



**Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting: Agenda
February 17, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

The Chancellor's Cabinet advises the Chancellor by providing guidance and support for the university's highest priorities and governance processes.

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

SHOUT-OUTS

Cabinet members shared messages of congratulations and celebrations for recent events and contributions of faculty and staff on campus.

INFORMATION

Retention

Members shared examples of individual efforts to retain students this semester.

Census Report

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success, provided an overview of the census data finalized on February 4. Overall undergraduate headcount is up for both university campus and City College. Dual enrollment numbers have reached a new all-time high. Graduate student enrollment has decreased. Retention rates are the highest in ten years.

Enrollment celebrations will be held on February 24 in the SUB Atrium at 10:00 am and on February 26 in the City College Tech Commons at 12:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served.

Sculpture and Ceramic Studio Update

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation & Alumni CEO, announced that enough funding has been pledged for the Sculpture and Ceramic Studio so that design procurement can begin. Krista is working with Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance. Krista shared the timeline of design and construction.

POLICY

Unallowable Expenses/ Hospitality

Leslie Weldon reviewed the policy draft that was recently updated to align with the MSU policy. The policy will have its first reading at the March 10 'Jacket Leadership Team meeting.

DISCUSSION

Bulletin Boards

Kathy Kotecki led discussion on the current policy and guidelines for internal and community bulletin board use. Discussion followed. Kathy will work with Jennifer Glad, Associate Legal Counsel at MSU to update the policy.

Campus Safety

Lee Vartanian, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, summarized campus discussions related to best practices for interacting with outside law enforcement should they come to campus. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has provided guidance. Lee stated that University Police should be called if outside law enforcement visits campus. Suzette Nynas, Academic Senate Chair, announced that faculty are working on an informational workshop about legal rights that will be open to faculty, staff, and students. Discussion followed.

Reverse Engineering the Student Experience

Kim Hayworth, led discussion on the article “Reverse Engineering the Student Experience.”

Next meeting date: March 17, 2026

UPDATES (Reprinted as submitted)

Mike Bazemore, Athletic Director

Men’s and Women’s Basketball Double-Headers:

- Thursday (2/19)
 - Women’s Basketball vs. Alaska Anchorage @ 5:15pm
 - Men’s Basketball vs. Alaska Anchorage @ 7:30pm.
- Saturday (2/21)
 - Women’s Basketball vs. Alaska Fairbanks @ 5:15pm.
 - Men’s Basketball vs. Alaska Fairbanks @ 7:30pm.
 - HOF Recognition and Senior Night.

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS:

Golden Merit/Outstanding Undergraduate Leader and other student org and leader nominations are being accepted through Monday, March 9, 2026. Nomination info and nomination links are on the CFE webpages. Golden Merit nominations must be submitted through each college dean.

ADMISSIONS:

Spring Preview Day is Thursday, March 27 on both City College and University Campus
City College Health and Safety Expo is Thursday, Feb. 19th.
City College Transportation and Industry Expo is March 12th.

NATIVE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT CENTER:

The NAAC is preparing a tribal enrollment card initiative for students. Thank you, Academic Senator, Dr. Kari Dahl-Huff for the idea!

The annual MSUB Powwow is scheduled for April 10-11th. (See attached flyer you can print in color!) A call for volunteers will be coming soon.

The next Faculty-in-Residence guest, Janice Wilson, will be on campus Feb. 23-27th, 2026.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS):

DSS administered a faculty survey in fall 2025.

- Sent to 81 “faculty users” with a 34.5% response rate
- Survey highlights: 92% of students “always or often” receive timely service
- Of the faculty respondents, 71.4% collaborate “regularly or often” with DSS regarding accommodations
- Next survey will expand to all faculty
- DSS is hoping to work with CTL to provide additional resources to faculty

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES:

Mental Health First Aid part 1: Mon, March 2, 2026, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm @ City College HSCT 119

Mental Health First Aid part 2: Wed, March 4, 2026, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm @ City College HSCT 119

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an 8-hour, scenario-based training where attendees are invited to enhance their communication and decision-making skills when having conversations with others experiencing mental health challenges. Additionally, Mental Health First Aid emphasizes the negative impacts of mental health stigma and how we can all do our part to reduce stigma through trainings like this. To learn more about MHFA check out this link:

<https://mentalhealthfirstaid.org/about/>.

To sign-up for this training, email RSVP to jerry.girard@msubillings.edu

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Housing:

- Occupancy as of Monday, February 9th: 324 (last year at this time we had 280)
- FY27 applications opened Jan 16th; as of Feb 9th, we have 148 completed applications and 8 started without deposit. A total of 68 new students and 88 returners have booked since the application opening date. This week last year we had 116 completed, with 55 new and 61 returners.
- RA applications: We had 36 students apply, 10 of which are current RAs.

CFE:

- Added new speaker systems to the SUB Atrium and Stingers. This will allow the staff to play music in Stingers and to have a better microphone/sound system for events in the Atrium.

University Police:

- Currently have an open Patrol Officer position. They have had 6 failed searches as candidates are not meeting minimum qualifications so it's been a challenge.

Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Our candidate for Executive Director of IT did not accept our offer. The committee will move forward reviewing other candidate options.