



'Jacket Leadership Team Meeting Minutes September 9, 2025 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Please share all information from today's meeting with the stakeholder group you represent.

'Jacket Leadership Team Purpose Statement

The 'Jacket Leadership Team promotes shared governance by including a wide representation of departmental leaders in decision-making processes and the enacting of institutional priorities. It aims to enhance the university's mission, improve operational efficiency, and foster a collaborative environment that promotes academic excellence and student success.

Did You Know?

The majority of new freshmen applicants to MSU Billings graduated from Montana high schools, 77% at University Campus and 72% at City College.

INFORMATION

Next is Now

Krista Montague, CEO of the MSUB Foundation and Alumni, provided an overview of the timeline and goals of the "Next is Now" major giving campaign. Krista announced that Jacket Giving Day is planned for March 18-19, 2026.

NWCCU Year 7 Visit

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, announced that we are less than one month away from the institution's Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Year 7 Visit from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. She provided guidance on attending the meetings that are scheduled for the three-day visit. Proxies should not be sent without direct communication with Kathleen. Everyone on campus is invited to attend the exit meeting. Kathleen gave an overview of the timeline of steps that will follow the visit. The NWCCU will issue a letter of findings to the university, most likely in February.

Strategic Plan Update

Kathleen Thatcher provided an update on strategic planning. She reported that Karen Miller of Kaleidoscope Group, has received the results of the survey that was circulated campus-wide last month. She announced that a second survey will be available in November and everyone is requested to respond to that survey as well. She acknowledged that many people at MSUB have participated in previous strategic planning processes, but urged everyone to maintain open-mindedness during this new iteration of the process.

AIMA Reporting and Compliance in Recruitment

Sunny Day Real Bird, Director of American Indian Outreach, presented recommendations to incorporate Indian Education for All in employee recruitment to be in compliance with state law related to the Governor's American Indian/ Minority Achievement Report (AIMA). Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, explained how recommendations will be implemented in the employee recruitment process. Discussion followed.

One MSU Policy Update

Jana Marcette, Interim Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives, reported on the One MSU working group. For policies that apply to MSU and affiliates, the One MSU working group has four-campus representation. Jana

presented a draft of a policy being worked on by the group. Their next meeting is on September 17. Jana expects that the policy will be formally reviewed during the current semester.

PRESENTATION

Shared Governance

Suzette Nynas, Kathy Kotecki, Kathleen Thatcher, and Dan Carter presented on the findings of their work to develop a shared governance model. They distributed an infographic card showing the shared governance process based on the feedback from 'Jacket Leadership Team and published resources on shared governance. Kathy Kotecki added that the goal is to build a culture of bringing everyone's contributions to the table. Chancellor Hicswa reiterated that we all need to play a role in this process as leaders on campus.

DISCUSSION

Meeting Format

Dan Carter will be leading a team who will work to determine how to best engage the group and make 'Jacket Leadership Team optimally effective. Chancellor Hicswa invited feedback on the new meeting room set up and meeting agenda.

UPDATES (*reprinted as submitted*)

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.

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 (non-supervisory staff only): 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!

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success

On September 2, 2025, Tracy McLuskie joined the MSUB Student Access and Success team as Director of Disability Support Services. Tracy comes to MSUB most recently as the database manager at the MSUB Foundation. Tracy completed her bachelor of science in liberal studies with an emphasis in communication and health administration at MSUB, and earned an associate's in occupational therapy from Casper College. Tracy has a strong background in clinical and school settings as an occupational therapy assistant. Her heart to serve

students, families, faculty, and staff through excellent customer service, collaboration, and innovation was evident to the search committee during interviews. Tracy is excited to serve her alma mater in this role!

We appreciate Greg Gerard's service as Interim Director for DSS. Greg will moved into a DSS Program Coordinator role as of September 2, 2025.

Welcome Week 2025 THANK YOU!

Thank you to all faculty, staff, and administrators who assisted with the Fall 2025 Welcome Week events. As of last week, MSUB welcomed over 3000 new and returning Yellowjackets plus 673 (so far) Dual Enrollment students. All of the student support areas will be working through census on September 23, 2025 to help students finalize their enrollment through accepting financial aid, arranging payment plans, and confirming attendance. If you have concerns about an individual student, please submit an alert through Navigate or <https://www.msubillings.edu/seesomething/>.

