

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**June 8, 2023**  
**Billingsly Student Center**  
**Room 310**

The June 8, 2023, meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by Chairwoman Anita Oplotnik. Governors in attendance were T. Mark Elliott, Bill Gipson, Carlos Haley, Anita Oplotnik, Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg, Mariann Morgan, and Alison Hershewe. Others in attendance were Dr. Jean Coltharp, John Hammons, Alicia Hughes, Rob Mallory, Dr. Brad Hodson, Dr. Lisa Toms, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Shellie Hewitt, Linda Eis, Marcel John, and Jeanie Nice.

Governor Ron Richard was not in attendance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairwoman Oplotnik called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Governor Oplotnik asked if there were any announcements. None were mentioned.

**MINUTES**

Chairwoman Oplotnik asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the March 10, 2023 Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by Mariann Morgan and seconded by Alison Hershewe to approve minutes of the March 10, 2023 Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).*

Chairwoman Oplotnik asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the Special Board Meeting held May 17, 2023; none were noted.

*A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve minutes of the May 17, 2023 Special Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).*

**Emeritus Approval and Recognition**

The Academic Affairs committee item of approving Emeritus status was moved up in the agenda. The podium was turned over to Dr. Lisa Toms who introduced Dr. Kerry Johnson who spoke on behalf of Dr. Charles Curtis.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve the recommendation of Dr. Charles Curtis for Professor Emeritus. Motion passed unanimously.*

Dr. Curtis was awarded a medallion and pin. Dr. Lisa Toms then introduced Dr. Jason Willand who spoke on behalf of Dr. Michael Fletcher.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Mariann Morgan to approve the recommendation of Dr. Michael Fletcher for Professor Emeritus. Motion passed unanimously.*

Dr. Fletcher was awarded a medallion and pin. Dr. Lisa Toms then introduced Dr. Tom Schmidt who

spoke on behalf of Mr. Terry Marion.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the recommendation of Mr. Terry Marion for Professor Emeritus. Motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Marion was awarded a medallion and pin. Dr. Tom Schmidt then spoke on behalf of Dr. Chris Moos.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Alison Hershewe to approve the recommendation of Dr. Chris Moos for Professor Emeritus. Motion passed unanimously.*

Dr. Moos was awarded a medallion and pin. Governor Oplotnik congratulated all the recipients for their achievements.

**President (Dr. Dean Van Galen):**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Van Galen's report are as follows. Additional information can be found in a handout distributed to the Board that is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book.*

**Visit of Commissioner Boggs**

In early May, we hosted Missouri's new Commissioner of Higher Education, Dr. Ben Boggs. Dr. Boggs came to Missouri most recently from Colorado, and it was a great opportunity to introduce him to what is special about Missouri Southern and the Joplin region. There was an informational session over lunch followed by a campus tour. The tour was one I suspect Dr. Boggs will remember as it included a visit to our cadaver lab, hosted by Dr. Alla Barry, a brief session on last fall's Czech semester activities, hosted by Dr. Chad Stebbins, and a tour of our reptile research lab, hosted by Dr. David Penning. Our students were the stars, speaking about their experiences at each stop on the tour. The evening reception with community leaders was well attended, and I know that Commissioner Boggs left with a very positive impression of Missouri Southern. Special thanks go to Governor Haley and Coordinating Board members Senators Gary Nodler and David Satar for their participation.

My report to the Board begins with highlights from the university's 80th commencement ceremony held in Leggett and Platt Athletic Center on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Commencement is always a great reminder of our purpose—the difference that the work of our university makes in the lives of students, their families, and communities. Congratulations to our over 600 new MSSU graduates and thank you to our faculty and staff who have supported each and every one of them. This includes the four faculty who received emeriti status today as they truly exemplify how outstanding educators have lifelong and, indeed generational, impacts of our students.

**Strong State Support for Public Higher Education**

My report also highlights what has been a very successful legislative session for higher education and Missouri Southern. While the Governor has yet to sign the fiscal year 2024 state budget, we anticipate a significant increase in core funding, as well as additional one-time funding for the Health Science Innovation Center. Earlier this week I had the opportunity to attend an event with Governor Parson to provide a Missouri Southern update and to thank him for his extraordinarily strong support of public higher education. He places a strong focus on the need to develop talent and Missouri's future workforce. His leadership, and the support of the Missouri General Assembly, is appreciated.

