



Chancellor’s Cabinet Meeting Minutes
April 7, 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: Stefani Hicswa, Mike Bazemore, Suzette Nynas, Kim Hayworth, Kathy Kotecki, Dan Carter, and Natalie Preston

Absent: Lee Vartanian, Leslie Weldon, Kathleen Thatcher, Paula Highlander, and Krista Montague

INFORMATION

Policy Reminder Regarding Animals on Campus

Cabinet members reviewed the policy regarding animals on campus and referred to Paula Highlander’s update for additional details.

Chancellor Hicswa shared that the policy committee, led by Cindy Bell, had reviewed the current procedure. The committee recommended a revised process that would have policies go first to the Policy Committee for refinement before being advanced to Cabinet. Following discussion, Cabinet members agreed that the proposed process would work well.

ADA Website Compliance Project

Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing, provided an update on the ADA website compliance project. The new federal law will go into effect on April 24, and a cross-functional working group has been preparing for compliance over the past year.

Workshops have been held for CMS users and challenges such as PDF accessibility have been identified. A “Report a Barrier” feature is now included in the footer of every webpage. The group has also researched approaches used by other universities. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) will issue further guidance. Discussion followed.

CMS Website Migration Update

Dan Carter also shared an update on the website migration project. The team at MSU Bozeman is currently checking for duplication and ensuring that algorithms function properly. The migration to the new system will occur in phases and is expected to take place over the summer. The resulting website will be more cleanly organized, though backend processes will feel different. Training sessions will be provided at a later date.

POLICY

Unallowable Expenditures and Hospitality Policy

Proposed changes to the policy were reviewed. The policy will return to the 'Jacket Leadership Team on April 14 for a second reading.

DISCUSSION

Commencement

Commencement will be held on May 2 at 10:00 a.m. at MetraPark's Interstate Arena. Related topics were discussed, including signage and the involvement of Student Regent Carter Jasper.

Summer Meeting Dates

Cabinet members discussed meeting dates for summer. Natalie will update the calendar with summer meeting dates and retreat dates.

UPDATES

Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources

Link to Policy (UPD) – Policy Number 323- “Animals on University Property”

https://www.msubillings.edu/police/policies/323_Animals_on_University_Property.pdf

Please read through the policy as a reminder.

Items to Note:

1. Documentation for Emotional Support Animals (ESA) must be requested through DSS for students and HR for employees. Individuals must follow the appropriate process to be allowed to have an Emotional Support Animal. Please see [323.5 Roles and Responsibilities for University Agencies](#) (pages 3-4).
2. Service animals needed to perform a specific task for the benefit of a person with a disability are allowed on university property
3. As the University is part of the surrounding neighborhoods and community, privately owned domestic animals under proper restraint of their owner are allowed on University property, but may not enter buildings or structures.

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO

Jacket Giving Day 2026 was a strong success, generating a total of \$82,272 with an average gift of \$118. We were proud to see 66 employees participate, including 10 Foundation & Alumni staff members which was 100% participation. The admin general outreach email contributed to 27 total gifts, underscoring the power of coordinated communication and engagement efforts. In terms of giving areas, the College of Business Conference led the way with 38 gifts, followed by Greatest Needs with 32 gifts, and the City College Fullon Memorial Outdoor Space with 28 gifts. Thank you to everyone who supported Jacket Giving Day. Your generosity truly makes a difference. We also welcome your feedback as we continue to build on this success and make next year's event even better.

Friendly reminder Wine and Food Festival tickets are on sale here: [Tickets - Montana State University Billings Foundation & Alumni](#) and volunteer opportunities can be found here: [MSUB Foundation & Alumni](#)

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Events (All of you are welcome to attend):

- April 8th: Registration Royale (event to promote summer/fall registration, housing sign-ups, FAFSA completion): 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Glacier Room
- April 15th: Student Leadership Recognition Program: 5:30 pm, Glacier Room
- April 27th: Cram Jam (Late Night study break with food and games): 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm, Rimrock Café

Housing:

Current Occupancy: 322 (274 this time last year)

Fall 2026 Applications: 288 completed, 20 started with no deposit (135 new, 173 returners); This time last year we had 236 completed with 99 new and 137 returning)

Dining:

Philip Bond, Executive Chef, accepted a position at Drake University. Our current Sous Chef Amber is filling the position on an interim basis with anticipation to be hired into the role permanently. The team is busy focused on supporting and executing many events in April.