Military and Veterans Success Center Update:

MSUB will hold our annual 9/11 remembrance ceremony on September 11 at City College scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. The ceremony will be held outside the Health Science Building on the City College campus. The event is free and open to the public.

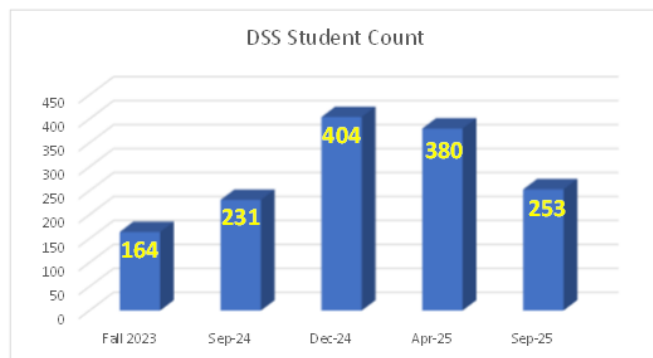
The MSUB Military and Veterans Success Center will once again host the Patton Vets Project on the MSUB campus, September 20-21, 2025. For information about this project visit <https://pattonvets.org/>.

Tracy McLuskie, Director of Disability Support Services

The DSS webpage is: www.msubillings.edu/dss

The past and current number of students we're serving as of 9/4/2025:

Year	Count
Fall 2023	164
Sep-24	231
Dec-24	404
Apr-25	380
Sep-25	253



Joann Stryker, Director of Institutional Research

- DATA REQUESTS: A reminder to direct your data requests to irdata@msubillings.edu. This allows assignment to the most appropriate and available IR staff and prevents requests getting buried in personal email accounts. Thank you!

- **ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS:** The 2025-2026 academic year is MSUB's scheduled engagement survey administration year. These are the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) at City College and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at University Campus. Planning is completed during fall semester, survey administration during spring semester, and results received during subsequent summer semester. Academic year 2026-27 will be focused on analysis, discussion, and use of these institutional assessment results.

For more information on these surveys at MSUB visit the following IR intranet pages:

- NSSE: <https://www.msubillings.edu/intranet/ir/studies/nsse/index.htm>
- CCSSE: <https://www.msubillings.edu/intranet/ir/studies/ccsse/index.htm>
- **FALL CENSUS:** MSUB's fall data snapshot will be run after the end of business, Tuesday, September 23rd. In the days/weeks following this, a variety of standard reports will be posted to the IR intranet census page: <https://www.msubillings.edu/intranet/ir/censusdata/index.htm>.

Cara Virostko, Chair of Staff Senate

Chad Flohr and Bill Skov are the reigning Cornhole champions for a second year in a row on university campus. City College had its own tournament this year, and Kristin Kilpela and Lucas Logan were the winning team.

We are planning to offer back-to-back training on Adobe Acrobat and Express on Wednesday, October 15 in COE 417 at 2 p.m.

Spooktacular is scheduled for Friday, October 31.

Jana Marcette, Interim Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives

Please send any feedback on draft revisions to the OneMSU Reporting Suspected Legal, Regulatory or Policy Violations policy to Jana Marcette and Paula Highlander. The next working group meeting is September 17, 2025. Policy directory work is ongoing, to be completed by April 24, 2026. A wish-list of facilities policies has been identified, and discussions are ongoing regarding expanding or developing a broader policy for specialized equipment and facilities. The Jacket Leadership Team policy committee will meet in September to discuss a timeline for individual policy review, as well as upcoming policy revisions.

Jerry Girard, Director of Student Health Services

The big news in SHS to start the year is that we are now the home of the Buzz Stop – formerly the Yellowjacket Emergency Pantry. Students, staff, and faculty may access the Buzz Stop by contacting the SHS on the University Campus. There is also a Buzz Stop location at City College and there is the Buzz Express at the MSUB Library.

Our Counseling Director, Kelsey Osmond, will be staffing the City College clinic this semester M-F 8:00-11:00 am.

It has been a busy first week with lots of student usage of all services.