## **President (cont.):**

### **Looking to the Future**

Next month we will commemorate the 20-year anniversary of our institution gaining university status. As we honor this rich history, we also know that we must look forward, and that we have important work to do in the year ahead:

- We must begin to implement our new strategic plan in ways that make us a stronger, even more student-centered university.
- We must build upon the extraordinary early success of the *Lions Forward* Campaign to provide resources that will advance our university, always expressing gratitude to those who are investing in our work.
- We must continue to build mutually beneficial partnerships, from local to global, knowing that great things are possible when people work together.
- And we must support and invest in our people the staff and faculty who, no matter the role they play, help our students succeed and our community thrive.

## **Executive Vice President (Dr. Brad Hodson):**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Hodson's report are as follows. Additional information can be found in a handout distributed to the Board that is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book.*

### **Lantern Society Dinner**

The Missouri Southern Foundation hosted its annual Lantern Society Dinner to recognize major donors. Over 150 guests attended the event at the Silver Spoon Event Center in Joplin, which was the first such dinner to be hosted since 2019 due to the pandemic.

### **New Signage and Wayfinding**

Beginning this summer, Missouri Southern will implement a new signage and wayfinding system to improve accuracy, consistency, ease of use, and aesthetics. We hope to have significant changes in those elements of our exterior signage done when the Board returns for our next meeting in September.

## **Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Dr. Lisa Toms):**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Toms report are as follows. Additional information can be found in a handout distributed to the Board that is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book.*

### **Year End Activities**

April and May were full of end-of-year activities such as the Glen Dolence Service Awards, Departmental Recognition Ceremonies, Pinning Ceremonies, Concerts and Recitals, and many others. I am constantly impressed by the quality of students we have at Missouri Southern, and I look forward to continuing to work with the academic and support units to provide these students with opportunities to grow and thrive here.

## **Provost (cont.):**

### **Empty Bowls**

Our faculty and staff have also been busy with excellent teaching and research, as well as both campus and community service projects. The MSSU Lion Co-op and the Department of Art and Design held the second annual Empty Bowls event that raised funds to provide scholarships for junior and senior MSSU students that have financial needs. The scholarships are awarded in the form of tokens that can be used for food at the Webb City Farmers Market. The event served 150 people and raised \$3,000.

### **TEDxMSSU**

Two Missouri Southern faculty members were chosen to present at the TEDx MSSU event on Connectedness on May 4th. Dr. David Locher, Professor of Sociology and former Faculty Senate President is an author of a textbook on collective behavior and a winner of two outstanding teaching awards. Dr. Christine Bentley, Professor of Art and Gallery Director is currently doing research on the relationship between art and medicine and preservation challenges within small university collections. Missouri Southern faculty joined 10 other speakers in Missouri Southern's first TEDx event.

### **Missouri Secretary of State Council on Library Development**

Ms. Amber Carr, Assistant Library Director and Marketing & Outreach Librarian, was appointed to the Missouri Secretary of State's Council on Library Development. Her three-year term will begin on July 1, 2023, with the possibility of a second three-year term appointment. She is only one of two academic librarian representatives to serve on the Council. Ms. Carr's appointment is a positive reflection of her strong work ethic, the respect she has earned, and her many contributions to librarianship at MSSU and throughout the state.

### **Honors Program**

For this upcoming academic year, the Honors Program accepted 43 new students, which is our largest incoming class since before the pandemic. Here are some statistics:

- 7 are current MSSU students
- 8 are transfers from another college
- 28 are first time freshmen
- 4 are valedictorians of their senior class
- 13 have 4.0 GPA's
- 16 are in the top 10% of their class
- 15 are from out of state
- 2 have an ACT of 30 or higher

The Honors Program enjoyed a 99% engagement rate with our students. Due to its high rate of student engagement, the MSSU Honors Program was recognized nationally in 2022. They are on track to do that again this year.

### **Global Leaders**

In 2022-23, Global Leaders were active and engaged on campus and off. The group had six site visits to area corporations and non-profits, participated and/or helped organize eight service projects with various nonprofits, and hosted 12 featured speakers' events on campus – with seven of those being MSSU alum and two featured speaker events. Through the Program, twelve students studied abroad, six students received internships, and two Global Leaders were selected to participate in the Missouri Governor's Student Leadership Forum.

## **Provost (cont.):**

### **Immersive Learning**

If you were over between Young Gymnasium and Leon Health Sciences Building, you would have seen 105 elementary school age children participating in Lifetime Sports Academy this week. These elementary children participated in this week-long daytime event that is planned and implemented by our students in the Kine 355 course, which is a practicum.

