

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**June 13, 2024**  
**Ron Richard Athletic Center**

The June 13, 2024, meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by Chairwoman Anita Oplotnik. Governors in attendance were Carlos Haley, T. Mark Elliott, Anita Oplotnik, Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg, Mariann Morgan, Alison Hershewe, Michael Seibert and Rod Hendricks.

Others in attendance were Dr. Jean Coltharp, Peter Edwards, Alicia Hughes, Rob Mallory, Dr. Brad Hodson, Dr. Lisa Toms, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Shellie Hewitt, Linda Eis, Maddox Studdard, Mark Scott, and Jeanie Nice.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairwoman Oplotnik called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm and welcomed everyone. Governor Oplotnik introduced the Board's new Governor, Rod Hendricks, who replaces Governor Bill Gipson. Governor Oplotnik asked if there were any other announcements. None were mentioned.

**Emeritus Approval and Recognition**

The Academic Affairs committee item of approving Emeritus status was moved up in the agenda.

*A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Mariann Morgan to approve the recommendation of Dr. Mike Lawson, Dr. Dan Marsh and Dr. Scott Wells for Professor Emeritus. Motion passed unanimously.*

The podium was turned over to Dr. Lisa Toms who introduced Dr. Jason Willard who spoke on behalf of Dr. Mike Lawson. Dr. Lawson was awarded a medallion and pin. Dr. Lisa Toms then introduced Dr. Lynell Gilbert-Saunders, who spoke on behalf of Dr. Dan Marsh. Dr. Marsh was awarded a medallion and a pin. Dr. Lisa Toms let the audience know that Dr. Scott Wells was unable to attend.

Governor Oplotnik congratulated all the recipients for their achievements.

**MINUTES**

Chairwoman Oplotnik asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the March 15, 2024 Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Micheal Seibert to approve minutes of the March 15, 2024 Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).*

**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.*

**Ron Richard Recognition and 2024 Legislative Session**

Today is a special day for Missouri Southern as we have had the opportunity to dedicate an important campus facility, now the Ron Richard Athletic Center. I know that I speak for many when I thank the Board for honoring his legacy through the naming of one of our most visible university facilities.

**State Support and Financial Stability**

We continue to be grateful for the strong support for higher education demonstrated by Governor Mike Parson, as well as our legislative delegation. Frankly, this type of support is simply not occurring in many other states across the nation. Regarding the fiscal year 2025 state budget, we are very optimistic that the Governor will sign the bills currently on his desk related to higher education. This includes a 3% core funding increase, and \$7.5 million in additional state support for the *Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center*. One item, related to the future support of higher education that we need to be aware of, is the interest of some legislators, particularly in the House, in developing a new performance-based funding model. At yesterday’s meeting of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education in Kansas City, state representative Brenda Shields spoke to their Board and university presidents about an interim House Committee that she is chairing to develop such a model. She described a timeline in which a model would be tested prior to implementation and would be considered by the legislature for funding in 2027. The work of the Committee is just beginning, and Representative Shields is interested in hearing from higher education leaders as this work moves forward. We will certainly keep you apprised of this and be engaged in the process.

Regarding Missouri Southern’s budget for the upcoming fiscal year, I would note that based primarily on new state investment and our progress on enrollment, this morning we were able to recommend to the Board’s Budget and Audit Committee a “cash positive” budget for Fiscal Year 2025. This recommended budget includes significant funds for employee compensation, as well as operational and facility needs. I want to thank our Chief Financial Officer, Linda Eis, and other colleagues on the President’s Cabinet for working together to develop a proposed budget that includes both strategic investments for today, and efforts to safeguard the longer-term financial health of the University. Today, Missouri Southern is a financially sound institution and well-positioned for the future.

**Highlights from the 2023-2024 Academic Year**

My written report highlights some of the most notable successes of the past academic year, including the 4% growth in overall headcount for the spring 2024 semester compared to spring of 2023. One highlight of this spring semester I wanted to shine a light on today is the public kickoff of the Lions Forward Campaign. On April 6<sup>th</sup>, we announced an overall goal for the five-year campaign of \$42.7 million and shared that \$30 million in philanthropic support had already been committed. Notably, the largest area of support thus far is student scholarships with over \$10 million committed – funds that will provide access and extraordinary opportunities for future students. I am grateful for the generous donors who have already invested in the campaign as well as the development team and others who have facilitated these gifts to the Missouri Southern Foundation. I also want to thank members of the Board of Governors who continue to serve on the Campaign Leadership Committee: Governors Oplotnik and Morgan, as well as former Board of Governors member Bill Gipson.

