



## **Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes**

**April 1, 2025 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

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

### **Did You Know?**

For the fall 2023 University Campus Performance Based Funding population, the MUS retention outside MSUB dropped to its lowest value (1.7%) while at the same time internal MSUB retention increased to its highest (59.6%) over the last five cohorts.

## **INFORMATION**

### **Legislative Update**

Chancellor Hicswa announced that the legislature passed House Bill 13. The pay increase is 2.5% or \$1 per hour, whichever is greater, for each year of the biennium. The increase is effective July 1 for employees outside of unions, and must be negotiated and ratified for union employees through collective bargaining, paid retroactively once agreements are ratified.

### **Commissioner's Directive HB 121**

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) issued guidance which has been communicated to all campuses in the university system. MSUB is in compliance. See Appendix A.

### **Federal Update**

Chancellor Hicswa announced that although MSUB has been impacted by federal grant funding cuts, no faculty or staff positions have been eliminated at this time. Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, is working with the Montana University System Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) to prepare a workshop for support for employees who are experiencing anxiety over this uncertainty.

### **FY 25 and FY 26 Budget**

Chancellor Hicswa provided a brief budget overview. Heather Hanna, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Finance, has been modeling expenditures based on anticipated revenue for FY26. Lower graduate enrollment in FY 25 reduced revenue, but vacancy savings will help balance this loss.

### **Meeting-Free Days**

Chancellor Hicswa led discussion on how best to determine which days to make meeting-free days following the well-being discussion at 'Jacket Leadership Team. Discussion followed.

Paula Highlander, Dan Carter, and Natalie Preston will meet to determine a calendar of dates for meeting-free days.

### **Summer Meeting Schedule:**

Cabinet Meeting Tuesday, May 6

Cabinet Meeting Tuesday, June 17

Cabinet Retreat July 28-29 (Location to be determined)

‘Jacket Leadership Team Tuesday, August 12

Cabinet Meeting Tuesday, August 19

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Operational Plan**

Cabinet members reviewed and updated the Operational Plan.

## **POLICY**

### **Unallowable Expenses**

Cabinet members reviewed the Unallowable Expenses Policy draft provided by Jana Marcette, Interim Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives, with updates made by the subject matter experts sub-committee. Discussion followed. Chancellor Hicswa will give feedback to Jana Marcette. See Appendix B.

## **UPDATES (Reprinted as Submitted)**

### **Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Students**

#### **-Spring Events**

April 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>: Powwow

April 7<sup>th</sup>: Registration Royale (Casino night connected to promoting Fall and Summer Registration, living on campus and use of navigate)

April 10<sup>th</sup>: Student Leadership Awards Program

April 28<sup>th</sup>: Cram Jam (Free Late-night breakfast and study break for students)

-Dining: RFP is out and submissions are due Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>

#### **-Thriving Together**

MSUB Implementation Team has convened and is working collectively regarding the implementation of the new MUS Thriving Together Prevention Education Course for new freshmen and new graduate students for Fall 2025. The course will be housed within Canvas, which we hope will help increase the completion rate for students given its visibility in the same platform as their other courses.

#### **-Residence Hall Occupancy**

Codie and the team continue to work diligently to get students to submit their housing applications for Fall (and summer). We currently have 224 that have completed their application: 99 are new students and 137 are current students in the halls. There are many strategies and activities happening throughout Spring to continue to grow the occupancy numbers, both with new and current students.

#### -Student Leadership Workshops

Center for Engagement staff coordinated a three-week leadership workshop series for students in March. They had 14 students from a variety of student clubs participate, which is a great number given this was a new initiative and completely voluntary!

### **Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation**

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!

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.

### **Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success**

Native American Achievement Center (NAAC)

Powwow week is April 3-5, 2025

Volunteer slots are still available. It is fun, just ask Kathleen 😊

-April 3, Native American Business Summit, 10 am – 4 pm, Glacier Room

-Chief Dull Knife College student government campus visit

- April 4, Grand Entry, 7 pm.

-April 5 Powwow Alumni Breakfast, 9 am, Glacier Room

-April 5, Grand Entry, 12 pm

The NAAC has hosted nine Elder-in-Residence programs this academic year with one more to go. This grant-funded program has been meaningful, especially to our Native students.

#### Admissions

Spring Preview Day was March 20, 2025

-MSUB welcomed around 300 guests

-Guests toured University and City College Campuses and met with faculty from each college

-We had nine students apply for fall 2025!

SD2 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be visiting MSUB campuses on April 3 and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

#### **Financial Aid**

The first round of Financial Aid Packages are going out the week of March 31<sup>th</sup>!

-This marks the earliest release of packages in at least six years!

