



MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY
BILLINGS
Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2023

In Attendance: Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, Kathy Kotecki, Krista Montague, Mike Bazemore, Paula Highlander, Leslie Weldon, Natalie Preston, Joann Stryker

Absent: Maureen Brakke, Dr. Sep Eskandari, Dr. Kim Hayworth, Dr. Jen Lynn

Meeting began at 2:00 p.m.

Thank you to Joann Stryker:

Director of Institutional Research Joann Stryker will rotate off the Chancellor's Cabinet, and Director of Accreditation and Assessment Kathleen Thatcher will serve beginning July 1st. Joann's input has been valuable and Chancellor Hicswa will rely on the Provost to gather insights from Joann that he can share with the Cabinet.

University Campus Landscaping Improvements:

Similar to the situation MSUB faces with the Physical Education building roof no longer being covered by liability insurance due to its age, there are trees on campus which have reached the end of their life cycle and pose a risk that may not be covered by insurance. They will need to be removed and replaced by new trees.

Stay Interviews:

Director of Human Resources Paula Highlander is looking at December and January as possible times for rollout (halfway between annual performance evaluations conducted each June). Some members of Cabinet have piloted stay interviews with staff members and discussed their results.

Leave Usage:

Chancellor Hicswa reminded the Cabinet to encourage employees to use their leave, but to do so strategically to ensure office coverage. Discussion followed about supervisors being able to access employee vacation balances in MyInfo.

Raises:

The raises approved during the Legislative Session were reflected on each eligible non-faculty employee's July 1st paycheck. Some unions are negotiating the raises currently. Any future raises approved by the Board of Regents will be retroactive to July 1st.

Tuition and Fees:

Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Leslie Weldon reported on the tuition increase and student fee structure approved at the May Board of Regents meeting. Tuition was increased 4% for in state students and 6% for out of state students. Some program fee increases were approved. House Bill 2 (Appropriations Legislation) has not yet been signed by Governor Gianforte.

FY 24 and FY 25 Budget:

Vice Chancellor Weldon continues to work on the Strategic Resource Reallocation. She is working to use vacancy savings to build reserves and go forward with a balanced budget. Leslie urges everyone on campus to work with the supervising Vice Chancellor to use or save any budgetary surplus strategically, instead of spending it for fear of later reduction. The goal is to treat the institution's budget more holistically.

Long Range Building Plan:

Chancellor Hicswa reported that legislation providing funding for long range building plans was signed by Governor Gianforte, but he made some reductions to requested amounts. MSUB will receive funding to tear down the Art Annex, improve its water infrastructure, and repair the PE Building roof. Plans are underway for the Art Annex to possibly be torn down this summer, but there are fall classes scheduled for that building. The Space Task Force is working to identify alternative facilities and long-term plans.

Art Annex/Poly Building:

While funding has been secured for the demolition of the Art Annex, it does not cover the cost to address the adjacent Poly Building. Chancellor Hicswa would like to see both buildings removed which would clear the corner of Poly Drive and North 27th Street. Ideally then MSUB could coordinate landscaping with the SCL/ Intermountain Health project which is across the street.

McDonald Hall:

MSUB Foundation and CEO Krista Montague reported that the Foundation has partnered with NAI Business Properties, a commercial real estate firm, to find a new tenant for McDonald Hall once it is vacated by MSUB's College of Business.

Parking Agreement with SCL/Intermountain Health:

Vice Chancellor Weldon is working with SCL/Intermountain Health on an agreement for MSUB to lease parking spaces to hospital employees.

Herminghaus House:

The former home of Mrs. Herminghaus is the only property between North 27th Street, Poly Drive, Rimrock Road, and Virginia Lane that MSUB does not own. After Mrs. Herminghaus passed away during the fall, her family negotiated its sale to MSUB. The purchase was approved by the Board of Regents at their May meeting, and the purchase is being finalized. Vice Chancellor Weldon will meet with family representatives this afternoon. The plan is to keep the house as a residential property that will generate revenue as a rental.

New Logo:

By July 1st no old MSUB logos (wave logo, tombstone logo, etc.) should be used. It is important to maintain consistent branding as a campus.

City College Branding:

Chancellor Hicswa has been working with groups of City College staff and faculty on how to more effectively brand City College in the community.

Signage Project Update:

Acting Director of University Communications and Marketing Anna Talafuse worked with Cara Virostko on the status of the project to update all signs on campus with the new logo and accurate information. Vice Chancellor Weldon is working with Chancellor Hicswa on budgeting for the completion of the project.

Chancellor's Cabinet Retreat:

The Cabinet Retreat will be held Monday, July 31st and Tuesday August 1st in the Zoot Training Room of the new Big Sky Economic Development Headquarters downtown. The theme of the retreat is Gratitude, and this will carry into the State of the University Address.

Operational Plan Review:

The Cabinet reviewed and updated the Operational Plan.

Departmental Updates:**Leslie Weldon:**

Vice Chancellor Weldon reported that Director of Facilities Services Michael Swavely submitted his resignation. His last day will be June 16th. Leslie is working on plans for the interim period.

Thanks to our partnership with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), Leslie was able to submit for discounts on our insurance policy that were being under-utilized.

Paula Highlander:

Paula reported that Daisy Collins resigned. Paula is currently working to negotiate seven union contracts. Her office is accepting annual evaluations as they are completed.

Joann Stryker:

Joann said thank you to everyone on Cabinet; she is honored to have worked with this group and gain a new perspective of the institution. MSUB is a great place where people can really excel and have support.

Krista Montague:

Krista announced that the Foundation will host the Billings Chamber of Commerce group NextGEN on Thursday at 5:00.

The Foundation hired Jennifer Mercer as Director of Donor Development. The Foundation is working to complete the new strategic plan they created at their March Board Retreat. Chancellor Hicswa added that the facilitator and strategic plan creation process were excellent, and MSUB may use the same company to facilitate our process.

Jason McNeal from Gonser Gerber will be consulting on fundraising and will start in July working toward a full-fledged campaign.

Chief Financial Officer Jon Egeland will be retiring and a September 14th barbecue is planned, details will follow.

Kathy Kotecki:

Kathy announced that summer projects are underway, including some cosmetic updates in the residence halls.

The first new student orientation will be next Thursday and Friday.

Last week, four staff members from her division attended the MUS Behavior Intervention team training in Kalispell.

Natalie Preston:

The Chancellor's Office is working to plan the Cabinet Retreat and semester opening events for fall.

As planning is underway for fall opening activities, Natalie is working with Morgan Fradenburgh in the Provost's Office to lead all event planners from each college and departments such as Graduate Studies and the Native American Achievement Center in an effort to collaborate planning efforts to result in a consistent and streamlined programming schedule for busy times of year.