**President** (continued):

**Thank You**

Finally, I want to say thank you to our faculty and staff for the many successes we've seen this year. I think the future is bright and I want to thank the Board of Governors for their support. With special thanks to Governor Oplotnik for serving as chair of the board. Thank you for your leadership and guidance for the last two years.

**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.*

**Public Campaign Launch**

Because we've had the public kickoff, you will see a regular campaign report in your Board of Governors package. Dr. Van Galen mentioned the new goal of \$42.7 million. We are at the \$30.8 million mark at the end of May. We have committed for FY25 to reach the \$37 million threshold. Other statistics on the campaign are included in my report.

**Blunt Health Science Innovation Center**

Development of the construction document is complete. We will be bidding out to subcontractors in two packages. This will help us get a firm sense of the construction budget. Some of the site prep begins in July so it will start to look more like a construction area when the students return in August.

**Hearnes Hall Water Incident**

We are in the midst of 'move-in.' As we committed back in January, all 85 Hearnes Hall employees will be back by July 1<sup>st</sup>. We are currently in the middle of a three-week transition back into the building with a moving company, our facility, and IT staff working very hard to make sure everyone is ready to go when we get back into the building.

The cost of the Hearnes Hall water remediation, reconstruction of damaged spaces, and all other associated costs is being borne by the University's insurance carrier (*minus the \$250,000 deductible*). Facility Services estimates the total cost to be \$490,700.

**Summer 2024 Facility Projects**

There is a list of 11 projects, totaling \$1.8 million, being worked on this summer. We will be all over the campus working on important projects that need to be done before the students return in August. The two projects approved earlier in the Budget/Audit Committee bring the total projects up to 13 and at a cost of \$2.5 million. This will be a great investment in our capital infrastructure for the next couple of months.

**New Foundation Board Members**

Four new board members were elected to the Foundation Board. Their information is on page nine. They will attend their first board meeting in August.

**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.*

April and May were incredibly busy times in Academic Affairs, with end of year concerts, awards ceremonies, pinning ceremonies, and the research symposium.

The World Music and Cuisine Festival was held Saturday, April 20, 2024. This year’s event was the 9th festival. There were 100 types of food to sample from 26 countries represented by students, employees, and community volunteers. Approximately 100 volunteers participated with approximately 700 people in attendance. There was \$6,525 raised for the International Club, which supports their events during the year. This event continues to grow each year and has already outgrown BSC Ballroom, Richard Athletic Complex, and almost Young Gym.

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, the Plaster School of Business and the Small Business Development Center held the Entrepreneur Speaker Series with J.D “The Iceman” Anderson as the guest speaker. Mr. Anderson has appeared on over 25 television shows worldwide and is a successful entrepreneur who owns Home Run Company in Joplin. The Center for Entrepreneurship in the Plaster School of Business held a Pitch Palooza contest in which students presented new product and business ideas. Scholarship Awards were given to the winners.

A group of students studied abroad in Canada over spring break. In late May and early June, seven groups of students participated in study abroad trips to Ireland, Italy, Costa Rica, Sweden, England, and Scotland. A final group will leave June 26<sup>th</sup> to study in South Korea for four weeks.

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

**FY25 Budget**

I want to send a “thank you” across campus for all the direction and work in developing the FY25 budget. I also want to thank my colleagues on the President’s Cabinet for the work they’ve done to adopt a positive budget that provides significant investments for our employees and our facilities. More will be covered in the Budget/Audit Committee report.

**FY24**

We are closing out the 2024 fiscal year. Auditors will be on campus within the next couple of weeks. They will start with Student Financial Aid and the Bursar’s office. They have been advised that their walk-through activities will occur at the same time as our return to Hearn Hall. The auditors will also review our closing out of the Federal Perkins Loan program which we will end this fiscal year.

**Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending May 31, 2024**

**Cash Graph:**

Ms. Eis noted the balance at the end of May 31, 2024, was \$22.6M.

**Statement of Net Position:**

**Total Assets:** \$187M

Accounts receivable had a decline over the prior month of almost \$700k which is payment of tuition.

**Total Liabilities:** \$136M

**Net Position:** \$51M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** \$3.85M increase. Tuition increased \$2M due to an increase in headcount and credit hours.
- **Total Operating Expenses:** \$3.93M increase. There are increases in compensation and in new transfers and international scholarships and decreases in health insurance.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** \$2.4M increase. State base appropriations of \$1.8M and Science to Jobs appropriation.
- **Other Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of \$860k. Most of this is TPAK reimbursement.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**  
Current Year: \$938k increase  
Prior Year: \$1.4M decrease  
This results in an increase from Prior Year: \$2.3M.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the May 2024 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for May 2024 is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

### **Assoc. VP of Admissions and Enrollment (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 Recruitment Initiatives**

International recruitment initiatives continue to show increased numbers for this coming fall semester. Interestingly, we've seen early notifications regarding visa approvals for Missouri Southern. To date we have confirmed 70 students arriving, but we still have a couple of months to go, and that number is expected to grow to more than 100. Students with visas will be pursuing majors of CIS, Biology, Criminal Justice, Healthcare Admin, Marketing, Accounting, and Psychology. Enrollment for our incoming international students will begin August 12<sup>th</sup> when they arrive for orientation.

#### **New Student Recruitment and Enrollment**

This past spring Missouri Southern visited Joplin, Carl Junction, and Galena high school for our Green and Gold Tours. During basketball half-time we awarded several scholarships for the upcoming academic year. Missouri Southern has been doing Green and Gold Tours for several years now and this was the first time we've visited a school outside of Missouri. Next year we plan to host Green and Gold Tours in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas, and possibly Arkansas.

#### **Fall New Student Enrollment Highlights**

In my report you will find highlights for graduate student enrollment. We continue to see encouraging numbers for fall and at present see a 6% increase in overall graduate enrollment with Curriculum & Instruction, Healthcare Administration, and Master of Arts in Teaching leading the way. New freshman enrollment is also trending in a positive direction with Business, Nursing, Biomedical Science PreMed, and Rad Tech proving to be some of our most popular undergraduate programs.

## **Assoc. VP of Admissions and Enrollment (continued):**

### **University Marketing Highlights**

One focus this past spring for our University Marketing team has been graduate programs. With much collaboration between our marketing team and our colleges, we were able to increase program specific campaigns for Data Analytics, Healthcare Administration and the new MBA program. After reviewing stats for these campaigns, we found that applications started and submitted for our graduate programs increased during the timeframe these campaigns were running. On the heels of this marketing campaign, the Admissions team launched a drip campaign sending targeted emails and text messages to the pending applicants with the goal of converting those into completed applications. This has truly been a team effort by Admissions, Marketing, and various academic programs. Currently, our University Marketing team is working with many undergraduate and graduate programs to schedule our program specific campaigns for the next academic year. We are hopeful to present the success of those campaigns in future meetings.

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

*Note: Highlights of Rob'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 repeated as both the MIAA regular season and tournament champions. Luis Limon was named MIAA Golfer of the Year. Luis Limon qualified for nationals as an individual and represented MSSU at the Division 2 Spring Sports Championship Festival in Orlando, FL. The baseball team also won a MIAA Championship, knocking off #1 seed Central Missouri, in a thrilling 18-16 game. Lions earned the #2 seed in the Central Region and earned the opportunity to host an NCAA Regional for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year. The team ended their season in the Regional with a record of 44-15. The outdoor track & field teams finished 2<sup>nd</sup> (men) and 4<sup>th</sup> (women) in the MIAA Championship Meet. The Lions earned 20 All-MIAA honors and took home seven MIAA individual titles. Eighteen student-athletes qualified in 25 events for the NCAA Outdoor National Championship meet. The men finished a program-record 4<sup>th</sup> in the event, while the women finished in 20<sup>th</sup> place. The Lions earned 12 All-American finishes, led by Peyton Barton capturing the National Championship in the Hammer Throw. It was Barton's 4<sup>th</sup> career national championship in three different events. Coach Brian Allen was named national assistant coach of the year.

