



Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2025 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Did You Know?

Fall 2017 first-time, full-time cohort bachelor's degree attainment is 30%.

In Attendance: Mike Bazemore, Krista Montague, Kathy Kotecki, Kim Hayworth, Kathleen Thatcher, Dan Carter, Suzette Nynas, Richard Beer, Paula Highlander, and Leslie Weldon

Absent: Chancellor Hicswa

Information:

Provost Start Date July 1, 2025

Richard Beer, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, announced that Lee Vartanian has accepted the position and will start on July 1 as MSUB's Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

OCHE Guidance on "Dear Colleague" Letter

Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing, confirmed that the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) received the "Dear Colleague" letter from the Federal Office of Civil Rights. OCHE Legal Counsel Ali Bovingdon determined through her review that the Montana University System has no practices in place that violate the executive order. Programming related to Native American students does not violate the ruling as their status is determined by political treaty and not by race.

Incident Response – Employee Assistance Program

Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, briefly addressed the death of a student that occurred recently. She announced that the MSUB Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) has shifted from Deer Oaks to AllOne Health. Paula stated that AllOne Health was helpful in providing support to the campus community following this tragic event. She asked the group to be aware of ways that they can provide support, and to request assistance from the EAP through her office if needed for groups on campus.

Cabinet Meetings Monthly in Summer

Dr. Beer announced that Chancellor Hicswa requested feedback on having once-monthly Cabinet meetings during the summer break. The group agreed that monthly meetings work well. Natalie will follow up with an updated schedule of summer meetings.

Cabinet Retreat July 28 – 29

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, announced that July 28-29 are the dates tentatively planned for the Cabinet Retreat. Natalie asked Cabinet members to please inform her of any schedule conflicts.

Discussion:

Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education – Dan Carter and Suzette Nynas

Dan Carter provided background of how the discussion began on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Suzette Nynas announced that while groups on campus are developing policy for academic honesty related to AI, we do not yet have parameters of how to use AI ethically and securely for work. There are over 30,000 platforms, and many do not secure or protect data entered, which could potentially include student data. Suzette confirmed that neither the MUS nor Montana State University currently have an AI policy. Dan suggested that Cabinet should charge the MSUB Data Governance Council with drafting guidelines for employee use of AI platforms. Discussion followed. It was determined that Dan and Suzette will draft the charge for the Data Governance Council and will share their draft with the Chancellor's Cabinet for feedback.

Policy:

Unallowable Expenditures – Natalie Preston

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, presented the version of the policy on Unallowable Expenditures that was updated by the subject matter experts committee led by Jana Marcette, Interim Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives. Cabinet members reviewed the updated version of the policy and determined that it is ready to be reviewed by the 'Jacket Leadership Team without any changes. Natalie will inform Jana Marcette and confirm that the policy reading is added to the agenda for the 'Jacket Leadership Team's March 11 meeting.

Updates (*Reprinted as Submitted*)

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 College of Education will host their accreditors (CAEP) virtually April 9-11, 2025. Please support the faculty and staff in COE during this important re-accreditation process.

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.

Dan Carter, Director of Communications and Marketing

Thanks to initiative from Shiloh, we did a "blanket ad" that essentially put a social media campaign on all cell phones that used Meta (Facebook) during the all-class wrestling tournament at

MetraPark. The ad led to more than 100 clicks and was seen by several thousand people. We focused on our cost advantage to parents.

The Web Team will be holding content training sessions on March 6 and 19. Those sessions are for web users in different departments. These hour-long sessions will primarily cover deleting outdated or unneeded content. So it is like doing spring cleaning, but with code! This is also being done in advance of anticipated change in the content management system (i.e. Website) that MSU will be getting later this year or early 2026.

Patrick has been redesigning banners and images for a variety of stakeholders on campus and will be handling a variety of spring-season postcard designs.

UCAM is in the process of centralizing the curation and ordering of branded swag and materials. This will help us control wayward logo use and ensure we have adequate materials when we need them.

Dan is working on student feature stories, faculty feature stories and alumni feature stories for use far and wide! The deans are helping by providing ideas and sharing publications when they come up.

The MSUB emergency response team will have a test of the emergency response system on March 26 at 9 a.m. The university community will get text messages and emails during the test.

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor

The Chancellor's Office is working through the season of faculty evaluations and planning for end of semester events. Planning for summer events is also underway.

Natalie will be collecting items to add to a gift basket for incoming Provost Lee Vartanian.

Highlights from the latest Legislative Update include three bills in which OCHE has interest:

HB 2: On February 19, the Section E Subcommittee voted on the OCHE/MUS portion of HB 2, approving the system's present law adjustments as well as a handful of amendments that add resources to the 1-2-Free, Montana 10, and Graduate Medical Education programs. The subcommittee declined a request in the Governor's budget to fund a proposal to develop a hybrid online law school at the University of Montana.

HB 13: The Senate Finance and Claims Committee heard HB 13, the state employee pay plan, Thursday evening. The Committee has not yet acted on the bill.

Long-range planning, HB 5 and HB 10: The Section F Joint Appropriations Committee on Long Range Planning will voted on Tuesday, **February 25**. Those measures will join HB 2 in the House Appropriations Committee for hearings.