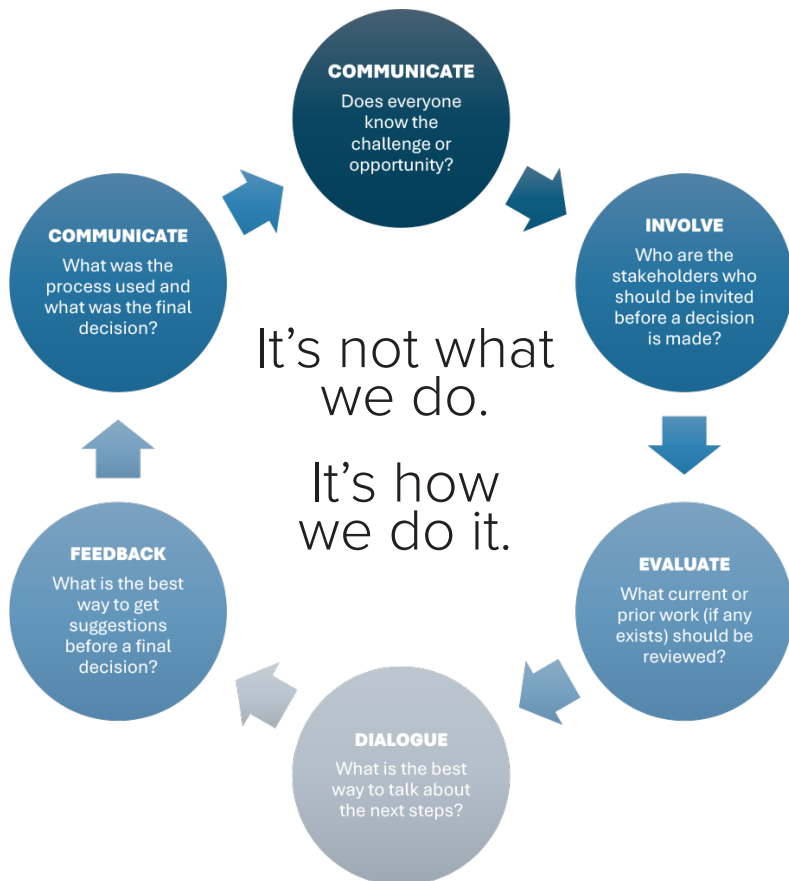
Dan Carter, Director of University Communications and Marketing

- 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.
- 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.

SHARED GOVERNANCE

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SHARED GOVERNANCE

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Shared governance is a system that involves multiple groups working together to make decisions and develop policies. It's based on the principles of equity, accountability, partnership, and ownership.

Shared governance can be used in a variety of settings, including colleges and universities, healthcare organizations, and other teams.

Ultimately, shared governance is one of higher education's most distinctive values and is key to the institutional success of all colleges and universities. It brings stakeholders together around passion for the institution and "ensures the inclusion of a range of voices and ideas in the formulation of goals, priorities, and strategies." Together, these collaborative voices focus on holistic, strategic directions for the future.

*** Reminder:** *If the principles and expectations of shared governance are used, the process can take time. The time should be productive and helpful. If a project or decision is urgent, communicate the urgency and timeline to all involved.*

*** Accountability note:** *As a learning organization, we will continue to hold one another accountable and be supportive in a gracious way. We believe in creating a culture where we can learn from mistakes. When mistakes occur, individuals are encouraged to take responsibility in a constructive manner.*





Montana State University Billings | Native American Achievement Center
Sunny Day Real Bird, Director of American Indian Outreach

2025 AIMA Recommendations Action Plan
 (Updated – June 2025)

Montana State University Billings and City College
Action Plan in Response to AIMA Recommendations

AIMA was established to address the mandates enshrined in Article 10 of the Montana Constitution:

- (1) It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state.
- (2) The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.

