

MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY
BILLINGS

'Jacket Leadership Team Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2026, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

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.

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

MSUB MOMENT

Slivers of time in our 100 years

In 1925, the Montana Legislature passed and the governor signed into law, "An Act to Establish an Eastern Montana Normal School." It directed that an out-of-state commission, to be chosen by the Board of Education, determine the site of the new institution by the summer of 1926. Billings business leaders took the lead in advocating for the Magic City.

SHOUT-OUTS

Stefani Hicswa, Chancellor, gave shoutouts to everyone who participated in welcome week, and to Kurt Toenjes, Dean of the College of Health Professions and Science, and his team for the lab coat ceremony.

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement, gave a shoutout to Ryan Morris, Executive Director of Facilities Services, and team for all of their work during move-in weekend, particularly with the rainfall.

Chancellor Hicswa gave a shoutout for the University Honors breakfast and Montana 10 breakfast.

Kim Hayworth, Vice Chancellor for Student Access and Success, gave a shoutout to Justin Beach, Director of Financial Aid, and Tracy McCluskie, Director of Disability Support Services, for their presentations on Disability Support Services and the financial aid changes due to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Kurt Toenjes gave a shoutout to Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Accreditation and Assessment, for the informative presentation she gave to faculty on academic prioritization.

Jerry Girard, Director of Student Health Services, gave a shoutout to Barb Burows, Director of Business Services, and Jill Brown, Business Manager, for assisting Student Health Services with equipment purchases that will help them better serve students.

Kathy Kotecki, Dean of Student Engagement, gave a shoutout to all who came in on Sunday for move-in and helped students and their families.

INFORMATION

25th Anniversary 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony

Vern Gagnon, Dean of City College, announced that on Friday, September 11, the 25th Anniversary 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held next to the memorial outside the Health Sciences Building. Dallas Knight, veteran, author, and entrepreneur, and Justin Jagers, 911 Communications Center Manager for the City

of Billings, will serve as keynote speakers. The Exchange Club of Billings has set up the “healing field” of 1000 American flags near the site.

Board of Regents Meeting on Campus September 24

Natalie Preston, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, reminded the group that on September 24, MSUB will host the September Board of Regents meeting. Guests will begin arriving for meetings on Wednesday, September 23, and may need directions or assistance. Please attend the meeting if possible and show your Yellowjacket spirit by wearing blue and yellow or MSUB gear, and your nametag on those days. All meeting attendees are invited to the reception on the evening of September 23 at the Chancellor’s residence.

Strategic Vision Next Steps

Kathleen Thatcher updated the team on next steps for the new strategic vision. The Delta Jackets will meet to continue reviewing the action items associated with each value and the associated strategic priority. Action items will likely focus on significantly increasing retention and graduation, and will incorporate data from peer institutions, as well as some of the recommendations from the Process Reimagine and Redesign (PRR). Discussion followed.

‘Jacket Mentors

Katie Moffatt, Retention Director, discussed the ‘Jacket Mentor Program. If any faculty or staff are interested in this opportunity to support a student, please use the Qualtrics [link](#) or contact Katie Moffatt.

‘Jacket Giving Day

Krista Montague, MSUB Foundation and Alumni CEO, announced that ‘Jacket Giving Day is March 17 and 18. The deadline for project submissions is October 9. *See attached timeline.*

Next is Now Campaign

Krista Montague gave an overview of the fundraising goals and timeline for the Next is Now campaign that launched the quiet phase in July.

Buzz Stop Updates

Jerry Girard, Director of Student Health Services, gave a preview of the updates to the Buzz Stop, formerly Yellowjacket Emergency Pantry, and the research that resulted in these updates. The Buzz Stop is now designed to be easier and more private for students to utilize. Jerry will have more information in October. Contact Lisa Shirk in Student Health Services to ask about donation needs for the Buzz Stop.

Meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Minutes by Natalie Preston.

Updates/Announcements

Jerry Girard, Director of Student Health Services

New Counseling Director, Kai Hoagland, started with us on Tuesday, September 1st.

SHS is currently in the process of expanding our medical testing lab services for students. More to come soon on the specifics.

Also be on the lookout for expanded outreach from the Buzz Stop and definitely check out what Eileen and the Library staff are doing with the Buzz Express.

