



**Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting Minutes
June 16, 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, Suzette Nynas, Mike Bazemore, Kim Hayworth, Kathy Kotecki, Natalie Preston, Paula Highlander, and Krista Montague
Absent: Stefani Hicswa, Leslie Weldon, 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

Process Reimagine and Redesign

Lee Vartanian, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, provided an update on the CampusWorks Process Reimagine and Redesign. MSUB faculty and staff and the team from CampusWorks have spent many hours mapping processes and analyzing the student experience from four broad categories: Marketing, Recruitment, and Admissions; Financial Aid; Records and Registration; and Academic Advising and Student Success. We are about halfway through the process and have begun receiving reports from the meeting series that have concluded. Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success, pointed out that CampusWorks has prioritized and provided timelines with their recommendations. There will be opportunities for feedback on these recommendations, and a final presentation will be scheduled in the fall semester. Discussion followed.

See the [Process Reimagine and Redesign page](#) on the intranet for updated meeting schedules and shared documents.

MUS Mental Health and Well-being Action Plan

Provost Vartanian was appointed to the Montana University System (MUS) Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education's is taking a system-wide approach toward promoting mental health and well-being for faculty and staff.

OCHE Projects

Provost Vartanian provided an overview of current OCHE initiatives, including mental health and wellness, artificial intelligence (AI) advising, and academic program review (APR).

Strategic Plan Update

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, provided an update on the strategic visioning process. The campus and community group sessions that were facilitated by Kaleidoscope Group partners Karen Miller and Michelle Williams were used to generate a draft. On June 10, Chancellor Hicswa and Kathleen met with Kaleidoscope Group to review the current draft. Karen and Michelle will meet with University Communications and Marketing, the Delta 'Jackets, and with the Chancellor's Cabinet at the July 21 meeting. The plan will be unveiled at the State of the University Address on August 27. Since we are in a transition with the strategic plan, people are encouraged to reach out to Kathleen if they need information while we transition.

Enrollment

Vice Chancellor Hayworth highlighted figures on current enrollment and retention numbers, which are tracking up. She is optimistic that both rates will continue to increase and surpass increases from the same time period last year. These are the results of the diligent and intentional work of employees across campus. Dr. Hayworth pointed out that the comprehensive data she reported for the "Updates" section was already outdated by the meeting date as it is updated weekly.

'Jacket Giving Day Update

Raised \$82,272 for campus initiatives over the two days for 2026. *This number includes gifts from all who gave (not just MSUB employees).*

MSUB Employee Giving Update

FY25: 109 donors totaling \$120,970

FY26 to date: 102 donors totaling \$90,776

Krista Montague reminded Cabinet members that even small gifts add up when there are more participants and make a positive impact for students.

Alumni/Donor Outreach

Krista shared that the Foundation has received an increase in requests to assist with mailing newsletters to alumni, particularly in connection with the upcoming Centennial. While this level of engagement from campus is welcome and appreciated, it also highlights the need for intentional coordination.

Without a coordinated approach, there is a risk of multiple communications being sent within a short timeframe, potentially reaching the same audience with overlapping messages or solicitations. This can create confusion and may feel uncoordinated from the recipient's perspective.

The Foundation currently distributes a quarterly newsletter to all alumni and donors and would welcome the opportunity to incorporate relevant campus content into those communications. The Foundation database coordinator needs at least two weeks' notice to pull lists as well. Krista will plan to attend a Dean's Council meeting in August to further discuss coordination efforts and explore a more aligned approach moving forward.

DISCUSSION

Operational Plan FY26

Cabinet members reviewed and updated the FY26 Operational Plan.

The next meeting is Tuesday, July 21, 2026, Strategic Plan Presentation 2-3:00

UPDATES

Summer Wellbeing Highlights:

AllOne Health is offering monthly 30-minute, clinician-led virtual support group focused on managing stress during times of transition.

