



**Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2021**

Meeting began at 2:00 pm

In attendance: Chancellor Hicswa, Brett Weisz, Maureen Brakke, Dr. Jennifer Lynn, Provost Sep Eskandari, Joann Stryker, Michael Bazemore, Susan Simmers, Kathy Kotecki, Dr. Kim Hayworth, and Natalie Preston

“What is Your Why?” Focus Groups:

Inspired by Cabinet Retreat material taken from Simon Sinek’s book *Start With Why*, Chancellor Hicswa will hold focus group sessions for staff, faculty, and students to find out why each group chose MSUB for work, teaching, or study. She will then code the data to inform what MSUB’s operational plan should focus on based on the collective “why”.

COVID Update/ Mask Requirement:

Provost Eskandari announced that the mask requirement in indoor instructional spaces is going well; there has been good compliance in classrooms, making faculty feel safer and able to spend less energy on COVID risk mitigation. Infection rates in Yellowstone County continue to increase. The next COVID Town Hall is next Thursday. 120 people received their first or second vaccine dose at the clinic this week, and a lot of them were community members.

FY 23 Budget:

Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance Susan Simmers announced that the goal for FY23 is an overall decrease in expenses by 10%. We know that some additional funding can be expected for FY23, and that the tuition increase will be taking effect. We hope for an increase in performance based funding as well. Workbooks will be used again by budget managers and directors then turned in to Vice Chancellors and the Budget Office; workbooks are a useful tool in finding areas to make budgetary reductions.

Enrollment Update:

Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success Dr. Kim Hayworth complimented Joann Stryker and her team in Institutional Research for providing not only data, but insight into some of the increases in this year’s enrollment. Dr. Hayworth continues to work with University Communications and Marketing Director Maureen Brakke for social media and marketing strategies to increase enrollment. Residence hall occupancy is up over last year by 7%. Dr. Hayworth is also working with the Provost’s office on retention and graduation; Chancellor Hicswa reiterated that retention and graduation rates are too low and need as much focus as enrollment.

Beer Garden:

Athletic Director Michael Bazemore is working to establish a beer garden for select athletic events as a way to increase vibrancy. The University of Montana does something similar and has had success so they may serve as a model. A slow roll out is recommended and any plan will include security personnel. Dr. Hicswa remarked that the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) legal team is reviewing the plan.

Review of Policy Drafts:

The Cabinet reviewed the draft of the Admin General policy and approved the changes made since its first reading at the previous Cabinet meeting. The policy draft will be presented at the next 'Jacket Leadership Team meeting.

The group also reviewed the Incident Response Procedures and made suggestions for revisions. CIO Brett Weisz will work on the draft to incorporate this input.

FY22 Operational Plan:

The Operational Plan created at the Cabinet Retreat was reviewed and updated as the group went through each section and updated objectives, statuses, and people in the teams working on each goal. The updated plan can be accessed by the Cabinet members in the shared Box folder.

Reminder: Cabinet will meet via Web-ex October 19th**Check- In/ Discussion:**

Chancellor Hicswa discussed the difference between stress, which can increase our productivity, and burnout, which interferes with work and can cause us to be lethargic or withdrawn. She asked everyone to speak about what they are doing for themselves personally, and for those who report to them to prevent burnout on the job. The group each shared some personal and work-related strategies for preventing burnout. Exercise and time with family were the most commonly shared methods for avoiding burnout. The consensus among the group of how to prevent burnout for employees was creating a flexible workplace that allows for work/life balance and encouraging employees to stay home when not feeling well.

Department Updates:**Maureen Brakke:**

University Communications and Marketing Director Maureen Brakke is working to update the marketing messaging for spring; she will be holding focus groups on current marketing materials and improving academic programming pages on the website. The news channel Q2 featured a story on MSUB's enrollment increase (she expects a Gazette article to follow) and the COVID vaccination clinic held on campus earlier this week. Her office is working to update the recording played to callers on hold and will have a draft for feedback ready soon.

Dr. Kim Hayworth:

Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success Dr. Kim Hayworth announced this week is “College Application Week” in the state of Montana making it the ideal time to celebrate our 10% enrollment increase. She is planning two short “pop up” parties with balloons and refreshments. This week, over 3,000 students received ARPA award money that went toward outstanding tuition bills.

Dr. Sep Eskandari:

The Provost is conducting academic program reviews and submitted 15 to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The Center for Teaching and Learning was submitted to OCHE as a Level II item. Preparation for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities is underway. He is working closely with Vice Chancellor Hayworth on retention and graduation.

Susan Simmers:

Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Susan Simmers continues work on long-range building projects, focusing primarily on the roof of the athletics building, campus water main replacement, and landscaping.

Dr. Jennifer Lynn:

Academic Senate Chair Dr. Jennifer Lynn is preparing for the Mid-cycle visit of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). She is involved in the ongoing development of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and is working on HyFlex training.

Kathy Kotecki:

Dean of Students Kathy Kotecki will be traveling to Butte for Student Mental Health Collaboration Training. This effort has brought students struggling with mental health on to the “radar” of those on campus equipped to offer assistance.

Joann Stryker:

Director of Institutional Research Joann Stryker reports that she and her team are working through the next phase of the enrollment report.

Michael Bazemore:

Athletic Director Michael Bazemore announced that there are many games this week, including softball and baseball alumni games. There have been some positive COVID tests among athletes, so the teams are following all protocols to prevent further infection transmission. There continue to be productive discussions regarding building management between Athletics, Health and Human Performance, and Recreation. Athletics will be hosting its annual fundraising dinner auction and Halloween party on October 29th.

Brett Weisz:

The new Information Commons design is in the process of being completed in the Library building, the Vice Chancellors have visited to see how the changes will impact efficiency.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.