Every Tuesday from 12 pm—1 pm, the MSUB Financial Aid Office and Educational Opportunity Center sponsor weekly FAFSA help sessions and promote individual appointments. Information is on the FA webpage, the monitor slides, and posters. Please encourage students to participate! One of our recruitment and retention goals this year is to increase the percentage of MSUB student FAFSA filers.

#### **University Police Department (UPD)**

Emergency Notification System (ENS) test on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 was successful. UPD and University Communications and Marketing are collaborating on a follow-up communication.

A local Gideons group will be visiting campus to pass out New Testament's on April 16, 2025, from 7:30-11 am. The appropriate campus colleagues have been informed.

#### **Krista Montague, Foundation and Alumni CEO**

Fundraising to date is \$4.3 million for FY25. A heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who supported Jacket Giving Day by donating or helping spread the word! Together, we raised \$88K for various campus projects. We're dedicated to building a strong culture of philanthropy, and that starts with leadership setting the example. Each year, we see continued progress, and Jacket Giving Day remains a simple yet powerful way to support our students and one another. We hosted a Helena-area alumni event on March 12. While the crowd was smaller than expected due to the BOR moving their meeting online and the legislature being on break, we still had a wonderful time connecting with alumni from all generations and celebrating our shared Yellowjacket pride and spirit. WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL is upon us! We are sold out for Friday April 18 "A Vintage Affair" and have just about 30 tickets still available for Thursday April 17 "Winemaster Soiree." We would appreciate you sharing the ticket link with your network to help get the Thursday night tickets sold: [Tickets - Montana State University Billings Foundation & Alumni](#)

#### **Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources**

If you are recruiting campus community members to volunteer for a project or event, please make sure that departments aren't encouraging the use of comp. time and overtime by other departments. Overtime and comp. time are both a form of compensation and should not be used in the same context as volunteering. Supervisors need to approve comp. time and overtime for their employees.

There is a target date of April 7, 2025 for MUS Benefits to roll out communication regarding benefit rates for FY 2026.



# Montana University System

## Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

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(406) 449-9124 – FAX (406) 449-9171

### **MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM | COMMISSIONER'S DIRECTIVE**

**RE: HB 121: Privacy in Certain Restrooms, Changing Rooms, and Sleeping Quarters**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: March 27, 2025**

On March 27, 2025 Governor Gianforte signed HB 121, "An Act Providing for Privacy in Certain Restrooms, Changing Rooms, and Sleeping Quarters" into law. HB 121 was effective upon passage and approval. HB 121 is a law of general applicability and applies to the Montana University System "MUS".

Under HB 121:

- The MUS must designate each multi-occupancy restroom, changing room, or sleeping quarters for the exclusive use of females or males.
- A restroom, changing room, or sleeping quarter that is designated for females or males may be used only by members of that sex.
- The MUS must take all reasonable steps to provide individuals with privacy from members of the opposite sex in designated restrooms, changing room, and sleeping quarters.

The definitions of male, female, sex multi-occupancy restroom, changing room, and sleeping quarters are provided for in the bill. [https://bills.legmt.gov/#/laws/bill/2/LC2129?open\\_tab=sum](https://bills.legmt.gov/#/laws/bill/2/LC2129?open_tab=sum)

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education directs the campuses to take the necessary steps to comply with HB 121. Compliance will require an assessment of all campus multi-occupancy restrooms, changing rooms and sleeping quarters to ensure appropriate signage, access and privacy for all students.

Clayton T. Christian  
Commissioner of Higher Education

*Commissioner's directives are official interpretations and guidance issued by the Commissioner of Higher Education; they remain in effect as system directives until withdrawn or revised by the Commissioner or superseded by action of the Board of Regents.*



# POLICIES

1500 University Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

## 205.0 ~~Non-Allowable and Restricted~~ Expenditures

Subject	Accounts Payable
Revised	XXXX
Effective Date	03/2013
Review Date/s:	XXXX
Responsible Party	Business Services, Financial Services and Payroll

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### 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE ~~Personal or Other Expenses:~~

The following is a list of restricted and unallowable charges for official university business. Purchases made on sponsored programs or indirect costs (IDC) funds or student club accounts may have additional considerations. Questions about an expense not listed should be directed to department coordinators, supervisors, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs, or a Business Services representative.

~~A. The University Purchasing Manual states that "...purchases for personal use are not allowed." Personal expenditures are not allowable for reimbursement, regardless of the funding source. Below are some examples that University Business Services considers to be personal or other unallowable departmental expenditures, and as such are not reimbursable.~~

### 2. UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Unallowable expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- A. Airfare - seat upgrades unless ADA approved. ADA declaration documentation must be provided.
- B. Cash - cash withdrawals or non-travel cash advances.
- C. Donations - contributions or donations, including financial donations or gift components when registering for a conference, or "rounding up" at a merchant to donate to a cause or organization. Except for donations from student club accounts
- D. Fuel – fuel expenses for personal vehicles – must request mileage reimbursement on travel expense report.
- E. Hospitality - hospitality-related office supplies such as coffee, plates, napkins, tissue, etc. that are intended for employee consumption.
- F. Memberships - memberships such as Costco or Amazon where MSUB has corporate programs.