Mike Bazemore, Athletic Director

Athletics Update:

- The men's and women's basketball teams have qualified for the GNAC tournament for the third consecutive year. The top 6 out of 10 teams make the conference tournament. As far as NCAA regional rankings, the women are 4th in the most recent (Feb. 26) rankings, the top 8 from every region make the NCAA Tournament
- We will be hosting our Chi Alpha Sigma induction ceremony on March 20. We have 45 inductees this year.
 - About Chi Alpha Sigma
 - Chi Alpha Sigma is the first, and only, nonprofit organization that was established to recognize four-year college student-athletes who excel both on and off the field of competition. Founded in 1996 by then DePauw University head football coach, Nick Mourouzis, Chi Alpha Sigma continues to provide outstanding student-athletes with an opportunity to become connected within a fraternal association that aligns their educational and athletic successes for a lifetime.
 - You must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 in order to be inducted

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Student Health:

- Vitalant blood drive mobile donation center will be on the University campus March 18th from Noon-4:30.

-Mental Health First Aid Training: March 4th and 5th (8:00 am – Noon)

Center for Engagement:

The CFE team in partnership with many other departments, including Student Government, are collaborating to offer more programs and student engagement opportunities for City College students.

Housing:

-The team interviewed 27 students for RA positions for next year (we had a record number of students apply – 33); hiring announcements will go to students on Friday, March 28th!

-They are working diligently on our occupancy marketing plan to increase the number of students living on campus this upcoming fall.

Dean of Students:

-I have served as a member of the OCHE Advisory Committee for creating and implementing a new Prevention Education Course for all new and graduate MUS students (Thriving Together). Historically this course was offered in partnership with 3rd party companies; however the MUS made the decision to create and manage the course internally going forward. 4 MUS campuses rolled the course out this Spring and MSUB will be rolling this out for Fall 2025. Our campus implementation team will be meeting on a regular basis to have this ready to go for students for Fall.

Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources

-Employee Assistance Program has transitioned to AllOne Health

- The EAP website login has changed. Employees can either click on the EAP link on the MUS *Choices* website or go to the [AllOne](#) website directly and they will be asked to register. Prior, an employee could enter MUS for the user/password to log in, **NOW** they will need to register with a **company code: MUS**, an email address, and will need to create a password. See attached flyer.
- Call: 1-888-993-7650 Visit: [AlloneHealth.com/DeerOaksCode: MUS](#)

-Paula will be traveling to Helena on 3/5 to attend the rate setting meeting for the FY 26 Benefits. Annual enrollment will be held in April-May; specific information and dates will be sent soon.

-Jacket Success Training on March 12-13. [Schedule](#)

Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

MSU Bozeman indicates that they will have our Food Service RFP posted by end of day February 28th. Schedule for RFP Process:

March 10th interested parties will come to campus and receive general information about the campus. Kathy Kotecki will lead walk through. We are scheduled to meet at 10am in the SUB. Anyone is welcome to join.

EVENT DATE

RFP Issue Date	February 28
Pre-Proposal Walk Through (mandatory)	March 10th
Deadline for Receipt of Questions	March 17th
Deadline for Posting of Responses	March 24th
RFP Response Due Date	April 7th
Optional ** Presentation	April 14th
Intended Date of Award	April 21st

Waiting for MSU Bozeman to post our RFP for Vending & Pour Rights

RMTD has identified trees that need to come down. The trees to the west and east of the McMullen entrance have shifted and need to be brought down.

Legislative update below

Will be meeting with the community to discuss our pool usage, rates and condition of pool

Business Services

Tuition & Fee Schedules submitted to MSU/OCHE

Presented Tuition & Fee Schedules to ASMSUB

Success using NelNet for payment plans this spring

Facilities

Veterans Lounge at City College complete

LI 231 online at the end of the week

Finance

Budget

March 1, 2025	FY2026 Budget workbooks and position budget workbooks distributed to Box folders
Week of March 17, 2025	Budget office will schedule individual meetings with each department via Webex
March 31st, 2025	FY 2026 Budget workbooks due to Budget office and Chancellor or Vice Chancellor
April 2025	Chancellor and Vice Chancellor FY 2026 Budget workbook review and approval
April 30, 2025	Final FY 2026 Budget workbook submissions due to Budget office
May 2025	Budget office enters all data into Axiom (MSU Budget System)
June 2025	Budget office reconciliation and balancing.
July 1, 2025	Budget data entry deadline for Budget office
July & August 2025	Budget office completes OCHE data requests and reports
September 2025	OCHE approves Final FY2026 Budget

Payroll continues to work on securing out-of-state business licenses and setting up workers compensation and unemployment for PT faculty hires outside of Montana

Jacket Success Training Sessions

Wednesday, March 12 and 13

<https://www.msubillings.edu/training/Jacket%20Success%20University%20Employee%20Training%20Schedule%20Spring%202025.pdf>

IT

Nearly complete with the new campus map

Local admin rights removal for COB and COE faculty in process

Experimenting with AI video generation that has an AI avatar read a script over the presentation.

Equipment in McMullen 305 will be upgraded over Spring Break.