



**Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2024 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Meeting began at 2:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, Provost Sep Eskandari, Kim Hayworth, Leslie Weldon, Brandon Irby, Kathy Kotecki, Paula Highlander, Kathleen Thatcher, Suzette Nynas, Mike Bazemore, Krista Montague, and Natalie Preston.

Commissioner's Directive on Transcript Withholding

Chancellor Hicswa reported on a memorandum from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The memo stated that the Department of Education announced that institutions that participate in Title IV financial aid are prohibited from withholding transcripts in specific situations from students who use federal financial aid to pay for their education. The Commissioner addressed additional guidelines in his memo to Montana University System institutions.

Facilities Update

Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (VCAF) Leslie Weldon reported that Business Services and the Mailroom have vacated the ground floor of the administration building in preparation for the building stabilization and water main projects planned to begin in June. Justin Rife, Director of Facilities Services, is working with the contractor to have work start later in the day to minimize impact. Work on the water main project will displace parking south of the building, so those with reserved spots will pay a pro-rated amount. Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Sep Eskandari added that he will ask his team to have a plan for temporary office relocation in case of disruption. Chancellor Hicswa instructed the Cabinet to help make everyone on their teams feel empowered to request accommodations if the work becomes disruptive. Updates to the door-locking plan were discussed. Communications and Marketing will publicize a comprehensive building work schedule when one is completed. Leslie or Justin can be reached with questions.

Cybersecurity Training

Vice Chancellor Weldon announced that approximately 70 percent of employees have completed the annually required "Know B4" cybersecurity training.

Wine and Food Festival Update

Krista Montague announced that the Wine and Food Festival had record breaking success and she thanked everyone who helped. This year's gross was \$604,000 and the anticipated net profit will be \$407,000 which will benefit MSUB scholarship programs. Next year's festival is

planned for April 17-18 with the main event taking place on Friday evening due to the Easter holiday.

Commencement Debrief

Provost Eskandari reported that the Commencement committee met to debrief and heard very good feedback. Suggestions were made for coaching speakers on how to make the best use of the unique sound environment in the arena.

Evaluations

Director of Human Resources Paula Highlander reminded the group that the form for annual employee evaluations has been distributed and evaluations should be completed for each classified staff member who has fulfilled their probationary period by the end of the fiscal year. The evaluation should reflect the employee's performance over the course of the fiscal year.

Vacation

Chancellor Hicswa encouraged the Cabinet to plan and use vacation time, and to ensure that their employees take vacations as well.

Summer Meeting Dates:

June 4, June 18, and July 2; and Cabinet Retreat: July 29-30

Department Updates

Krista Montague

Krista announced that Kelly Schrock is transitioning to a role working with major gifts, and the Foundation is working to hire a Stewardship and Event Coordinator who will work closely with scholarships staff in Financial Aid.

Sep Eskandari

Provost Eskandari announced that the Dean of the College of Education, Ann Beste-Guldborg, is on leave and Dr. Melanie Reaves is serving as administrator during the interim. The City College Dean search launched and the goal is to have a permanent dean in place by January 1, 2025. Honors and Graduate Studies are returning to being separate departments and current Director Jana Marcette will be in a new role when this change becomes effective July 1st. She will be Interim Director of Academic Initiatives. Austin Bennett will be the new faculty director of the honors program, and Dr. Sam Boerboom will be faculty director of Graduate Studies. The Provost is also working on a Memorandum of Understanding with School District 2 related to their early college program for which they have formed a cohort of 26 students who will begin in the fall. Lastly, he reported that fall-to-fall retention is up 2.5% and he will have a full update on the initiatives of the Retention and Graduation Plan at the Provost Council meeting tomorrow.

Kim Hayworth

Vice Chancellor Hayworth announced that City College will be having a furniture upgrade thanks to ASMSUB funds and based on the results of a survey. The change will be well timed with construction repairs and improvements occurring at City College. TRIO grants are open so Laura Gittings-Carlson and her team are working hard on grants and may have asked for letters of support due July 10. There is a Fast Pass registration this Friday, the first two filled to capacity. Tuesday evening FAFSA workshops are still offered in the Student Union and virtually. Ed Brown has resigned as Director of Admissions and his last day is Friday. Dr. Hayworth is working to restructure New Student Services and Admissions with Julie Pettitt as Executive Director.

Leslie Weldon

Vice Chancellor Weldon reported that MSU Billings has embarked on a foodservice Request for Information, as state law requires MUS campuses to open an RFP every seven years. Faculty leaders are invited to a Thursday meeting to give input. A new beverage service contract is also under exploration. V.C. Weldon met with faculty today about the Barnes and Noble First Day Complete program and planned Fall '25 implementation.

Suzette Nynas

Academic Senate Chair Suzette Nynas reported that faculty are working to finish grading as grades are due to the Registrar's Office at 12:00 on Wednesday. Classes begin for summer session 1 on Monday. Academic Senate is working on the planned implementation of First Day Complete, plan of study and course rotations, and developing an Artificial Intelligence policy that could be incorporated into the Academic Dishonesty policy. The Senate has scheduled a retreat for August. They plan to look at updating their bylaws, may reconstitute a standing budget committee, and updating the General Education package.

Kathy Kotecki

Dean of Student Engagement Kathy Kotecki is working to fill the Director of Student Health Services position to replace Darla Tyler-McSherry who is retiring. Kathy has hired a Hall Director for Rimrock Hall and continues to work to fill the Associate Dean of Students position. Planning has begun for Welcome Week.

Paula Highlander

Paula Highlander reminded everyone to complete employee evaluations. New Title IX regulations will take effect on August 1 and will require annual training. She will discuss this in further detail at a future Cabinet meeting. The Staff Appreciation Awards celebration is on May 29 at 5:00.

Kathleen Thatcher

Director of Assessment and Accreditation Kathleen Thatcher is writing the annual report due to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities that is due August 1 and the year-six Policy, Regulation, and Finance Review (PRFR) due on August 29. Her office is preparing for the

AACSB accreditation for the College of Business planned for September 8-10, and the CNEA Nursing Program accreditation visit at City College October 14-16.

Mike Bazemore

Athletic Director Mike Bazemore reported that MSU Billings will host the baseball conference tournament May 9 and 10, but our baseball team will not be competing. Both the head and assistant softball coaches resigned, so a search for replacements will begin immediately. A new baseball assistant coach will be hired soon.

Brandon Irby

Director of Communications and Marketing Brandon Irby announced that he is finishing some of the in-progress projects he inherited when he began in his role this past fall. Updates to City College signage will be underway soon. He is working to make brand standards more consistent and eliminate any remaining confusion. His office is working with other departments to use a universal design in degree and program listings on the website that will be consistent and increase search engine optimization. Additionally, his department is performing a feasibility study on software already in use at the Bozeman campus that will populate a campus-wide events calendar and announcement system.

Natalie Preston

Executive Assistant to the Chancellor Natalie Preston reported good feedback after Commencement and thanked everyone involved. She continues to work with the Provost's Office to ensure a more coordinated event schedule for beginning and end of year events, particularly the college-specific events leading up to Commencement. She will be reaching out to schedule annual evaluations for each of the Chancellor's direct reports, and has begun planning for the Board of Regents meeting that will be hosted on campus in September.

Paula Highlander will lead article discussion at the June 4 meeting.

Meeting concluded at 4:00 pm.

Notes by Natalie Preston.