



**Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes  
March 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:** Lee Vartanian, Kathleen Thatcher, Paula Highlander, Kathy Kotecki, Kim Hayworth, Leslie Weldon, Suzette Nynas, Kim Hayworth, Mike Bazemore, and Natalie Preston

**Absent:** Stefani Hicswa and Dan Carter

### **SHOUT-OUTS**

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

### **INFORMATION**

#### **CampusWorks Contract**

Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, announced that MSUB will have the contract with CampusWorks completed soon for partnership on the Innovation Project/ Process Reimagine and Redesign (PRR). The campus-wide meeting with CampusWorks is scheduled for March 31 at 2:00 p.m. in the Glacier Room, following the preliminary meeting on March 27 with project leads. Lee Vartanian, Provost, and faculty leaders will meet with CampusWorks earlier in the week. Discussion followed.

#### **Dare to Lead Workshop**

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success, announced that Chantel Schieffer, former CEO of Leadership Montana, will host a workshop called "Dare to Lead," based on Brene Brown's research, at MSU Billings on May 18-19.

#### **AI Convening Update**

Provost Vartanian; Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation; and Vern Gagnon, Dean of City College, attended the Montana University System's (MUS) AI Summit following the March Board of Regents meeting. The MUS is working to help campuses use tools for productivity and to stay on the forefront of the challenges and opportunities of this emerging technology.

#### **MUS NASH Google AI Training Opportunity**

Provost Vartanian, Vice Chancellor Weldon, and Vice Chancellor Hayworth announced that the MUS has opened a training opportunity for those interested in advancing their skills in AI technology. They will have more details following a meeting later this week.

### **‘Jacket Giving Day**

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO, announced that Wednesday and Thursday are ‘Jacket Giving Day with a kickoff event in the SUB Atrium at 11:30 on Wednesday, March 18. All faculty and staff are encouraged to participate.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Cabinet Retreat**

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, proposed July 27 and 28 for the annual Cabinet Retreat. Discussion followed. Natalie will work to finalize dates and report back.

*Next meeting date: April 7, 2026*

## **UPDATES**

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

Annual Enrollment for FY 27 Benefits April 27-May 15, 2026. There will be information forthcoming regarding rates.

Spring Well Check- April 14-15, 2026. Please see admin general for the flyer to sign up for a time.

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

Fundraising (cash received) for FY26 is just under \$3 million. Next Is Now Campaign has \$6.6 million in commitments, with \$3.1 million in commitments for the new Sculpture & Ceramic Studio. Jacket Giving Day is March 18 and 19 – please join us in the SUB atrium on the 18<sup>th</sup> at noon for a kickoff celebration. The annual Alumni Powwow Breakfast is April 11, with Don Wetzel Jr joining us as our guest speaker. Wine Festival is April 16 and 17, please share ticket info: [Tickets - Montana State University Billings Foundation & Alumni](#) and volunteer info [MSUB Foundation & Alumni](#) with your constituents. We hired Matt Schoonover as our Director of Leadership Giving. Matt most recently was fundraising for the Billings Mustangs and is a proud graduate of MSUB. He started March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance**

#### **Parking**

- Working with Layton/IH regarding additional parking opportunities on campus

#### **Art Building (Sculpture and Ceramic Studio)**

- Board of Regents approved spending up to \$1.65 million on planning and design for the new building. The Foundation has raised \$3.4 million towards the building

#### **Business Services**

- OBB - Changes impacts Student Account process – collaborating with Financial Aid, Advising, and the rest of campus to address
- Hospitality Form changes

- Catering Update – Payments will be paid with PCards. Too often Business Services is chasing down payments and incurring late charges with Sodexo

#### Facilities

- Working on RFP/RFQ for Motorcycle Safety Course at City College (this is funded by the legislature through Helena College)
- Working with State A&E to select Vendor for Cisel Hall HVAC project (funded in the last legislative session coordinated in the LRBP process)
- Working with State A&E on elevator upgrades and roof upgrades (these will take several months and cross fiscal years)

#### Budget

- FY27 Budget workbooks were distributed March 2nd
- Working on fees and tuition projections

#### Payroll

- Annual leave extension forms sent to employees
- Summer session faculty contracts per CBA and training sessions

#### Information Technology

- Our candidate for Executive Director of IT did not accept our offer. The committee is moving forward reviewing other candidate options.
- Questions for IT, reach out to the IT Service Desk at [servicedesk@msubillings.edu](mailto:servicedesk@msubillings.edu)
- As a reminder, Brett's responsibilities have been distributed among Leslie Weldon, Jared Kerr, Rick Whitaker, and Darrel Williams. If you encounter any issues or need assistance, please reach out to the IT Service Desk at [servicedesk@msubillings.edu](mailto:servicedesk@msubillings.edu). They will either resolve the matter directly or route it to the appropriate person.

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

#### FINANCIAL AID

The first round of fall 2026 financial aid offers is on schedule to go out by March 31, 2026. Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships, Justin Beach has conducted One Big Beautiful Bill (OB3) training for the Student Enrollment and Support Collective (with 77 participants!) University Campus and Jacket Student Central academic advising, MT 10, and City College TRIO teams. Contact Justin Beach if you would like to schedule training for your area.

#### ADMISSIONS

Spring Preview Day is Thursday, March 27 on both City College and University Campuses. We expect around 200 students and guests.

City College Transportation and Industry Expo and welding competition was held on Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. Admissions and JSC hosted over 160 students, teachers, and local businesses. City College faculty provided demos and welding instructors judged 26 student entries for the welding competition.

City College Health and Safety Expo hosted about 200 students and teachers on Thursday, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>. City College faculty provided 12 demos each to the rotating student and teachers.

MSUB will host the Future Health Professional (HOSA) state conference for students and teachers at City College on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

Fall 2026 Registration and Orientation dates are on the calendar and RSVP platforms are live!

#### NATIVE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT CENTER

The annual MSUB Powwow is scheduled for April 10-11<sup>th</sup>.

- Grand Entry Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 12 pm and 6 pm
- Alumni Breakfast, April 11 am at 10 am in Glacier Rm, RSVP required
- Still looking for a few volunteers for Saturday
- Free admission for all students, faculty, and staff. Please bring MSUB ID

Tribal ID Campaign will continue through spring 2026

#### **Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement**

Housing:

Occupancy (week of March 9<sup>th</sup>): 324 residents (277 last year at this time)

Fall 2026 applications: 239 completed, 24 competed but with no deposit (203 last year at this time)

RA Staff was hired for the 2026-2027 year – it will be a great team and we were excited to have so many students apply!

Registration Royale: Co-sponsored Casino event to get students registered for Fall classes, Housing and Navigate, while also promoting FAFSA completion: Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>: 6-8pm, Glacier Room.

CFE:

Student Leadership Awards Nominations were due Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> – the committee will be meeting to review and select the winners. The Student Leadership Awards Program will be held Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

SHS:

University Campus Blood Drive will be April 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Blood Mobile (more promotion to follow)

GeneSight Testing: SHS has implemented a new genetics testing process that allows Medical Providers better direction and insight into medication prescriptions for students to best align with their DNA. We hope this will increase success in medication management and better support the retention of our students knowing that their medications work more effectively and in a more timely manner.

Dean of Students:

We are hosting a Montana University System Behavior Intervention Team Training May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>!