	Action Plan	Next Steps	Person Responsible	Implementation Date
Recommendation 1: Senior level point of contact	<p>Identify a senior-level staff member to serve as the primary contact for American Indian student support.</p> <p>Communicate this designation to all departments and establish clear referral pathways.</p> <p>Provide guidance on strategies to improve retention and completion rates for American Indian students.</p> <p>Ensure students are aware of this point of contact through outreach and visibility efforts.</p>	<p>Identify appropriate leadership role within NAAC and communicate designation to university leadership</p> <p>Communicate role and referral procedures to advising, financial aid, housing, and support offices</p> <p>Participate in retention-focused meetings and provide input on American Indian student support</p> <p>Develop flyers, update NAAC website, and include information in orientation and advising materials</p>	<p>Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success and Director of American Indian Outreach, Sunny Day Real Bird</p> <p>Native Student Retention Specialist, Donna Stand Over Bull, Native Success Coordinator, Kenna Bemis, and Financial Aid Navigator, Marlynn Cloud</p> <p>NAAC Team</p> <p>Native Success Coordinator, Kenna Bemis and Financial Aid Navigator, Marlynn Cloud</p>	Ongoing
Recommendation 2: Department points of contact	Develop a clear and accessible list of department points of contact dedicated to supporting Native students on campus.	Annually reconfirm points of contact to account for departmental changes.	<p>Financial Aid Marlynn Cloud, Financial Aid Navigator, (406) 657-2188, marlynn.cloud@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Advising Center</p>	Ongoing

			<p>-Bryan Grove, Assistant Director, (406) 657-2169, bryan.grove@msubillings.edu</p> <p>-Stephanie Cowen, Director of Jacket Student Central at City College, (406) 247-3005, scowen@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Disability Support Services -Greg Gerard, Interim Director of Disability Support Services, (406) 657-2283, greg.gerard@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Student Health Services -Jerry Girard, Student Health Director, (406) 657-2153, jerry.girard@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Admissions Kealy Dowd, Associate Director of Recruitment, (406) 896-5910, kdowd@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Housing and Residence Life -Codie Warhman, Director of Housing (406) 657-2376, Codie.warhman@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Human Resources -Paula Highlander, Human Resources Director, (406) 657-2117, paula.highlander@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Employment and Career Services Dr. Becky Lyons, Director of Career & Employment Services, (406)- 657-2168, blyons@msubillings.edu</p> <p>Academic Support Services Amber West Martin, Director of Academic Support Services, (406) 657-1714, amber.westmartin@msubillings.edu</p>	
<p>Recommendation 3: Collect/Share/Analyze quantitative and qualitative data to guide and improve American Indian enrollment and student success.</p>	<p>Overview of American Indian Data Resources Available at MSUB: General Campus-Level Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCHE-Generated Data and Reports • MSUB Internal Aggregate Reports • American Indian enrollment, retention, and graduation rate data included in standard internal reporting 	<p>A. Semester Reports on Native American Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Reports are regularly shared with administration and department chairs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data is used to inform decision-making and support the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. 	<p>Responsible Office: Information Tech.</p> <p>-Sunny Day Real Bird, Director of American Indian Outreach, (406) 657-2144, 2630 Normal Avenue</p> <p>-Joann Stryker, Institutional Research Director (*link 2) (406) 247-5752 303 McMullen Hall</p>	Ongoing

	Detailed Student-Level Information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> APEX Advisor/Enrollment Reports: Includes student-level data such as enrollment status, class lists, and non-returning students Potential Modifications to Support AIMA Goals: Option to add an American Indian indicator in student records Argos – American Indian Outreach Application: Generates a list of American Indian students with contact information Ad Hoc Data Requests: Submit through the online form (*link 1) 			
Recommendation 4: Request campuses consider how to include American Indian voice in the search process when hiring campus leaders and assess leadership candidate's knowledge and experience working with American Indian students, faculty and staff.	Training and Orientation: -Develop interview questions that specifically address candidates' experience and understanding of working with American Indian students, faculty, and staff. -Offer cultural competency training for all search committee members to ensure a respectful and informed hiring process.	Develop Interview Questions and Evaluation Criteria: A. Collaborate with American Indian representatives to draft interview questions focusing on candidates' experience and initiatives involving American Indian communities. B. Establish clear criteria for evaluating candidates' responses and experiences. Cultural Competency Training: A. Provide resources and support for ongoing learning and sensitivity.	-Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, (406) 657-2117, paula.highlander@msubillings.edu	Make necessary adjustments based on feedback and changing needs to ensure continuous improvement.

