



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

R E P O R T

J U N E 1 3 , 2 0 2 4

DR. DEAN VAN GALEN

PRESIDENT

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2024 legislative session resulted in positive support for higher education and Missouri Southern. Key legislative actions (that still require approval by Governor Parson) include:

- For fiscal year 2025 (beginning July 1, 2024), a 3% core funding increase for all public higher education institutions (this would translate to approximately \$883,000 being added to the MSSU budget).
- Support of the Governor's recommendation of additional funding dedicated to the previously identified transformational capital projects on higher education campuses. This includes an additional \$7.5 million in state support for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center, bringing total state investment to \$30 million.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

Progress on Enrollment and Focus on Quality: The university continued to positively “bend the curve” on student enrollment with an increase in new students in fall 2023 and 4% growth in overall headcount for the spring 2024 semester compared to spring of 2023. Moreover, we continue to ensure that we offer an extraordinarily high-quality education that is characterized by supportive relations for students with our faculty and staff.

Lions Forward Campaign: The public phase of the Lions Forward fundraising campaign was launched on April 6. That evening, 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 in the first 21 months of the campaign. Notably, the largest area of support thus far is student scholarships with more than \$10 million committed (some of which is in the form of planned gifts). We are grateful for the generous donors who have already invested in the campaign as well as the development staff and others who have facilitated these gifts to the Missouri Southern Foundation.

Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center: Schematic design of the facility is complete and groundbreaking for this transformational facility was April 11. It's been a collaborative effort, including a campus planning team of faculty and administrators, and representatives from Corner Greer and Crossland Construction. We look forward to watching the construction and celebrating the opening the Center for the fall 2026 semester.



SPRING COMMENCEMENT

On May 11, Missouri Southern celebrated student achievement by awarding almost 700 associates, baccalaureate, and masters degrees to 523 individuals at two commencement ceremonies. Also, 34 Golden Graduates from the graduating class of 1974 and before returned to campus with many participating in the morning commencement ceremony. It was a special day in which we shared a sense of pride in our graduating students and reflected on the impact of our work at Missouri Southern.

Education positively changes lives. Thanks to the commitment of our faculty and staff, the efforts of our students, and the support of our alumni and friends, Missouri Southern State University is fulfilling its mission at a high level and impacting future generations.



DR. BRAD HODSON

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

FUNDRAISING

Public Campaign Launch



The “Lions Forward” comprehensive **fundraising campaign was publicly launched** at a gala celebration on Saturday, April 6, 2024, in Taylor Performing Arts Center. More than 200 donors, faculty, staff, and volunteers were in attendance to hear progress made during the leadership (*silent*) phase of the campaign.

During the past two years, since the campaign was launched on July 1, 2022, the **working goal has been \$31.5 million**. That goal will likely be reached by the end of this current fiscal year (*June 30, 2024*) – three years ahead of schedule. As of May 31, 2024, the Missouri Southern Foundation had documented \$30,799,387 in campaign gifts and commitments. If gifts and commitments in June 2024 exceed \$700,613, then the **working goal will have been achieved in just 24 months**.

Campaign Goal Announced

At the campaign kick-off event in April, **a campaign goal (*distinct from the working goal*) was announced - \$42.7 million** by June 30, 2027.

With three years remaining in the campaign, the university has set a **Fiscal Year 2025 goal (*June 30, 2025*) of reaching \$37 million** in total gifts and commitments. This means in the coming twelve months the Missouri Southern Foundation will need to receive or document commitments totaling \$5.5 million.

This FY25 goal of \$5.5 million is achievable, given the campaign has realized the following gift income/commitments over the last two years:

Pre-Campaign Counting Period (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022)	\$ 6,924,352
Campaign Year 1 – FY23 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)	\$ 16,485,432
Campaign Year 2 – FY24 to date (July 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024)	\$ 7,389,603
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Total received/committed as of May 31, 2024	\$ 30,799,387

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Please note – Year one of the campaign was dedicated to engaging alumni and friends who were well known to MSSU and participated in the feasibility study. Year two began a process of **engaging prospective donors who are not as well connected with MSSU**, but still have the financial capacity to participate in the campaign. This continues in year three. A much lower percentage of these less well-connected alumni and friends will participate in the campaign. For that reason, while the campaign goal of \$42.7 million is certainly achievable, it will become more difficult to close major gifts in the coming years and the annual campaign totals will plateau.

