



Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2025 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, Richard Beer, Suzette Nynas, Kathleen Thatcher, Leslie Weldon, Kim Hayworth, Kathy Kotecki, Mike Bazemore, Krista Montague, Dan Carter, and Natalie Preston

Absent: Paula Highlander

DID YOU KNOW?

As of the date of the Spring 2025 census, MSU Billings has 58 international students enrolled. 51 are on F1 visas, and 7 are on J1 visas as exchange students.

INFORMATION

Commencement

Chancellor Hicswa announced that the final plans for Commencement on Saturday, May 3, are coming along well. Vikash Kumar will be the student speaker. The ceremony begins at 10:00 a.m. Natalie has parking passes if anyone needs one.

Policy

Chancellor Hicswa reviewed how the new procedure for creating and revising university policies has been working since it was implemented. Once policy drafts are approved by 'Jacket Leadership Team, they can be updated as needed, but more specific guidance can be added to the procedure documents that accompany the policies.

Cybersecurity

Chancellor Hicswa announced that approximately 95% of faculty and staff have completed the required annual cybersecurity training. Brett Weisz, Chief Information Officer, is working to plan for additional training modules to be available throughout the next academic year.

Legislative Update

Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing, provided a Legislative update. The Montana Legislature has only about 20 days remaining in the session. House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Bill, is currently in the Senate Committee.

FY 26 Budget

Chancellor Hicswa said that once the state-allocated funding is determined by the Legislature, and the Board of Regents sets tuition, possibly during its upcoming May meeting, budget forecasting will proceed with more specificity. Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, provided an overview of some factors that are currently impacting the budget, including new rates for health insurance, the expected tuition revenue shortfall from the decline in graduate enrollment, and expiration of the insurance holiday. Undergraduate enrollment will also impact the budget. Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and

Success, reported that enrollment is tracking about 4% below last year for summer semester, and 5.7% ahead for fall.

Leslie Weldon also reported that she is continuing to work with Barnes and Noble College to negotiate service for the campus bookstore and course materials procurement without the First Day Complete program. Suzette Nynas, Chair of Academic Senate, confirmed that the work group approve continuing forward with the status quo until an alternative agreement is reached.

Provost Onboarding

Chancellor Hicswa has been in touch with incoming Provost Lee Vartanian. Dr. Vartanian requested briefing document and position description from his direct reports. Chancellor Hicswa asked Cabinet members to let her know if there is anything else he should have ahead of his start date to improve his onboarding experience.

President Campus Visit

Chancellor Hicswa is working with Dan Carter to organize a campus visit for incoming MSU President Brock Tessman in the fall.

Peer/Aspirational Campus Visit

Chancellor Hicswa led discussion on peer and aspirant institutions and if campus visits would be of value. Discussion followed on what types of connections can be made with peer and aspirant universities and what can be learned from one another.

Summer Cabinet Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday, May 6

Tuesday, June 17

Cabinet Retreat July 28-29

Tuesday, August 19

DISCUSSION

Shared Governance

The Cabinet sub-committee of Suzette Nynas, Kathleen Thatcher, Kathy Kotecki, and Dan Carter, led discussion on shared governance. They reviewed the notes from the discussion at the 'Jacket Leadership Team April 8, 2025, meeting. Robust conversation followed. Chancellor Hicswa asked for next steps for creating framework for shared governance at MSUB. The sub-committee will create an information sheet incorporating the feedback they have gathered from group meetings and distribute it to Cabinet members for further discussion.

UPDATES (Reprinted as submitted)

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO

Fundraising to date is \$4.8 million. We held the annual Alumni Powwow Breakfast on April 5th, welcoming 62 attendees who enjoyed a keynote address from Foundation Board member and 2006 MSUB graduate, Buddy Windy Boy.

Wine Fest is this week! Wine Master Soiree scheduled for April 17 has a handful of tickets available and can be purchased here: [Story](#)

A Vintage Affair Gala on April 18th is sold out and currently has a waiting list. We are expecting 500 guests on the 18th.

We're still looking for a few more Wine Festival volunteers! Friends are welcome to sign up and share their time and talents using this link. [MSUB Foundation & Alumni](#).

Our staff is planning to sell roses again this year at Commencement on behalf of the Alumni Association.

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation

The Year 7 NWCCU visit will take place October 8-10, 2025. Please mark this on your calendars. If you receive a request for information related to the year 7 report or visit, please be timely with your response. The NWCCU provided the official feedback on the Year 6 PRFR report. The NWCCU issued no new findings and also marked our only outstanding recommendation as fulfilled. At this time, MSUB has no outstanding recommendations!

Program assessment reports for City College (April), College of Education (March), and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (March) are due this spring. Additionally, co-curricular program assessment reports for Academic Affairs and Students Access and Success are due this May. These documents will be considered during the NWCCU's Year 7 report and visit. Please use the support of the Assessment and Accreditation office in advance of these due dates to be sure your program has what it needs to be successful with your assessment efforts.

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

Enrollment Update:

April 4, 2025 enrollment report - three weeks into fall registration excluding dual enrollment

Overall headcount up 8.4%

Undergraduate headcount up 9.7%

Graduate headcount down 4.5%

ASMSUB Senate and President/VP elections took place March 28th, 2025

President – Vikash Kumar, Vice President – Elijah Sniegowski

Senators – full slate of senators were elected. This marks the first time in over six years all senator slots have been filled by spring elections, including two City College senators.

Freshman senator elections will take place September 2025.

Native American Achievement Center (NAAC):

Powwow week was April 3-5, 2025

The NAAC reports record attendance for Friday and Saturday night.

The NAAC final Elder-in-Residence is scheduled for April 21-25, 2025. This grant-funded program has been especially to our Native students. Thank you, Dr. Elaine Westbrook, for her role as the inaugural NAAC faculty liaison for the 24-25 academic year.

Admissions:

SD2 9th graders visited MSUB University and City College campuses on April 3 and will return on 10th, 2025. Thank you to all the faculty who are assisting with the classroom demonstrations.

They are a hit!

Fall 2025 New Student Registration Dates

(UC two sessions per date 8:30 am-11:45 am, 1 pm – 4:15 pm, CC see website for am/pm)

April 23 – Dual Enrollment Priority Registration Date

May 16, May 29, June 12th, June 24th, July 9th, July 22nd, August 1
New Student Orientation is July 14-15th!

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Casino Royale Registration event on April 7th was a success! We were able to capture getting students signed up for housing next year as well as making appointments to register for classes and downloading navigate. Students had a great time playing a variety of casino games.

Student Leadership Recognition Program was held on Wednesday, April 9th and was also a huge success. We had a great turnout of students and many received awards for their positive contributions and leadership!

Dining RFP – Submissions were due April 8th so we are in the process of reviewing.

Mike Bazemore, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

SWX will be broadcasting our softball contests on April 18 and our baseball contests on May 2. Games will start at 12pm.

The Buzzies student-athlete award show will be April 23 at the Babcock Theatre. The event is scheduled for 6pm.