### **Lions Cup Winners**

Missouri Southern finished third in the MIAA Commissioners Cup. Just this week it was announced that out of approximately 300 NCAA Division II institutions, we finished 30<sup>th</sup> in the Learfield Director's Cup which is a metric that measures national post season success.

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

Overall athletic department GPA is a 3.21, marking the 12th consecutive semester the department GPA has been above a 3.0. There were 135 student-athletes who earned a 3.5 GPA or better for the spring, while 69 finished with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

## **Director of Athletics (continued):**

### **Community Engagement Summary**

MSSU student-athletes finished the 2023-24 academic year with 5,208 hours of community service, the second consecutive year the department has broken the 5,000-hour mark. The top five programs in service hours and the top organizations impacted by MSSU student-athletes are listed in my report.

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

On May 6<sup>th</sup> the athletic department celebrated the accomplishments of the year at the annual Student Athlete awards banquet. New this year was a special commencement ceremony for our Spring Sports student athletes who were unable to attend the regular commencement ceremony. My report lists the teams and individuals that received awards that night.

## **Faculty Senate President (Dr. Jean Coltharp for Dr. Michael Beilfuss):**

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

There have been a few changes to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The entire group is as follows:

President: Michael Beilfuss, Language and Literature

Past President: Jean Coltharp, Mathematics

President Elect: Nicole Shoaf, Political Science

Secretary: Amber Carr, Library

Parliamentarian: Vacant

At Large: Jill Greer, Sociology and Anthropology

Our Academic Policies Committee, which is now called the Undergraduate Curriculum and Policies Committee, continues the revamp of the workflow of the committee. A proposal for updated language in the handbook came right at the end of the school year so we were not able to work on it. We will continue to discuss proposed changes throughout the fall semester.

We continue to look at health insurance. Our Welfare committee compared our plan to other available plans and came up with several recommendations that were passed on to the Insurance Committee.

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

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

### **Southern Service Champs**

Our service champ winners this quarter were Abby Bishop, Curtis Almeter and Melissa Hunter. These winners were selected based on their respect for the campus community, positive attitude, pride in work, exemplary dependability and excellence in customer service.

Staff Senate elections were held. New senators include Shawna Ackerson, Jedidiah Buck, Karli Fort, Ceason Nance and India Reynold. Our new president, Leona Belk, will start as Staff Senate President at the next Board meeting.

## **Student Representative (Mr. Maddox Studdard):**

*Note: Highlights of Ms. Studdard's report are as follows:*

As has been mentioned in other reports, Commencement was a fantastic time during which we could honor student accomplishments and celebrate student milestones. I wanted to personally thank all the hard work from our faculty and staff that led up to those commencement ceremonies. Our students certainly appreciate all the volunteers and hard work that goes into planning and implementing our commencement ceremonies. The work does not go unnoticed, and students certainly appreciate how amazing commencement is.

It seems like summer is just getting started, so it's hard to believe in just a few short weeks a new group of Lions will be on our campus, ready to start a new chapter in their lives. It's an exciting time for returning students, too. There is a lot of campus vibrancy that leads up to Southern Welcome in August. While a lot of students are resting up and recharging in anticipation of the fall semester, I wanted to acknowledge the hard work that is taking place by our Student Success Office, as well as our First-Year Experience and Orientation teams.

A few things I wanted to point out:

- MSSU's Ready to Roar is a new bridge program that supports incoming students transitioning from high school to college and helps prepare them for the upcoming fall semester. It is designed to foster community and connection among fellow students and faculty/staff. Students will receive valuable guidance on navigating their college experience through purposeful programming with current students, interactions with MSSU leaders, and exposure to campus resources.
- Throughout this two-week on-campus program, students will actively engage in diverse workshops, explore various career paths during immersive building tours, fine-tune their resumes, and participate in activities with exciting prizes!
- MSSU is proud to offer this new opportunity for incoming students in July. This program is managed by the Student Success Center, with the help of partnerships all over campus.
- Studies indicate that enrolling in a high-quality summer transition program, such as Ready to Roar, coupled with ongoing support throughout the academic year, leads to improved academic performance, increased interaction with fellow students, and a heightened sense of university affiliation. There's a lot to be excited about there.