Gifts Received or Committed by Dollar Range

As of May 31, 2024, the following individual gifts have been received in these dollar ranges:

- \$1 million + 8 gifts or commitments
- \$100,000 - \$,999,999 56 gifts or commitments
- \$10,000 - \$99,999 285 gifts or commitments
- \$1,000 - \$9,999 643 gifts
- \$999 or less 4,446 gifts

Major Donor Events

As part of the Lions Forward campaign, events have been held in six cities in Fiscal Year 2024 to **engage alumni and friends with major gift capacity (\$25,000+)** about the campaign. Those cities where the events were held were Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Northwest Arkansas, and Dallas. More than 120 total attendees at these events heard a university update from the president and an overview of the campaign and its seven priorities. Additional events will be held in Fiscal Year 2025.

FACILITIES

May 6 Storm Damage

A storm the National Weather Service has categorized as an EF-1 tornado moved just south of campus through Joplin and Duquesne on the evening of Monday, May 6, 2024. While MSSU itself was not struck by the tornado, high winds from the perimeter of the storm did damage across the campus, including:

- **Leggett & Platt Athletic Center** – The northwest corner of the room was torn back, resulting in rainwater collecting on the gym floor only five days before Commencement. The university is currently in negotiations with our insurance carrier for a roof replacement.



- **Fine Arts Building (*Music, Art, and Theater*)** – The roof over the hallway connecting Taylor Performing Arts Center with Spiva Art Gallery was torn off during the storm. Facility Services negotiated with the insurance company for a \$34,058 full roof replacement rather than a \$12,300 temporary fix.
- **Athletic Fields (*Football, Softball, and Baseball*)** – The most significant damage occurred on the east side of campus, which was closest to the path of the tornadic winds. A section of the football video board was torn away and bounced across the football stadium turf, cutting gouges as it moved. The Lapira Softball Field had bleachers blown into the backstop and damage to the concession stand. Finally, Turner Baseball Field had damage that included its large scoreboard mounted on steel trusses being bent backward just days before MSSU hosted the regional baseball tournament.
- **Tree Damage** – Numerous trees were damaged by high winds across campus, but none of the falling debris damaged other structures.

Missouri Southern is working with its insurance provider to maximize the funds available to remediate these and other issues directly related to the May 6 storm damage. Given the west end of Leggett & Platt roof alone will cost more than \$500,000, filing an insurance claim is financially prudent. This storm represents **Missouri Southern’s third large claim of the fiscal year** (*Lion Village and Hearn Hall being the other two*) requiring a \$250,000 deductible payment.

Blunt Health Science Innovation Center

Preliminary work continues on the \$45 million, 65,000sf Blunt Health Science Innovation Center. Working closely with Corner-Greer Architects, Pulse Design, and Crossland Construction, the university has completed the design development phase of plan development. The next phase is completion of construction documents, which will in turn inform sub-contractor bids and, ultimately, the guaranteed maximum price put forward by Crossland as construction manager at risk.

The construction zone has been completely fenced off as test drilling for the 75 piers that will support the facility over heavily mined land draws to a close. Site prep, including removal of trees in the construction zone will take place in late June in anticipation of actual construction beginning in July 2024.



A ceremonial groundbreaking was held on Thursday, April 11 in the Taylor Performing Arts Center due to rain the day before and high winds the day of the event. More than 400 donors, friends, faculty, staff, and students attended the groundbreaking, which marks the beginning of construction.

Hearnes Hall Water Incident

As promised in January when a water pipe flooded Hearnes Hall displacing 85 employees, those same individuals will return to Hearnes Hall by July 1, 2024. In those **167 days (or 24 weeks) between the water incident and final move in on June 28**, staff in Facility Services, Financial Services, and numerous impacted offices have worked collaboratively to turn an unforeseen accident into an opportunity for renewal of one of the institution’s original buildings. We are grateful for the **teamwork, understanding, and perseverance from across campus** that has made this success possible.