Recommendation 5: Provide annual professional development opportunities for all faculty and staff in the areas of Indian Education for All, American Indian culture and cultural sensitivity and the history of Montana's First Peoples.	OCHE version of a Higher Education IEFA. Providing annual professional development for both faculty and staff. A. Awarded grant to hire Faculty Liaison to offer ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty to enhance their cultural competence and awareness.	Work with Chancellor's Cabinet and HR to ensure every staff and faculty member completes the IEFA module.	-Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, (406) 657-2117, paula.highlander@msubillings.edu -Andrea Aebersold, Executive Director of Center for Teaching and Learning, (406) 657-247-5720, andrea.aebersold@msubillings.edu	Ongoing
Recommendation 6: Dissemination of professional development	The action plan is to seek support from the Chancellor, Provost & Vice Chancellors to support 5 and 6.	All new hires will view the higher ed. version of IEFA as part of new employee onboarding for all faculty and staff.	-Paula Highlander, Director of Human Resources, (406) 657-2117, paula.highlander@msubillings.edu -Supervisors	Ongoing
Recommendation 7: Strategy to Leverage Apply Montana and FAFSA Completion Initiatives to Support American Indian Students in Accessing the Montana University System	To improve access to the Montana University System for American Indian students, we will leverage Apply Montana and FAFSA completion initiatives. Our strategy includes partnering with Tribal education offices, local and tribal high schools, and community organizations to raise awareness and conduct informational sessions. We will provide one-on-one assistance through dedicated support lines and offer user-friendly guides. Staff and volunteers will be trained to ensure effective support. A tracking system will monitor completion rates, and follow-up communications will ensure timely submissions.	Work with TRIO Educational Opportunity Center and Office of Admissions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Partnerships - Create Resources - Plan and Conduct Outreach Events - Implement Tracking System - Follow-up Communications 	Marlynn Cloud, Financial Aid Navigator, (406) 657-2188, marlynn.cloud@msubillings.edu TRIO Educational Opportunity Kimberly Kost, Academic Counselor, (406) 657-2182, Kimberly.kost@msubillings.edu -Laura Gittings-Carlson, Director of Advising and Student Support Services/TRIO, (406) 657-1668, l.gittingscarlson@msubillings.edu	Ongoing

*Link 1: <https://msubillings.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV38BBK33FrAhAll>

*Link 2: Joann.stryker@msubillings.edu



Information for Jacket Leadership Team: 9/9/25

Next Is Now

Comprehensive Campaign for MSU Billings
2025-2030

\$27 Million:

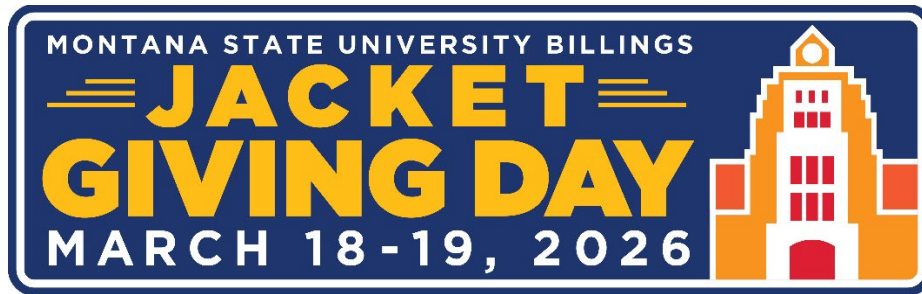
\$13 million scholarships
\$11 million Sculpture & Ceramic Studio
\$3 million – Program Excellence

Montana State University Billings is where potential turns into purpose.

Here, students discover who they are, what they value, and how they will lead in a changing world. Whether they are the first in their family to pursue higher education, or transferring to begin a new chapter, MSUB meets every student where they are and equips them with the knowledge, confidence, and support to go further than they imagined.

Next is Now is more than a campaign. It is a promise: to open doors, expand opportunity, and empower students with the resources, experiences, and spaces they need to thrive, not only in the classroom, but throughout their lives.

