



Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2025 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Chancellor Stefani Hicswa, Krista Montague, Kathleen Thatcher, Dan Carter, Lee Vartanian, Kim Hayworth, Paula Highlander, and Natalie Preston

Absent: Suzette Nynas, Leslie Weldon, Kathy Kotecki, and Michael Bazemore

DID YOU KNOW?

In fall 2025, the majority of new freshmen graduated from Montana high schools, 77% at University Campus and 72% at City College.

SHOUT-OUTS

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO, announced that she has received over \$2 million in commitments for the major giving campaign.

Chancellor Hicswa gave a shout out to Dan Carter and Shiloh Skillen-Robison, Director and Associate Director of University Communications and Marketing, for the rapid and successful emergency notification on Friday evening.

Lee Vartanian, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, gave a shout out to everyone involved in the first day of classes and related activities.

Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, gave a shout out to Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, for her work on the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) campus visit.

Chancellor Hicswa gave a shout out to Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success, and her team for hosting the Montana Post Secondary Educational Opportunities (MPSEOC) college fair.

INFORMATION

Fall Enrollment Update

Vice Chancellor Hayworth gave an overview of enrollment, which is tracking up, even with dual credit students excluded from the numbers. She explained that the drop for non-payment period has not yet ended. Dr. Hayworth also reported that the retention rate for the freshmen cohort is currently tracking higher than last year's rate. Overall, the retention rate has only increased incrementally.

NWCCU Visit

The NWCCU Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) Year 7 Visit is scheduled for October 8-10, 2025. Kathleen Thatcher confirmed the specific meetings on the visit agenda that Cabinet members should be sure to attend. She asked the group to review the EIE Report, with emphasis on sections 1.A.1, 1.B.1, 1.B.2, 1.B.3, and 1.B.4 and to click on any links to see evidence of strategic planning accomplishments. Kathleen reminded Cabinet members to be familiar with the university mission statement, and to be prepared to speak about how the operational plan intersects with the strategic plan.

Strategic Plan

Kathleen Thatcher reported that the strategic planning steering committee met with Kaleidoscope Group on Friday, September 12. The survey that was distributed campus-wide in August closes on September 19. Another survey will be distributed via Admin General in November. Please respond to this survey as well.

DISCUSSION

Operational Plan

Cabinet members finalized the FY26 Operational Plan that was developed during the retreat held on July 28-29, 2025.

Purpose Statements for 'Jacket Leadership Team and Cabinet

Cabinet members reviewed the purpose statement for 'Jacket Leadership Team, and a draft of a purpose statement for the Chancellor's Cabinet was discussed. The purpose statement for Cabinet was finalized and will be published on the website.

Cabinet Agenda

Chancellor Hicswa asked for feedback on the format of the Cabinet meeting agendas. Cabinet members discussed and determined that the Operational Plan priorities should guide the Cabinet meeting agendas.

UPDATES (*Reprinted as submitted*)

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation

MSUB will host the NWCCU Year 7 visit October 8-10, 2025. Please be available during those dates. If you are asked to attend a meeting with the review team, it is important that you show up. The three open forums are scheduled as follows:

Student forum: Wednesday, October 8 at 1:00pm in LI 231

Faculty forum: Wednesday, October 8 at 2:00pm in LI 231

Staff forum: Thursday, October 9 at 11:00am in LI 231

While we await the additional details of the visit agenda, reach out to Kathleen Thatcher to schedule a visit preparation meeting for your department or program.

The Paramedic program at City College will host their re-accreditation visit December 4-5, 2025. Please welcome the review team if you see them!

Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing

Social media interaction for Welcome Week showed a huge improvement this year over 2024. Facebook is up across the board, and we had a nearly 178% increase in Instagram impressions and a nearly 75% percent increase on Instagram engagement. The pace of activity and the diversity of our posts and videos is playing a big role in having MSUB being seen in the social media landscape.

Three new wayfinding signs are now in place at different locations of the University Campus. Some arrow directions that were incorrect have been replaced by the vendor. The signs include maps to the various colleges and buildings. The arrows point to venues for those who may be visiting campus for special events.

Marks, brand identifiers and other elements of the UCAM branding guide are being prepared for distribution. Once they are up on our web site, we will communicate that with the campus.