Renovations, including (*depending on the severity of water damage*) new flooring, walls, paint, ceiling tiles, and lighting, have been completed. Final cleaning before move-in is underway, with stored furniture on the second and third floors being returned in recent days. Returning those 85 displaced staff to their workstations in Hearnes is scheduled to take place **June 9 – 28**. A sample of how the move-in of each of the three floors of Hearnes Hall will be staged is displayed below.

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 of the Hearnes Hall water incident project to be \$490,700**.



HEARNES HALL SECOND FLOOR						
<i>President, Executive Vice President, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Financial Services, University Development/Foundation, and Human Resources.</i>						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
June 9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	← Stored Furniture Moved			Remote Office Items Boxed	Campus Closed	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	← Reestablish Basic Technology Access		Holiday	Remote Work	Campus Closed	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Second Floor Staff Reports to Hearnes Offices				Campus Closed	

Summer 2024 Facility Projects

Summer is always a busy time on a college campus for Facility Services staff and 2024 will be no exception. Below is a **list of the 12 projects the university will be addressing** between Commencement in mid-May and the return of students in early August:

- **Reynolds 232** – Complete renovations to this tiered classroom that includes new furniture. Total cost of \$95,000 as part of year one of the Three-Year Facility Improvement Plan.
- **Art 105** – Complete renovations to the sculpture studio that includes new ceiling, wall finishes, lighting, furnishings, instructional writing surfaces, and technology. Total cost of \$50,000 as part of year one of the Three-Year Facility Improvement Plan.

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- **BSC Bathrooms** – Complete renovations of the restrooms adjacent to the Board of Governors room. Work includes new floor tile, wall treatment, ceilings, lighting, and all bathroom fixtures. Contractor bids recently put the cost of this project at \$130,000, while the Three-Year Facility Improvement Plan budgeted \$80,000. Staff are currently assessing options for aligning budget with cost.
- **Science Annex** – Originally acquired during the 2016 renovations of Reynolds Hall, the science annex (*modular trailers*) was put on the market last fall for acquisition at no cost other than paying to have them moved. The board at College Heights Christian School recently voted to acquire the trailers to expand their enrollment capacity. The trailers will be moved in late summer at no cost to Missouri Southern.
- **Hearnes Hall Parking Lot** – Re-paving the parking lot used by visitors to Hearnes Hall, including prospective students and their parents. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$77,500.
- **Leggett & Platt Roof** – Following May storm damage, a complete tear off and replacement of the 25-year-old roof on a heavily used facility. Cost is estimated at \$500,000.
- **Music Ceiling Replacement** – Damage by water and mold has necessitated replacement of the ceiling grid system and tiles in the Music Department. The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$12,000.
- **Spiva Library Flooring** – New flooring on 3rd and 4th floors with a total cost of \$250,000.
- **Blaine Residence Hall** – Renovations on this dorm’s HVAC system and room finishes (*paint and flooring*). Total cost is estimated at \$380,000.
- **Center for Data Analytics** – Renovations to a classroom and office suite in Plaster Hall to house the new Center for Data Analytics. The work includes new ceiling, flooring, and integrated technology at an estimated cost off \$210,000.
- **Mayes Student Life Center** – Replacing drainage pipes and hot water system in the kitchen used by Fresh Ideas to prepare meals in Mayes Dining Hall. Estimated cost is \$60,000.

FOUNDATION

Portfolio Investment Performance

When the Missouri Southern Foundation board met in May, the Finance and Investment Committee reported a most recent one-year **return on the Foundation’s \$30.3 million portfolio of 14.6%**. This is above the actual weighted benchmark and well above the CPI+5.75% return (9.2% for the last twelve months) set as a target for FEG, the Foundation’s outsourced chief investment officer.

New Board Members

Four new board members were elected to the Missouri Southern Foundation Board for their **first three-year term**. They are:

- **Nick Edwards** – Nick graduated from Missouri Southern in 2007 with a degree in political science. He has been the Joplin city manager since 2020 and served our country in the United States Marine Corps.
- **Shelly Kraft** – Shelly is a 1991 graduate of Missouri Southern with a degree in early childhood education. She and her husband have owned Kraft Insurance in Joplin for more than 20 years.
- **Kevin Parker** – Kevin graduated from Missouri Southern in 1996 with a degree in marketing. He is the owner of Parker Development Corporation in Joplin.
- **Troy Richards** – Troy is a 1990 graduate of MSSU with a degree in criminal justice. After a 30-year career leading Joplin Building Materials, Troy and his wife sold the family business. He is currently fulfilling his lifelong dream as a police officer in Carthage.