#### ~~1. Cash~~

~~a. Cash may not be charged the University Purchasing Card and transferred to a personal One Card.~~

#### ~~2. Gifts, Gift Cards or Awards~~

~~Gifts given for graduation, birthday, leaving MSUB employment, service of work completed, Secretary's Week, awards to students outside the Financial Aid process, weddings, showers, etc.~~

~~a.~~

#### ~~3. Flowers~~

~~a. Given as a gift, for a funeral, or for office. Purchase of flowers may be allowable if they are business related with approval from University Business Services.~~

~~4. Cards~~

- ~~a. Purchased for greetings, birthday, wedding, "going away" or retirement, funeral, etc~~
- G. Services - services provided by an MSUB employee. Payment should occur through the Payroll Office.
- H. Transactions - dividing transactions to circumvent purchasing thresholds. See General Purchasing Guidelines.

**3. RESTRICTED EXPENSES****Restricted expenses include, but are not limited to:**

- A. Alcohol and Drugs - purchase of drugs and alcohol or any substance, material or service, which violates policy, law or regulations is not allowed with the following exceptions:
  - 1. Alcohol - see the Alcohol Policy.
  - 2. Drugs - may be purchased for medical purposes or for a sponsored research project.
  - 3. Tobacco - see the Tobacco Free Campus Policy.
- B. Clothing (non-uniform) - certain clothing may be purchased if it is required and utilized for protective personal equipment (PPE), research, or education (e.g., scrubs, lab coats, etc.). If purchased on sponsored program funds, include justification. Clothing items such as MSUB-branded shirts for events where employees represent the university may be allowable under specific conditions and are subject to a taxable threshold. See Restricted and Unallowable Policy Procedure.
- C. Gifts - gifts must serve official university business and are subject to additional requirements. Purchase of gift cards or gift certificates including from agency accounts is not allowed except for gift cards or certificates used for research or survey participants which are subject to additional requirements. See Restricted and Unallowable Expenditures Policy Procedure.
- D. Graduation Regalia - regalia for faculty and other campus leaders who participate in graduation may be provided by the University when approved by the applicable vice-chancellor/chancellor.
- E. Equipment - Equipment with a trade-in. Contact Financial Services Office.
- F. Moving / Relocation Expenses or Allowances - relocation allowances when approved by the applicable vice-chancellor/chancellor are taxable and paid through payroll.
- G. Parking Permits and Citations - long term MSUB parking permits for privately owned vehicles and payment of parking citations are not allowed with the following exceptions:
  - 1. Parking permits can be purchased for university-owned, State of Montana, or government vehicles.
  - 2. Short-term parking permits can be purchased for visitors on official business only. See Restricted and Unallowable Expenditures Policy Procedure.
  - 3. When grant funded, which is subject to additional requirements. Contact Sponsored Programs for guidance.

~~5. Parking Decal and personal fines~~

~~a. Parking Decal is a personal expense as discussed in MSU's Parking Regulations at <http://www.msubillings.edu/police/parkinginfo.htm> Fines incurred are also considered personal expenses.~~

~~b. The purchase of temporary parking hangtags may be allowed if they are for a visitor from another state agency, candidate for a position, workshop attendees, visiting dignitaries, etc.~~

~~6. Graduation Regalia and other clothing (non-uniform)~~

~~a. Graduation regalia—cap, gown, and hood—are all personal expenses whether they are for a student or Faculty.~~

~~b. Certain clothing may be purchased if it will be consumed in the course of completing a research~~

**Procedure Number: 205.0**  
**Non-Allowable**  
**Expenditures**

~~project.~~

~~7. Office treats~~

- ~~a. Purchase of treats for office personnel is not an allowable expenditure.~~
- ~~b. Retirement, Going Away, or other personal office events.~~

~~8. Office Supplies~~

- ~~a. Coffee, plates, napkins, tissue, etc. Any items consumed by employees is not allowed.~~

~~9. Donations~~

- ~~a. Donations are not allowed to any organization including charitable organizations.~~
- ~~b. Exceptions are donations from student club accounts.~~

~~3. Drugs and Alcohol~~

- ~~A. Purchase of drugs and alcohol or any substance, material or service, which violates policy, law or regulations pertaining to Montana State University is not allowed with the following exceptions: Drugs may be purchased for medical purposes through the Student Health Service or for a sponsored research project. Alcohol may be purchased for approved events if the Alcohol Request Form has been completed and approved. See the MSU Alcohol Policy.~~

~~\*\*\* Non-Allowable reimbursements are not limited to this list.~~