### **Strategic Plan Taskforce**

I would like to thank the twelve individuals on the Strategic Plan taskforce, who worked very hard this year, for their work on the strategic plan that we will present to you later in the meeting for approval.

### **Data Analytics Approved**

We just learned this morning that the MS in Data Analytics was fully approved by HLC, and we can begin marketing and taking applications as soon as we can get the programming completed.

## **Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer (Ms. Linda Eis):**

### **SERRA (Strategic Employee Retention and Recruitment Analysis)**

We began the project in fall 2022, and in April we received the report and provided the information to the campus. We reaffirmed that the information is one data point/one tool that would be used to inform the strategic employee recruitment and retention analysis (SERRA). Implementation of decisions concerning compensation and fringe benefits will be a multi-year process beginning with the fiscal year 2024 budget.

### **Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

We've been working very hard across campus with a lot of departments and have had a lot of conversations concerning the budget for fiscal year 2024. The board will be asked to formally approve the budget later in the meeting and I want to thank everyone for their hard work in developing this budget.

### **Annual Audit Year 2023**

We are in the final month of fiscal year 2023 and audit preparation is moving along at a fast pace as we prepare for the annual external audit. FORVIS (formerly BKD) will be on site in late June to begin the compliance fieldwork that primarily centers around student financial aid and federal grants. In addition, they will begin the walkthrough of finance processes. The auditors will return to campus again for two weeks in August for additional fieldwork that focuses on the university's fiscal year financial transactions. The actual audit data gathering, fieldwork, writing the narrative, producing the financials and supporting tables will encompass the next five to six months with the results expected to be presented at the November 2023 Board meeting.

### **Insurance Committee**

The insurance committee did a tremendous amount of work last year to review proposals and to transition us to a new carrier in January 2023. This year, their work includes reviewing claims data, trends, plan design, etc. in order to set rates for calendar year 2024.

**CFO/Treasurer (cont.):**

**Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending May 31, 2023**

**Cash Graph:**

Ms. Eis noted the balance at the end of May 31, 2023, is \$20.1M.

**Statement of Net Position:**

**Total Assets:** \$185M

**Total Liabilities :** \$133M

**Net Position :** \$52M

**Comparative Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position (difference column):**

- **Total Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$641k). This is made up of a decrease in tuition. We do have an offset with auxiliary, residence halls and the bookstore.
- **Total Operating Expenses:** Reflects a decrease of (\$8M). This includes compensation (\$2.7M) changes made for the FY23 budget. The utilities increased from a rate increase of \$541k, and there are additional fuel charges due to additional resident halls back online. Scholarships variance (\$7.1M) is primarily due to no student HEERF grants in the current year.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$10.8M). State appropriations for MOSERS represents a ten-month draw of \$374k. We've submitted our last request and in total we will receive \$460k. MoExcels difference is \$622k.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**  
Current Year: \$1.4M loss  
Prior Year: \$2M gain  
This results in a decrease from Prior Year: (\$3.4M)

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Bill Gipson to approve the May 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for May 2023 is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

**Dean of Admissions (Dr. Shellie Hewitt)**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Hewitt's report are as follows. Additional information can be found in a handout distributed to the Board that is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book.*

**International Student Recruitment Initiatives:**

To date we have received more than 800 applications and admitted over 400 international students. 85% of these students are undergraduate, degree-seeking students from various countries. The top countries are Nepal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Bangladesh, Ghana, and Ethiopia. Initiatives that contribute to the growth of international recruitment include the new international student scholarships we are offering in the fall, partnerships with regional community colleges, and international partnership with organizations and agencies around the world.

**New Student Recruitment and Enrollment:**

Many staff and faculty have assisted with student recruitment and enrollment initiatives, and we are seeing progress with new student enrollment. This past year collaboration and teamwork have become

## **Dean of Admissions (cont.):**

the focus and it is truly making a difference. Our graduate programs have seen some success over the past several weeks with increased enrollment. Additionally, we've seen that our new transfer scholarship model and marketing strategy has given Missouri Southern a competitive edge and I'm happy to report we are seeing positive trends for enrollment there as well.

## **Director of Athletics (Mr. Rob Mallory):**

*Note: Highlights of Ryan's report are as follows. Additional information can be found in a handout distributed to the Board that is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book.*

### **Spring Sports Success**

The Men's Golf team captured both the MIAA regular season and tournament championships this year. Trae McCrae was named MIAA Golfer of the Year. Head coach Mike Wheeler was named MIAA Coach of the Year.