We will soon be doing student and faculty features for a compilation web page. What was once called "Jacket Journeys" will be making a comeback with new short feature stories and profiles that will draw potential students to the MSUB website.

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor

Employees serving in administrative support positions, including Program Coordinators, Dean's Assistants, and Administrative Associates, will be invited to a meeting immediately preceding the Payroll training session. We will network, share resources and expertise, and plan future meetings and professional development opportunities. Please encourage your administrative staff members to attend this and future meetings. The first meeting is Friday, September 26, at 9:00 in COE 291.

Mike Bazemore, Director of Athletics

- NCAA Legislation proposal to be aware of is changing the athletic eligibility for student-athletes from 4 years to 5 years within 10 full-time semesters, with limited exceptions
- Upcoming home competitions
 - Women's Soccer
 - Saturday, Sept. 13 vs. Minot State @ 6pm
 - Thursday, Sept. 25 vs. Western Oregon @ 12pm
 - Saturday, Sept. 27 vs Saint Martin's @ 12pm
 - Volleyball
 - Thursday, Sept. 18 vs Alaska Fairbanks @ 7pm
 - Saturday, Sept. 20 vs Alaska Anchorage @ 1pm
 - Tuesday, Sept. 30 vs Rocky @ 7pm
 - Cross Country
 - Friday, Oct. 10 @ 12pm Amend Park
 - Men's and Women's Golf
 - Yellowjacket Fall Invitational – Oct. 6 – 7 @ Lake Hills Golf Course
 - Briarwood Shootout – Oct. 13 – 14 @Briarwood Golf Course

- Women's Basketball Elementary Game is being held on Tuesday, Oct. 21 @ 12pm
- Athletics Halloween Auction is being held on Friday, Oct. 24 @ the Pub Station
- We are hosting the GNAC Cross Country Championship Meet on Saturday, Oct. 25 @ 10am Amend Park

Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources

Fall Wellcheck for the MSUB campus will be held October 22-23, 2025, from 6:30 AM-10:30 AM in the SUB Beartooth Room. Employees should be receiving the flyer in their home addresses and HR will be providing further communication via Admin General communications. Registration is currently open.

1. Go to **my.itstartswithme.com**
2. Login to your account or Create an Account (new users)
3. Use the company code: MUS2025

MyMSUB (NEW MyInfo) information and training is currently being provided on a regular basis. Please see updated communication from Dan Carter. It is scheduled to be implemented on October 2, 2025.

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

The Yellowjacket Emergency Pantry has been rebranded The Buzz Stop! Student Health Services is leading this effort with food, hygiene, and school supplies available on both the UC and CC campuses. The UC Buzz Stop open house was held September 10, and the CC Buzz Stop open house is Tuesday, September 16th from 9-11 am. Please stop by to see our new and improved service to students and employees.

The Native American Achievement Center is hosting four Elder-in-Residence weeks for fall 2025. **See attached flyer** for elder profiles and dates. Everyone is invited to attend any of the events.

Admissions will host the largest college and career fair in Montana on September 16th from 8-11 am on the MSUB campus! Be prepared for full parking lots and busy sidewalks.

THANK YOU everyone for participating and supporting the Fall 2025 Welcome Week events. We have received positive feedback from students, faculty, staff, and administration. We had over 200 campus volunteers participate in the Fall Kick-Off on September 2nd. A special thank you to those who came out on Sunday, August 31st to help students move into the residence halls.

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Welcome week was a huge success – thank you to everyone who participated in the various events with our students! The CFE and Housing teams will continue to facilitate programming and events to keep the momentum going for the semester.

Current Occupancy for Housing:

Fall 25 Occupancy Report

- Opening was 367 in the halls, after the first week we are at 350 (no shows impacted this number) - this is up from the Spring 2025 occupancy of 270.
- We have 231 total residents living in Petro
- We have 119 total residents living in Rimrock

Loyalty Program Numbers:

2nd yr: 64 (55 singles and 9 doubles)

3rd Yr: 21 (19 singles and 2 doubles)

4th and over: 16 (14 singles and 2 doubles)

Student Health Services: The staff submitted their accreditation application on Wednesday of this week and will be working to get the site visit scheduled for the end of October.