I want to end by acknowledging and appreciating the work of our Student Senate leaders on campus. A few weeks back there was some misinformation floating around some social media channels about the new Blunt Health Science Innovation Center. Our student leaders were able to engage with the misinformation, share the correct information, and tell the great story about how the new facility will enhance our campus. You can imagine that social media can at times be a challenge when it comes to factual information, and it was great that we were able to engage with students and share facts about the building. It certainly changed the tone of the conversation.

Thank you, Dr. Van Galen, for engaging with the Student Senate and Student Leadership to keep us informed about the vibrancy on our campus. We're looking forward to an outstanding fall 2024 semester!



## **Board Committees:**

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

Committee met in closed session for the annual review with President Dr. Van Galen.

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

In addition to the Emeritas recommendations that were given earlier, the following were presented for tenure and/or promotion:

#### Tenure

- Dr. Michael Beilfuss
- Dr. Sarah Holtzen
- Dr. Ildo Kim
- Dr. Zachary Rice

#### Promotion – Full Professor

- Dr. Teresa Boman
- Dr. Cheryl Cotter
- Dr. Andrea Cullers
- Dr. Tim Wilson

#### Promotion – Associate Professor

- Dr. Lisa Beals
- Dr. Joseph Boomer
- Dr. Dominic Bucciari
- Ms. Amber Carr
- Dr. Jeri Goswick
- Dr. Ildo Kim
- Dr. Laura Schisler
- Dr. Rebecca Shriver

*A motion was made by Benjiman Rosenberg and seconded by Mariann Morgan to approve the tenure and promotion recommendations. Motion passed unanimously.*

The committee reviewed Faculty Handbook updates.

*A motion was made by Benjiman Rosenberg and seconded by Micheal Seibert to approve the changes to the Faculty Handbook that were discussed in committee. Motion passed unanimously.*

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

The committee met to discuss the FY25 tuition, next year's budget, infrastructure projects and a contract for dining services.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve FY25 tuition at the following rates:*

- *In-state/Lion Pride/Oceanic tuition rate at **\$290.00** (\$10.00) per credit hour.*
- *Out-of-state tuition rate at **\$580.00** (\$20.00) per credit hour.*

- *Distance Learning tuition rate at \$330.00 per credit hour. No change.*
- *Graduate in-state/Lion Pride tuition rate at \$375.00 (\$1.00) per credit hour.*
- *Graduate out of state tuition rate at \$685.00 (\$5.00).*
- *Dual Credit tuition rate at \$60.00 per credit hour. No change.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Michael Seibert to approve a revenue budget of \$78M for FY25. Motion passed unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to authorize administration to increase campus compensation by \$1M for FY25. Motion passed unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Rod Hendricks to authorize administration to utilize \$650,000 in reserve funds for two facilities projects, HVAC/chiller system and replacement of aging hot water systems in the Residence Life apartments. Motion passed unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Michael Seibert to authorize university President to sign the dining services contract once a vendor is selected. Motion passed unanimously.*

**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A

None was mentioned.

**NEW BUSINESS** –

Every June is the election of Board Officers. Anita Oplotnik thanked everyone for their support during the two years she was Chair of the Board of Governors. Motions were opened for nominations of Board Chair. Dr. Benjiman Rosenberg nominated Carlos Haley to serve as Board Chair. An offer for other nominees was requested. None were recommended. Nominations were ceased.

*A motion was made by Benjiman Rosenberg and seconded by Michael Seibert to nominate Carlos Haley as the Board Chair. Motion passed unanimously.*

The floor was opened for nominations for Vice-Chair. T. Mark Elliott nominated Benjiman Rosenberg to serve as Vice-Chair for the Board. An offer for other nominees was requested. None were recommended. Nominations were ceased.

*A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Rod Hendricks to nominate Benjiman Rosenberg 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. Carlos Haley nominated Jeanie Nice.

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

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meetings of the Board are as scheduled:

- November 8, 2024
- January 10, 2025
- March 14, 2025
- June 12, 2025

**Closed Executive Session:**

Chairwoman Oplotnik noted that 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 T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Carlos Haley 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