June 25: Virtual Support Group: Feeling the Stress of Seasonal Change? You're Not Alone 12-12:30 PM MDT

July 29: Virtual Support Group: Burnout or Break Time? Navigating Work Stress this Summer 12-12:30 PM MDT

August 27: Virtual Support Group: Stuck in the Middle? Managing the Stress of Caregiving from All Sides 12-12:30 PM MDT

Webinars and Trainings

Embracing Personal Reflection and Self-Awareness June 17th 10:00 – 10:45 AM MDT

When Conflict Is the Signal: Supporting Minority Mental Health at Work

July 7th 10 – 10:45 AM MDT

Still a People Person: Protecting Your Mindset When the Work Gets Heavy

July 15th 10 – 11:00 AM MDT

**SHRM credits available for HR Professionals*

Managing the Stress of Parenting

Aug 19th 10 – 10:45 AM MDT

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO

- The 2026 Wine & Food Festival raised just over \$700K gross, with net of \$474,586. Thank you to all who attended, volunteered, or supported the event. Next year's dates are April 16 and 17, 2027. Same format as 2026. "Cheers to 100 Years" will be the overall theme, and we are considering encouraging people to dress like its 1927. Stay tuned. We also plan to create a focus group to help determine the future of WFF in 2028 and beyond.
- As of June 8, 2026, fundraising cash received in FY26 is \$4,771,518, with over \$2.6 of that dedicated to scholarships.
- Next is Now Campaign has just over \$7 million in commitments: \$3.5 million committed to the new Sculpture & Ceramic Studio, \$3 million committed to scholarships, \$1 million committed to program impact, \$3.1 million in planned gifts.
- Athletics golf scramble is up and running and teams are registering here: [Home](#) Spread the word!
- Our office will be sending out the Centennial Kick off save the dates to all Yellowstone County Alumni and donors. for the Aug 26th party being planned on campus. We are

sponsoring the Centennial light pole banners that will be placed around the outside of campus as well.

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement

Student Health Services:

We are hiring a new Counseling Director and hope to have someone in place August 1st.

CFE/Housing:

Occupancy:

As of June 5th, we have 363 completed applications and 25 started with no deposit (205 new students and 180 returners). This week last year we had 315 completed and 26 started and not completed (192 new and 149 returners).

Colton Adams' last day at MSUB was June 3rd. Given the merge of the CFE and Housing teams, we used this vacancy as an opportunity to review gaps and needs with filling some of his previous duties while supporting other needs within both departments. As a result, we have created an Assistant Director of Housing and Event Support Role. This is an internal search with a close date of June 12th.

We have a busy summer with hosting several camps and conferences, many utilizing Dining Services, SUB meeting space and the residence halls.

Apsaruke: With the MSU College of Nursing moving to their new building, we are currently working to find a new tenant for that building.

University Police:

Brian Kerserich has been hired as a Patrol Officer and his first day will be July 27th. He is scheduled to attend the Law Enforcement Officer Basic Course beginning in September and is expected to graduate at the end of November.

Leslie Weldon, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

BOR Approvals

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.
- Reviewing RFQ respondents. Firms will be interviewed June 23rd.

Business Services

- OBBB - Changes impacts Student Account process – collaborating with Financial Aid, Advising, and the rest of campus to address
- MSUB is moving to a Service Fee for Tuition payments starting August 10th
- Catering Update – Payments will be paid with PCards. Too often Business Services is chasing down payments and incurring late charges with Sodexo
- Preparation for Fall 2027 Student Fee Change Requests is underway. It's time for departments to begin planning any student fee change requests for Fall 2027. Please work with your respective Vice Chancellor from now through the summer to review potential

changes and prepare your proposals. The formal collection and submission process for fee change requests will begin in late September or early October 2026. The student fee guidelines—including fee types, timelines, and the full process—are available on the Business Services Tuition page.

https://www.msubillings.edu/intranet/boffice/Fee_Guidelines.htm

- FYE – Pcard expenses in Chrome River must be fed through all approval queues by 3pm on the 23rd. This includes travel expenses for anyone in travel status. Business Services is happy to assist those in travel to get the expenses flowing as long as the card holder has the receipt, Index, description we will help with reports. Also, if any approvers are going to be unavailable, please let Business Services know who to forward approvals to, if not the supervisor etc.
- Starting the 24th Banner & Chrome River are placed on a hold, no nightly feeds process and no checks are run through the state again until after 7/1/26. This is MSU wide and allows the University to be cash positive during FYE.

