



**Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes  
September 21, 2021**

**Present:** Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, Dr. Sep Eskandari, Dr. Kim Hayworth, Brett Weisz, Joann Stryker, Dr. Jennifer Lynn, Kathy Kotecki, Mike Bazemore, Natalie Preston

**Absent:** Maureen Brakke, Susan Simmers  
Meeting (held in person) began at 2:00 pm.

**COVID Update:**

Chancellor Hicswa asked the Cabinet how the COVID Task Force should communicate case numbers to the campus community. After discussion, and considering input from faculty association representatives, and community members, the group agreed to publicize to campus as we have been at the COVID Town Halls. The group also discussed how students and faculty may be affected by a mask mandate.

**Wine and Food Festival:**

The proposed COVID protocols for this year's Wine and Food Festival have been reviewed by the COVID Task Force. Task Force Lead, Dr. Kim Hayworth, reported that she met with Dr. John Dorr regarding the plan and what can be expected at the Wine and Food Festival with the anticipated attendance. The Task Force has approved the Wine and Food Festival to be held as planned.

**Strategic Plan Reboot:**

Chancellor Hicswa discussed that the strategic plan was revisited in the drafting of the Cabinet Retreat FY22 Operational Plan, and acknowledged that before the COVID pandemic began, the strategic plan committees had begun work on some overlapping action items. She asked for an update on the status of the work of the strategic plan committees. Dr. Hayworth suggested that Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Accreditation and Assessment is best equipped to provide this update, and could do so at an Executive Team meeting.

**Staff Retention:**

The team working on the employee retention goal from the FY22 Operational Plan, Michael Bazemore, Joann Stryker, and Kathy Kotecki, will now include Leslie Weldon, as Ms. Kotecki's workload has increased due to the prolonged absence of Center for Engagement Director Brandee Soens. Ms. Kotecki suggested a brainstorming session at the next 'Jacket Leadership Team meeting to discuss employee retention.

**Mass Email/Admin General Policy:**

The policy draft was discussed and some sections were removed. The updated draft will be returned to University Communications and Marketing Director Maureen Brakke and prepared for a second reading by the Cabinet.

**Department Updates:**

**Maureen Brakke:**

In Maureen's absence, Chancellor Hicswa announced the successful completion by Maureen's department of the 2022 MSUB Viewbooks for City College and University Campuses, as well as the Billings Gazette insert featuring the Yellowstone Science and Health Building.

**Dr. Kim Hayworth:**

Vice Chancellor Kim Hayworth continues working with our enrollment partner Ruffalo Noel Levitz, Maureen Brakke, and the Billings Gazette to most effectively reach both traditional and non-traditional students. Her office sponsored the Montana Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities Council event which brought 150 students from high schools to campus. Census is next week, and for the first-time enrollment is 4% ahead of last year, and the count is 45 freshman ahead. There are still eight position openings across the VCSAS division.

**Dr. Sep Eskandari:**

The process of faculty evaluations is underway. The academic program review (APR) process, which aligns with OCHE's 7-year cycle has begun under Director of Accreditation and Assessment Kathleen Thatcher and Director of Institutional Research Joann Stryker. Provost Eskandari is also working with the deans to become more deliberate in their use of faculty early alerts to reach out to struggling students sooner and intervene. Dual enrollment numbers have dramatically increased, but aggregate data masks other reductions.

**Susan Simmers:**

Vice Chancellor Susan Simmers attended a meeting September 1<sup>st</sup> at MSU Bozeman for Long Range building planning. MSUB presented 11 facility priorities, funding for all is not expected. Landscaping and grounds improvement on campus are moving forward under Michael Swavely's direction.

**Dr. Jennifer Lynn:**

Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Lynn announced that professional development funds are available. Faculty are working on applications for pre-tenure awards, and MUSFAR met with the Board of Regents virtually; discussion was mostly focused on COVID-19.

**Kathy Kotecki:**

Ms. Kotecki continues to work on connecting students with CCAMPIS grant funding for childcare. St. Johns has become another partner facility, and like Cradles to Crayons is working toward the highest level of licensure. COVID funds are also available to be used by students to pay for food and technological needs related to school. A student consultation team is working with students

to provide early alerts for mental health situations. The Center for Engagement is not working to fill Brandee Soens' director position at this time.

**Joann Stryker:**

The CCSSE survey is upcoming and instead of using a costly survey, faculty data is being collected directly. Completions Dashboards are rolling out on Tableau, which are user friendly for students and parents. Census closes on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup>; from that point on data is locked.

**Michael Bazemore:**

All fall sports are in full swing, men's and women's golf teams are competing, as are basketball teams. Alcohol sales are being considered for athletic events, but the Commissioner of Higher Education must approve any plan. Yellowjacket branded beer must also be approved; proceeds from sales may need to go toward drug and alcohol education. We are also looking at how to maximize the MSUB Athletics brand; brand licensing is owned by MSU Bozeman. Compliance officer Rebekah Gasner returns from maternity leave in two weeks. Athletics continues to follow GNAC and NCAA protocols for COVID. Athletes must be tested weekly, and have a negative PCR test to travel.

**Brett Weisz:**

Phase I of centralizing the IT Helpdesk is complete; they have reconfigured the Information Commons in library, phase II will construct offices for helpdesk people in library, more work is planned for IT at City College. IT continues work to "right size" the number of labs and classrooms. They are completing the Educause core data survey, which counts revenue, expenses, and staffing to compare to peer institutions. IT is also preparing campus wide security awareness training.

**Natalie Preston:**

Natalie continues to work on multiple projects for the Chancellor's office, including logistics for making progress on operational plan items.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Minutes taken by Natalie Preston.