**Amber West Martin, Director of Center for Teaching and Learning
and Academic Support Center**

Center for Teaching and Learning

New Faculty Orientation

The Center for Teaching and Learning welcomed all new part-time and full-time faculty to the in-person New Faculty Orientation on Monday and Tuesday. We also held a *new* Part-Time Faculty Orientation Wednesday evening. Both New Faculty Orientations went well! We enjoyed meeting 13 new full-time faculty as well as 6 part-time faculty. We're excited to continue connecting the new faculty to more professional development resources in the coming months, with CTL programming around advising and annual review.

Events and workshops coming up for September are:

Faculty will gather in the CTL this fall to discuss the book "Slow Productivity" by Cal Newport beginning September 14th and 15th.

The Online Teaching Series session 1 will begin September 25th.

Academic Support Center

The Academic support Center is looking forward to welcoming back our tutors, Navigators, SI Leads, and front desk staff to our orientation and training on September 8th! If you know returning students who are looking for jobs that work around their student schedules the ASC is looking for:

Math tutors

A&P tutors

Navigators

Front Desk

Students can visit the ASC webpage for more information at the following link

<https://www.msubillings.edu/asc/employment.htm>

Fall hours for the ASC

University Campus

Monday – Thursday 9AM – 5PM, Fridays 9AM – 4PM

Monday & Wednesday 5PM – 8PM

City College

Monday – Thursday 8:30AM – 4PM

Friday 8:30 AM – 12PM

Fall 2026 Navigate 360 Campaign Dates:

- Week of October 12: Enrollment Census Campaign #1 (For specific international students in Hyflex classes)
- Week of October 19: Progress Report/Grade Check Campaign #1 (For specific student groups)
- Week of Nov. 30: Enrollment Census Campaign #2 AND Progress Report/Grade Check Campaign #2

Call for volunteer 'Jacket Mentors:

Sign up for the 2026-2027 'Jacket Mentors program to get involved! We have over 30 students signed up to participate and additional mentors are still needed! Mentor/mentee matches will be made in early September and this is a low-key, low-commitment way to connect with students who you may not usually interact with. Fill out this brief survey to sign up! https://msubillings.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4Pm4GJp8PrBQ2PQ. Mentors will receive a Resource Guide with more information on the program and expectations.

Chancellor's Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					Developed 8/4/2026 Updated 8/18/2026 Updated 9/15/2026
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
Stubbornly Yours Student-Centered Support	Prioritize and implement recommendations from the Process Reimagine and Redesign (PRR) project.	Prioritize four focus area recommendations	Lee Vartanian	October 31, 2026	
		Develop implementation plan	Lee Vartanian	October 31, 2026	

Chancellor’s Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
Uncommonly United Community Partnerships & Engagement	Reflect and celebrate Centennial	Calendar of celebrations	Dan Carter	ongoing	
		Contextualize historical highlights	Dan Carter	ongoing	

Chancellor's Cabinet Operational Plan FY27

Chancellor's Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
	Enhance communication and transparency for budget practices and procedures	Publish Budget Advisory Council agendas and meeting minutes	Tia Brown	ongoing	
		Initiate campus conversations	Tia Brown	ongoing	
		Update budget planning calendar	Tia Brown	October 31, 2026	
		Align budget to strategic vision	Tia Brown	December 18, 2026	

Chancellor’s Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
Uncommonly United Community Partnerships & Engagement	Support Foundation to Raise \$7 million (\$6 million for Sculpture and Ceramics Studio)	100% meaningful giving/volunteering for Cabinet members for Foundation initiatives and events	Krista Montague and Stefani Hicswa	June 30, 2027	

Chancellor's Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
Magic Makers Campus Experience & Atmosphere	Finalize architectural design for Sculpture and Ceramics Studio	Complete the Design to Plan stage for the Sculpture and Ceramics Studio	Tia Brown	January 31, 2027	

Chancellor's Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
	Operationalize MSUB's Strategic Vision 2027-32	Develop process for strategic vision implementation and data collection	Kathleen Thatcher	February 1, 2027	
		Align budget to strategic vision	Tia Brown	December 18, 2026	

Chancellor's Cabinet Operational Plan FY27					
Strategic Framework Alignment	Goal	Action Items	Responsible Cabinet Member	Timeline	Status
	Implement an employee and student well-being action plan	Implement MUS Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan	Lee Vartanian	June 30, 2027	
		Employee training	Tia Brown	ongoing	