Facilities

Construction Season

- Water Main Upgrade – 2nd phase of our water main project (1st phase completed in the fall of 24) will begin this May. Tennis courts may be used for staging next phase for water main upgrade.
- Sanbell selected for the design work for the Motorcycle Safety Course at City College (this is funded by the legislature through Helena College).
- State A&E selected Cushing Terrell 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)
- State selected HGF Architects for the remodel design for City College food service.
- Installing and repairing sidewalks on the University Campus and the City College Campus
- Recent walkaround by State Insurance
 - Concerns about trees and tennis court
- Finishing the McMullen Stabilization project - Landscaping around the building
- Carpet on 2nd floor McMullen
- Refreshing 9 residence hall rooms

Parking

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

Financial Services

Budget

- Working on the Fiscal Year 27 budget development.

Finance

- Working on Fiscal Year 26 closing.

Information Technology

- Jason Davis starts Monday, June 15th. Please welcome him to campus.

Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing

Website migration: Montana State University is preparing to transition to a new website design as well as a new content management system (CMS) to run it. Because MSU owns the platform, we are inheriting the new CMS at Montana State University Billings. We won't have the same identical design, but we will have shared design elements and tools to make the website our own. Expected to begin in July, the MSU digital leadership team — with assistance of the UCAM team — will be systematically migrating the university's many units, program, college and department websites over approximately a year to the new Content Management System (CMS). Each site will be moved into a "staging area" for review by the appropriate dean or director before it is published. We'll have several months for the process to fully migrate.

Centennial: The university Centennial Planning Committee is full at work for all kinds of things that will start this summer. That includes:

- Introduction of the Centennial logo and tagline "A Legacy of Access. A Lifetime Impact."
- Branded computer backgrounds to be in place by July 1
- Electronic "Save-the-Date" reminders (see below) were distributed on Wednesday, June 10 for Foundation and others to send to their various stakeholders.



Save the Date!
Community Centennial Celebration

When Wednesday, August 26 • 5-9pm
Where MSU Billings Main Campus *(north side)*
Who Alumni, community supporters, and neighbors of all ages
Why Turning 100 is a good reason to celebrate! We're just starting early.
Live Music! • Food Trucks! • Kids' Activities!



- The Community Centennial Celebration will be Aug. 26 from 5-9. Food trucks. Kid activities. Live music.... It's gonna be a blast!
- History Facts and Fun being prepared for YPR that will start in July.
- The book is under peer review. In September I will have the full thing and will pull together photos, maps, and illustrations.

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

Fall 2026 Enrollment:

Overall headcount excluding dual enrolled students is +114/+5.9%

FTE excluding dual enrolled students is +138/+9.4%

Undergraduate headcount excluding dual enrolled students +143/+8%

Graduate headcount -29/-17.7%

New First-time Freshman & Transfers +97/+44.7% (Fine print – we are up but not likely this much due to timing of report and slightly different registration schedule between '25 and '26.)

Retention:

Fall '25 cohort retention is 55% or +3.4%/+31 compared to the same week SU'25.

Freshman Orientation

MSUB will be hosting new students and supporters on July 13-14, 2026. For more details visit <https://www.msubillings.edu/orientation/orientationdetails.htm>. The opening session will be held in Petro Theatre at 9:30 a.m. Join us!

TRIO-SSS:

On June 15, 2026, the university campus TRIO-SSS team will be temporarily relocated to the third floor of Cisel Hall, with the Upward Bound/Talent Search & EOC team, while work on their area in the LI building is completed.

Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC):

MSUB recently received news that we have been named a Top Yellow Ribbon School by the *U.S. Veterans Magazine*. The *U.S. Veterans Magazine* is a trusted guide for veterans, transitioning service members and military families seeking their next mission in the workforce or classroom. The goal is to highlight institutions and employers that go beyond the basics—those committed to empowering veterans with the tools, support, and opportunities they deserve. MSUB was selected through a national evaluation process that includes both self-reported surveys and independent research. Evaluations are conducted independently and are not influenced by paid participation. Each organization is assessed on key criteria such as military benefits, ERG support, career transition initiatives and educational services tailored specifically for veterans. Recognition is awarded to institutions offering critical support elements like Veteran Resource Centers, SVOs, VA Certifying Officials and academic credit for military training.