



Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2025 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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

DID YOU KNOW?

For spring 2025, 221 enrolled students were participants in the MT10 program: 81 at City College and 140 at University Campus. 12 of these students intended to graduate this spring (11 AAS and 1 BS) and 2 students intend to graduate in summer (1 AAS and 1 BS).

INFORMATION

Commencement Debrief

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, reported on the commencement debriefing meeting that was held on May 5, 2025. During the meeting, feedback was shared on Saturday's commencement ceremony which was mostly very positive. Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing reported that approximately 700 students received degrees, and the livestream of the event was accessed by more than 1,100 people. Any additional feedback can be sent to Cheri Johannes.

Federal Update

Dan Carter provided an update of state and federal legislation impacting the university system. Chancellor Hicswa confirmed that an AmeriCorps VISTA position at MSU Billings has been eliminated. Funding for TRIO and Upward Bound are currently not in the President's proposed budget. Dan Carter explained that Congress is responsible for appropriating funding, which may or may not align with the administration's priorities. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting was ordered to reduce spending that impacts 8% of the Yellowstone Public Radio annual budget.

The Montana Legislature ended its session on April 30. The University System will receive additional appropriations for the state employee pay plan, 1-2 Free, and the Montana 10 program. Chancellor Hicswa credited the Commissioner's Office (OCHE) for working closely on budget requests with the Governor's Office.

Strategic Plan Planning

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, reviewed the previous process that produced the current Mission, Vision, and Values, and Strategic Plan. As the university reaches the end of the current strategic plan cycle, Chancellor Hicswa charged Kathleen with assembling a committee to steer the next iteration of our strategic plan.

The committee, which Kathleen is working to finalize, will encourage participation of faculty and staff members in strategic visioning sessions facilitated by Karen Miller of Kaleidoscope Group. The goal is to identify 3-5 broad themes during the strategic visioning process. Facilitated sessions will be held following the NWCCU Year 7 visit, which is scheduled for October 8-10.

MSU Bozeman Employees on Campus

Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, announced that previously remote MSU Bozeman employees will begin using office spaces on the university campus and City College starting July 1.

Intermountain Health Parking

Leslie Weldon announced that her office has finalized a lease agreement with Intermountain Health for the use of parking spaces on our campus. Intermountain Health employees will be able to rent spaces in part of the Virginia Lane lot, certain areas of the parking garage, parts of the northeast Poly Drive lot, and the lot adjacent to Apsaruke Hall. The lease went into effect on April 28.

Facilities Summer Projects

Leslie Weldon announced that there are many summer facilities projects underway. Projects include: phase two of the water main project, housing updates, replacement of the Physical Education Building roof, and Information Technology (IT) networking projects throughout campus. Justin Rife, Director of Facilities Services, will continue to email facilities project updates on a regular basis.

Sodexo Update

Leslie Weldon updated the group on the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued for provision of campus dining services. Sodexo submitted an RFP and Leslie's office is reviewing it. Dining services and facilities on City College campus must be considered in the proposal. Jazzman's Coffee and the Sub Connection will remain closed.

Provost Transition

Chancellor Hicswa reported that she recently met with incoming Provost Lee Vartanian. Provost Vartanian will begin in his role on July 1. Natalie Preston is collecting items for a gift basket for Dr. Vartanian if anyone would like to contribute.

Evaluations

Chancellor Hicswa reminded Cabinet members of the importance of completing a performance review for each employee every year. Kathleen Thatcher confirmed that the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) considers regular employee evaluations to be important. Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, explained that while the review process is a good time to set expectations and goals for the upcoming year, they do not need to be completed before the fiscal year ends on June 30. Paula also recommended updating position descriptions in conjunction with evaluation completion. Human Resources can provide additional copies of evaluation forms if anyone needs them.

Vacation

Chancellor Hicswa reminded Cabinet members to use vacation time and encourage employees to use vacation time.

Summer Cabinet Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday, June 17

Cabinet Retreat July 28-29

Tuesday, August 19

DISCUSSION

Article *Why Academic Maps May Be the Single Most Important Action in Improving Student Success*

Suzette Nynas, Chair of Academic Senate, led discussion on article by Larry Abele (completecollege.org) entitled “Why Academic Maps May Be the Single Most Important Action in Improving Student Success”. Robust discussion followed on how much choice in program mapping should be given to students, what literature shows works best for students, and barriers to implementing best practices.

UPDATES (Reprinted as submitted)

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Student Health Services:

- Jerry is offering Mental Health First Aid May 20th and 21st, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

Housing:

- We have 55 students staying on campus this summer as of today. We are also hosting interns from different states/campuses who are here for the summer.
- We will be busy this summer hosting a variety of summer camps and conferences in Petro.

CFE/ASMSUB Space

- We are going to make a move this summer and swap the locations of the ASMSUB and CFE offices. The goal for this is to better serve our CFE full-time staff with individual office spaces to help support their work productivity. Moving ASMSUB into the current CFE space will allow them to create a strong and vibrant location for ASMSUB to gather and be visible to students but also to create a space where student clubs can gather, have work spaces and to create stronger collaboration amongst clubs that currently doesn't exist.

CFE:

- Aaron Murrish has been hired as the new Assistant Director for Conferences and Special Events. His official start date is June 4th.

UPD:

- A new Clery Compliance Specialist, Kari Swanson, has been hired.

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation

The Year 7 NWCCU visit will take place October 8-10, 2025. Please mark this on your calendar. If you receive a request for information related to the year 7 report or visit, please be timely with your response. 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!

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

Graduation Celebrations!

Student Access and Success hosted multiple graduation celebrations including

MT 10 Goals and Stoiles – May 1

TRIO/SSS – May 2

Native American Achievement Center – May 2

Enrollment Update:

April 25, 2025 enrollment report

Fall registration excluding dual enrollment compared to same week in 2024

Overall headcount up 1.8%

Undergraduate headcount up 3.2%

Graduate headcount down 12.2%

FTE even with same week in 2024

Financial Aid:

Financial Aid has packaged 95% of all new student ISIRs.

Admissions:

Fall 2025 New Student Registration Dates

(UC two sessions per date 8:30 am-11:45 am, 1 pm – 4:15 pm, CC see website for am/pm)

May 16, May 29, June 12th, June 24th, July 9th, July 22nd, August 1

New Student Orientation is July 14-15th!

Military and Veteran's Success Center:

MVSC is collaborating with Veterans Navigation Network (VNN) to host Patton Veterans

Project May 16-18, 2025. MVSC and VNN hosted a screening of film projects [Newest Films](#)

[from our Workshop - YouTube](#) on April 16, 2025.

[Mission & History – Patton Vets](#)

[Featured Films – Patton Vets](#)

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO

2025 MSUB Wine & Food Festival raised \$730K – a new record.