The Softball and Baseball teams ended a successful season finishing second in both the MIAA regular season and tournament championship. Both earned the #2 seed in the Central Region, and we were blessed to host an NCAA Regional on campus for both sports.

The Outdoor Track & Field teams finished 2nd (men) and 5th (women) in the MIAA Championship Meet. I had the privilege of escorting 15 student-athletes and their coaches to the NCAA Outdoor National Championship meet, which took place in Pueblo, CO. Men finished fifth and our women fourteenth. Payton Barton won the national championship in the discus and second in the hammer throw. Our men's T&F finished second in the United States Track & Field and Cross-country Coaches Association in the Program of the Year standing.

Missouri Southern finished third in the MIAA Commissioners Cup, the highest ever finish for the department in a year in which all sports seasons were completed.

### **Lions Excel in the Classroom**

The spring semester was another strong academic performance for MSSU student-athletes, as they collectively earned a 3.21 GPA. 132 student-athletes earned a 3.5 GPA or better for the spring, while 63 finished with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

### **Community Engagement Summary**

MSSU student-athletes finished the 2022-23 academic year with 5,239 hours of community service and an 82% participation rate. After finishing fifth in Division 2 during the fall semester's NCAA Teamworks Challenge, Missouri Southern ended the academic year seventh overall in Division 2. This was a big initiative for our student advisory council and for their efforts they were awarded the MIAA SAC Cup for the first time in school history. That award is given for things like community service, Make-a-Wish fund raising and participation in MIAA and NCAA initiatives and meetings. Two softball student-athletes attended the awards ceremony to accept the award on behalf of MSSU.

### **Student-Athlete Awards Banquet**

On Monday, May 9th the athletic department celebrated the accomplishments of the year at the annual Student-Athlete awards banquet. My report lists all the individual winners.

**Faculty Senate President (Dr. Jean Coltharp):**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Coltharp's report are as follows.*

As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, we have a new executive committee. The group is as follows:

President: Jean Coltharp

Past President: Vacant

President Elect: Michael Beilfuss

Secretary: Amber Carr

Parliamentarian: Laura Schisler

At Large: Zack Rice

Later in the meeting we will discuss, and hopefully approve, the new bylaws and constitution the faculty has been working on all year. It's gotten approval by Faculty Senate, school faculty and finally the Board today.

This upcoming year we want to work on anonymous voting. We have found that when we do email votes, we get a wider range of opinion as opposed to face-to-face where we get unanimous approval. This appears to sound good, but there may be some unintentional peer pressure we don't see with emails.

**Staff Senate President (Ms. Alicia Hughes):**

*Note: Highlights of Ms. Hughes report are as follows:*

Our service champ award winners for the first quarter are Jared Carper, Ryan Orcutt and Stephanie Workman. These winners exemplify respect to the campus community, positive attitude, pride in work, exemplary dependability and excellence in customer service.

In our last meeting we discussed the Staff Senate's new mission and vision and that new goals were coming. They have been created and are included in my report. They are:

- Create a culture that supports University pride through communication and collaboration amongst senators and campus community to encourage and solicit engagement with all areas of campus.
- Advocate for the development of work environments that foster collaboration and professional growth, while promoting healthy habits and work-life balance.
- Develop, support and enhance positive initiatives that create a more vibrant campus community, build support, and foster the mental and physical well-being of the campus community.

Finally, included in my report are a few of the Staff Senate Committee work initiatives.

**Student Senate President (Mr. Marcel John):**

*Note: Highlights of Mr. John's report are as follows:*

In Student Senate, we have new faces on Student Senate. I will remain president. The Vice President is now Payton Randolph and Secretary is Morgan Robinson. We are still focused on campus vibrancy and am happy to announce we did get approval for outdoor seating in front of the bubble at Billingsly. Our project next semester is going to be a community outreach project. We're going to partner with one of the local schools and create a positive outlook for Missouri Southern.



## **Board Committees:**

### **Personnel/Compensation (T. Mark Elliott, Chair):**

The committee met in closed session for the annual review of the President and will also meet after the Board meeting in closed session.

