



## Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes

December 6th, 2022

**In attendance:** Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, Joann Stryker, Leslie Weldon, Paula Highlander, Jen Lynn, Krista Montague, Sep Eskandari, Mike Bazemore, Kathy Kotecki, Kim Hayworth, Maureen Brakke, Natalie Preston

**Guests:** Brett Weisz

Meeting began at 2:00 p.m.

### **Directory Information:**

Director of Information Technology Brett Weisz presented proposed changes to the publicity of the online faculty and staff email directory. His proposal is to publish only general department accounts and publish individuals' email addresses only on the intranet. Discussion of best practices and possible implications followed and will be continued at a future meeting of the Chancellor's Cabinet.

### **Board of Regents Policies: Dependent Tuition and Remote Work**

Chancellor Hicswa outlined the updates to Board of Regents policies on dependent tuition and remote work. For recruitment and retention of qualified employees, the Montana University System (MUS) now allows remote work arrangements to be made with supervisors for positions where remote work will not adversely affect the quality of service to the public or students. Additionally, the dependent tuition waiver can now be used by employees after only four months of continuous service, and for up to two dependents per term.

### **Governor's Budget:**

The Governor's proposed budget includes a 4% raise for MUS employees in year one of the biennium, and another 4% in year two, or \$1.50 per hour whichever is higher. It also includes a present law adjustment for inflation which, if passed, will help MSUB's structural budget deficit. The Governor also committed \$1 million toward the efforts for the Sprint Degree program. These items reflect his commitment to higher education and MUS employees. Chancellor Hicswa expressed her appreciation to Dr. Joy Honea who represented the Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE) as part of the bargaining team who worked on the Governor's proposed budget. The proposed budget has been submitted to the legislature and if approved, it will take place at the end of the current legislative session this spring and go into effect at the beginning of FY24 (July 1, 2023).

Montana State University Director of Government Affairs and MUS Lobbyist Janelle Booth is willing to offer training on the dos and don'ts of lobbying legislators as a public employee to anyone who is interested.

**Tuition and Fees:**

Interim Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Leslie Weldon updated the Cabinet about budget changes within the MUS. Increases in budget will balance with increases in tuition and fees. V.C. Weldon will request clarification from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) on whether the fee increases will take place only during the first year of biennium or in the second year also.

**Fall 2022 Finish Strong:**

Dr. Hicswa reminded everyone to support students, especially those at high risk, as they finish the semester. The weeks between the Thanksgiving holiday and finals are a busy time when students are stretched thinly and may be running short on resources, so it increases their risk of not completing the semester.

**Spring 2023 Registration:**

Dr. Hicswa announced that MSUB is working hard to have students' registration for spring classes completed before they leave for the holiday break. Research shows that the chances of retention diminish greatly if students leave without registering for spring semester. Registrar Cheri Johannes and Retention Director Katharine Moffatt will present retention initiatives to the 'Jacket Leadership Team at the December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Provost Sep Eskandari added that Advising, the Academic Support Center, Military and Veterans Success Center, the Native American Achievement Center and other offices have worked hard to increase retention numbers, particularly among the student populations they serve. He commended them for having institutionalized their team efforts and Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success Kim Hayworth concurred this comment. The goal for fall to spring retention is 76.35 %.

**After Holiday Gathering:**

Chancellor Hicswa invited Cabinet members to attend an after-holidays gathering at her campus residence for a January date still to be determined.

**Article Presentation:**

Vice Chancellor Kim Hayworth presented and led discussion of article *Empathy Is The Most Important Leadership Skill According to Research* by Tracy Brower.

Next Cabinet Meeting January 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Meeting concluded at 3:55 pm.

Notes by Natalie Preston