Student Health Services:

Kelsey Osmond, Counseling Director, has resigned from her position effective April 10th. We will begin a review of the position and get the hiring process in motion soon.

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Dare to Lead, May 18-19, in the Glacier Room, cost is \$400 for two-day workshop. Contact Kim Hayworth for more information.

FINANCIAL AID

1200 students were notified of their fall 2026 financial aid offers on March 27, 2026. This is four days earlier than 2025! Announcing aid offers is a strategic recruitment and retention priority for the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Well done, Team FA!

MONGOOSE TEXTING PLATFORM

SAS in collaboration with IT and approved by the Executive Team, has developed a set of Mongoose Platform Usage Guidelines (see attachment). These guidelines will help maintain best practice use of the texting platform as well as effectively steward the limited number of area user permissions. The platform offers the ability to send texts to prospective and current students. A Mongoose Training for new, prospective, and current users is scheduled for April 15 from 2-2:30 pm. Please let Kim Hayworth know if you would like to participate.

ADMISSIONS

Spring Preview Day was Friday, March 27 on both City College and University Campuses. We welcomed over 300 prospective students and guests. THANK YOU to the entire campus community for rolling out the red carpet for our guests. Guests had over 30 sessions in order to “choose their own adventure” according to their interests and needs.

BPS Ninth Grade Day – on March 31, 2026, Admissions hosted the first of two BPS ninth grade days. Students enjoyed demos from Dr. Matt Queen and Dr. Dan Wilhem, drone demos, and at City College they toured the Tech Building where faculty hosted demos from Rad Tech, business, and industry programs.

Also on March 31, 2026, City College hosted approximately 300 students and teachers in conjunction with Future Health Professionals (HOSA) MT chapter. Students participated in demos and tours of the City College health programs.

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

NATIVE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT CENTER

Final Elder in Residence April 13-17

April 13th from 3-4pm in COE 122, open to all of campus. See NAAC webpage for full schedule. Theda New Breast will be presenting on Historical Trauma to Cultural Strength: Supporting Native Student Success in COE 122.

Theda is a nationally recognized leader in Indigenous health, cultural resilience, and healing. With over 40 years of experience, she has led international work on historical trauma, mental health, and community healing, and is a founding member of the Native Wellness Institute.

The annual MSUB Powwow is scheduled for April 10-11th.

- 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

- Free admission for all students, faculty, and staff. Please bring MSUB ID

The Tribal ID Campaign will continue through spring 2026

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

DSS conducted a student survey in two-week intervals for a two-month period during spring semester. They found that, of those students registered with DSS, student satisfaction is consistently high, survey results were stable over 2-month survey window.

DSS spring semester faculty survey – sent to 81 “faculty users” with a 34.5% response

- Faculty responded that 92% of the time students always/often receive timely service.

- Faculty responded that 71.4% of them collaborate regularly or often with DSS regarding accommodations

Future plans include-expand survey to all faculty and to work with CTL on faculty resources

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

MSUB will launch an Emergency Notification Test on April 22 between 10-10:30 am

Lee Vartanian, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

The COE has a new Dean. Dr. Ted Purinton will begin his service as Dean of the College of Education on August 1st. He currently serves as the Founding Dean of the Sharjah Education Academy in the United Arab Emirates. Prior to this position, he served as Dean of the Graduate

School of Education, Associate Provost at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and Chair of the Department of Education Administration & Supervision at National Louis University in Chicago, IL.

MSUB student group wins first place at in the Business Plan Competition at the American Indigenous Business Leaders Annual Conference in Las Vegas, March 2026. Congrats to these students and their faculty sponsor, Dr. AJ Otjen.

MSUB students won the Koto-Steele Quiz Bowl at the Northwest Athletic Trainers' Association Annual meeting in Boise, March 2026. Congrats to these students and their faculty sponsor, Dr. Suzette Nynas.

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor

This Thursday, April 9, at 10:00, Rob Masee will offer training for general use and troubleshooting when using IT audio and visual equipment in meeting spaces. We will begin in the SUB Beartooth Room, and go to LI 152.

Planning for the September Board of Regents that will be hosted on campus is underway. Faculty and staff are involved in planning and input is appreciated. The meeting will be held at the university campus on Thursday, September 24, 2026, with pre-board meetings taking place on Wednesday, September 23 and a reception that evening. We are discussing how to showcase City College and other aspects of the meeting.