### **Academic Affairs (Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg, Chair):**

We had a lengthy meeting this morning and accomplished quite a few goals. First was the new 2023-2028 Strategic plan and the new mission, vision, statement of core values, goals, and objectives. The strategic plan was distributed and reviewed during the May Special Board meeting.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. Motion passed unanimously.*

The committee also reviewed and approved the list of employees for promotion and tenure. Those people are:

#### Tenure

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Dr. Joseph Boomer    | Psychology                |
| • Dr. Dominic Buccieri | Management/Marketing      |
| • Ms. Amber Carr       | Library                   |
| • Dr. Jeri Goswick     | Teacher Education         |
| • Dr. Laura Schisler   | Teacher Education         |
| • Dr. Rebecca Shriver  | Social Sciences (History) |

#### Promotion

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • Dr. Holly Hackett, Full Professor    | Psychology                     |
| • Dr. Victoria Rhodes, Assoc Professor | Biology & Environmental Health |

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Mariann Morgan to approve those recommended for promotion and tenure. Motion passed unanimously.*

The Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws were reviewed and approved by the committee.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws. Motion passed unanimously.*

New Academic Programs were also reviewed. These include a Bachelor of Science in Social Studies, a graduate certificate in Sociology, and a Master of Business Administration encompassing several areas.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Alison Hershewe to approve these new academic programs. Motion passed unanimously.*

## **Budget Audit Committee (Carlos Haley, Chair):**

Since this is the last meeting of the year, we had several items we needed to take care of. We discussed tuition rate, FY24 budget and the construction of the Health and Science Innovation Center.

We have three motions that we would like to submit to the Board. First motion:

Authorize the Administration to set the following tuition for FY24:

- In-state/Lion Pride/Oceanic tuition rate at \$280.00 per credit hour.
- Out-of-state tuition rate at \$560.00 per credit hour.
- Distance Learning tuition rate at \$330.00 per credit hour.
- Graduate in-state/Lion Pride tuition rate at \$374.00 per credit hour.
- Graduate out-of-state tuition rate at \$680.00.
- Dual Credit tuition rate at \$60.00 per credit hour.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Bill Gipson to approve the new tuition rates for FY24. Motion passed unanimously.*

Second motion:

We then discussed the FY24 budget in relation to enrollment, ancillary enterprises, health care, operating expenses, and utilities. We are anticipating a revenue budget of \$72.2 million for FY24.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to authorize the administration to adopt a revenue budget of \$72.2 million for FY24. Motion passed unanimously.*

Third motion:

As part of the FY24 budget, we discussed compensation. The committee approved authorizing the administration to increase compensation by approximately \$350k to distribute at the discretion of the university.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Bill Gipson to authorize the administration to increase compensation approximately \$350k. Motion passed unanimously.*

**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A

**NEW BUSINESS** – N/A

Every June is the election of Board Officers. Motions were opened for nominations of Board Chair. Alison Hershewe nominated Anita Oplotnik to serve as Board Chair for another term. An offer for other nominees was requested. None were recommended. Nominations were ceased.

*A motion was made by Alison Hershewe and seconded by Bill Gipson to nominate Anita Oplotnik as the Board Chair. Motion passed unanimously.*

The floor was opened for nominations for Vice-Chair. T. Mark Elliott nominated Carlos Haley to serve as

Vice-Chair for the Board for another term. An offer for other nominees was requested. None were recommended. Nominations were ceased.

*A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Alison Hershewe to nominate Carlos Haley as Board Vice-Chair. Motion passed unanimously.*

Nominations for Treasurer were opened. Carlos Haley nominated Linda Eis.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Mariann Morgan to nominate Linda Eis as Board Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.*

Nominations for Secretary were opened. Alison Hershewe nominated Jeanie Nice.

*A motion was made by Alison Hershewe and seconded by Carlos Haley to nominate Jeanie Nice as Board Secretary. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meetings of the Board are as scheduled:

- September 8, 2023
- November 10, 2023
- January 19, 2024
- March 15, 2024
- June 13, 2024

**Closed Executive Session:**

Chairwoman Oplotnik noted the Board needed to go into closed Executive Session pertaining to the following state statutes:

**RSMo 610.021 (1)** Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys; and

**RSMo 610.021 (3)** Hiring, firing, disciplining, or promoting of particular employees by a public governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded.

*A motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to move to executive closed session. A roll call was made by Secretary Jeanie Nice, with each attending Board member voting in favor of the closed Executive Session.*

*At the conclusion of the Executive Session, a motion was duly made and passed to adjourn the meeting.*

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Board Chair

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Board Secretary