 11
- Addition – Fall First, Second, and Third Five-Week Session calendars
- Addition – Fall First and Second Half Session calendars
- Addition – All progress grades record by faculty by 12:00 noon; February 15
- Revision – Early summer intersession, summer, and fall registration begins on March 1 instead of March 29
- Addition – Spring commencement; May 6 and May 7
- Addition – Spring First, Second, and Third Five-Week Session calendars
- Addition – Spring First and Second Half Session calendars
- Addition – Summer Session 2027 Full Term calendar
- Revision – Summer First and Second Half Session instead of Summer I and Summer II.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the revised 2026-2027 Academic Calendar and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

**2027-2028 Academic Calendar ..... Dr. Griffin**

Upon the approval of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the 2027-2028 Academic Calendar to Cabinet for approval. Dr. Griffin announced the recommended changes made to the 2026-2027 Academic Calendar were implemented into the 2027-2028 Academic Calendar. Those changes included the removal of the summer term at the opening of the academic calendar, the addition of progress grades recorded by faculty members, an earlier start to early registration, the addition of first five-week, second five-week, third five-week, first half-session, and second half-session calendars, an additional day added to commencement, and summer session split into first and second half sessions.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the 2027-2028 Academic Calendar and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

**Academic Offerings policy (revised - final reading) ..... Dr. Griffin**

Upon the approval of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised Academic Offerings policy to Cabinet for a final reading. Delta State University offers a range of degrees, majors, and minors, each with specific requirements approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and in accordance with policies of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Board of Trustees. This policy establishes the framework for managing academic offerings and class scheduling to ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance with state and accreditation standards. The substantive Academic Offerings policy edits include: the last day to add a course is the fifth day instead of the seventh day of a full semester term; the last day to add a course is the second class day of a summer term; the last day to add a course is the third day for five-week part-of term; the last day to add a course is the fourth day for

seven-week part-of-term; the last day to present a request for withdrawal from a course will be the seventeenth day for a five-week part of term; and, the last day to present a request for withdrawal from a course will be the twenty fourth day for a seven-week part of term.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the revised Academic Offerings policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Matthews. The motion passed unanimously.

**International Student policy (revised - final reading) ..... Dr. Griffin**

Upon the approval of the Academic Council, Dr. Griffin brought the revised International Student policy to Cabinet for a final reading. International students may receive assistance from the International Student Services, a Division of the Student Success Center, in meeting the requirements for attendance at Delta State University as outlined in the procedures below. While this policy outlines the University's expectations and available support, students are responsible for complying with all applicable immigration laws and regulations. International students make up a growing segment of our DSU population. In order to meet the special needs of these individuals, the Office of International Student Services has been designated by the University to provide resources and support. All international students are responsible for the following:

1. Submit a passport, visa, and I-20 to the International Student Services staff at the beginning of each semester.
2. Notify the International Student Services staff immediately of a physical address change and/or email change.
3. Pursue a full course of study. For undergraduate study, a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester, and for graduate, a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester is required. Reduced course loads may be authorized by the Designated School Official (DSO) under certain circumstance. Failure to maintain the minimum requirement or failure to obtain approval from the International Student Services staff will result in a violation of terms of the visa status and make the student "out of status" with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
4. Keep passport valid at all times.
5. Have the I-20 verified and endorsed as needed by the Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) or a DSO before departing the United States of America for any reason.
6. Notify the Office of International Student Services whenever there is a change in major.
7. Understand the types of employment available to F-1 Visa which is limited to no more than 20 hours on campus. Students with F-1 Visa may have several types of authorized employment (on-campus employment, CPT, OPT, etc.), but must receive any required prior authorization before employment begins.
8. Obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) if working on or off campus.
9. Notify and communicate with the DSO to maintain compliance when seeking OPT/CPT.
10. Maintain valid health insurance.

**Motion:** Moved by Dr. Griffin to approve the revised International Students policy for a final reading and seconded by Dr. Lovin. The motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion**

**FY 2027 Organizational Chart ..... Dr. Ennis**

Dr. Ennis presented the draft FY 2027 organizational chart, and he requested all revisions be sent to Ms. Cole. The final organizational chart will be presented at the next Cabinet meeting for approval.

**INFORMATIONAL/CALENDAR ITEMS:**

- Summer Session II begins, June 30
- Independence Day holiday, Begins July 2 at 12:00 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Next Cabinet Meeting – Monday, July 13, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.
- Next Cabinet Meeting Topic – TBD

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.