**Please note, we will remain in a quiet phase (focus on leadership and major gifts) until 70% of our goal is achieved. Once we reach that milestone, we will expand our efforts with increased public exposure and events. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation & Alumni CEO, at 406-657-2244 or krista.montague@msubfoundation.com*



March 18th (@ 12 noon) until March 19th @ 8:07 pm

JACKET GIVING DAY TIMELINE

- Project Submission Form is open
 - Form will be housed with MSUB Foundation on Microsoft Forms
 - [CLICK HERE](#) to access the form
 - OR visit the MSUB Foundation website under "Resources/MSUB Employee Resources"
- **9/29/25:** Project Submission Deadline
- **10/1/25:** Foundation Development Team Reviews projects and makes recommendations to University Executive team
- **10/3/25:** Projects Submitted to University Executive Team
- **Week of October 13th:**
 - Approval/Denial of Projects Communicated
 - Approved Projects Announced
 - Initial Communication about project lead expectations
- **If your project is approved:** Project Lead Meeting on 11/4 @ MSUB Foundation (Time TBA)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON PROJECT IDEAS: If you don't have a **physical** project, that is OK – unrestricted funds to be used for your area/college is perfectly acceptable –remember that is that idea marketable OUTSIDE of campus?

JACKET GIVING DAY – Some things to remember...

- Based on feedback from last year we will be doing away with “Academic centers & Institutes” and “Areas of Critical Need” as categories and those projects will be listed on the main page. Yellowjacket Athletics will remain a category within itself.
- Key Initiatives (formally ‘Areas of Critical Need’) for Giving Day are the funding priorities of the MSUB Foundation:
 - Yellowjacket Nation Greatest Needs
 - Yellowjacket Excellence Scholarship
 - Finish Line Scholarship
 - General Athletic Scholarships
 - Yellowjacket Student Crisis Fund (available but not heavily promoted)
- If you **become** a project lead – remember you’re the expert and advocate for your project...you know best who to talk to and solicit – we (the Foundation) can help you, but we’ll look to you for leadership in this area.



Awareness & Fundraising Request Process (Revised 2025)

Purpose

To streamline coordination and protect important relationships, all campus activities involving fundraising, alumni outreach, donor engagement, or external relations must now follow a two-step request process through the MSUB Foundation & Alumni team.

This revised process ensures alignment with university policies, institutional priorities, donor data & privacy requirements and proper tax receipting.

Step 1 – Awareness & Fundraising Request (Initial Proposal)


- Who completes: Project Champion/Requestor
- Goal: Provide a high-level overview of your initiative so Foundation staff can determine next steps.
- Key Information Requested:
 - Project/Event name, lead contact, department/program
 - How initiative aligns with MSUB's mission
 - Brief description, goals, participants
 - Type of engagement (fundraising, alumni, donor, sponsor identification, other)
 - Anticipated date(s)
 - Past Foundation involvement
- Review & Signatures: Champion, Dean/Director, Vice Chancellor (if applicable), Foundation staff, CEO, Chancellor
- Next Step: Foundation staff may direct you to complete Step 2 and/or an additional Campus Data Request.
 - ⚠️ Depending on the nature of the submission, a separate Campus Data Request form may be required to ensure compliance with the Data Sharing Agreement between the Campus and the Foundation.


Step 2 – Execution & Coordination

- Who completes: Project Champion (or designated execution contact)
- Goal: Provide detailed execution plan once Step 1 is approved.
- Key Information Requested:
 - Engagement type (email, mailing, event, social media, other)
 - Target audience(s) (alumni, donors, friends, community partners, etc.)
 - Data needs (e.g., specific alumni lists or segments)
 - Messaging/call to action
 - Timeline with deadlines, launch dates, or event dates
 - Foundation assets required (design, print, mail, RSVP form, online giving form, etc.)
 - Budget considerations (funding source, estimates, Foundation contribution if needed)
 - Special considerations (VIPs, timing sensitivities, key messaging)
- Review & Signatures: Champion, Dean/Director, Foundation contact



Important Reminder

 Any activity on campus that involves soliciting funds must be run in coordination with the Foundation. This ensures maximum alignment across the university and careful stewardship of relationships in the community, particularly as we move into a comprehensive campaign.

 The good news: campus partners have really begun to embrace this approach, which is strengthening collaboration and consistency across MSUB.

What's New in 2025

- Mandatory two-step process: High-level proposal (Step 1) followed by detailed execution plan (Step 2).
- Campus Data Request compliance: A separate form may be required in Step 1 to honor the Data Sharing Agreement.
- Greater emphasis on coordination across campus, ensuring all outreach aligns with mission, policies, and external relationships.
- Formal review and approvals required at each stage before proceeding.

Need Help?

Contact Nick Schmidt, Director of Annual Giving

 406-657-2253 |  nick.schmidt@msubfoundation.com