This brings the total number of Missouri Southern Foundation board members to 40. The four new board members will participate in an orientation program in July before attending their first Foundation board meeting in August 2024.



Nick Edwards



Shelly Kraft



Kevin Parker



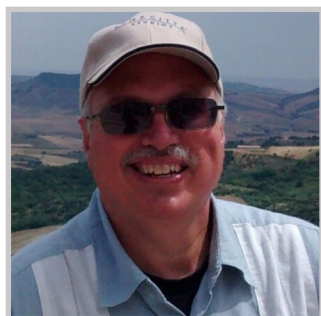
Troy Richards



DR. LISA TOMS

PROVOST / VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

HONORS PROGRAM



In April, author and film historian Andrew Erish gave a presentation as part of the Honors Lecture Series titled “Movie History in Your Backyard” followed by a Q&A. This event was free and open to the public. There were approximately seventy-five people in attendance.

Andrew Erish’s first book, *Col. William N. Selig, the Man Who Invented Hollywood*, published by the University of Texas Press, was hailed as “One of the best books of 2012” by the Los Angeles Public Library. His most recent book, *Vitagraph, America’s First Great Motion Picture Studio* received the Peter C. Rollins Award for the best book of 2022 by the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association. He contributed five essays to *American Cool*, published by Prestel Press in conjunction with an exhibit at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, and has written about film for several publications, including the *Los Angeles Times* and *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*.

STUDENT SUCCESS

In April and May, the Student Success Center coordinated and participated in enrollment visits to eight area high schools. MSSU advisors traveled to the schools and gathered enrollment information from 93 seniors who will be freshmen at Southern in the fall. This information was then passed on to their major departments for enrollment. This is the third year for these enrollment events, and the schools visited this year were Grove High School, Carl Junction High School, Neosho High School, McDonald County High School, Joplin High School, Monett High School, Carthage High School, and Webb City High School.

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY



• On March 26, the **Plaster School of Business** and the **Small Business Development Center MSSU** held the Entrepreneur Speaker Series with J.D. “The Iceman” Anderson as the guest speaker. Mr. Anderson has appeared on more than 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.



- The **Society of Human Resources Management Club** held a Networking Bingo event and brought a group of Human Resources professionals to campus on April 18.

• The **Plaster School of Business** Recognition Celebration was held to honor our Outstanding Graduates, our student club officers, and induct students into Delta Mu Delta. The keynote speaker was Mrs. Gay Burns, a Senior Advisor with TAI Group.



- **Dr. Dominic Bucciari** began serving as Chair of the Plaster School of Business on June 1.

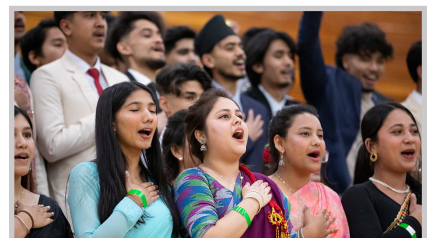


- The **Department of Communication** hosted the annual Southern Media Showcase on April 10, 2024. More than 350 entries were submitted by high school students, and 170 attended for the multi-media competition. Along with breakout sessions led by local industry experts, the keynote speaker was Karen Elizabeth.

- **KGCS-TV** student workers and staff ran cameras and production efforts at the Joplin Chamber of Commerce Banquet, the MSSU Commence ceremonies, and the Carl Junction High School graduation ceremony.
- In the **Department of Technology**, Mrs. Claudia Wilson has transitioned from Interim Chair of the department to Chair of the department.

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

- The **World Music and Cuisine Festival** was held Saturday, April 20. This year's event was the ninth festival. There were 100 types of food to sample from 26 countries represented by student, employee, and community volunteers. Approximately 100 volunteers participated with approximately 700 people in attendance. \$6,525 was raised for the International Club, which supports their events during the year. Students enrolled in INTS 310 Food, Culture, and Society participated in the event by preparing food that has some cultural significance for each of them. This event continues to grow each year and has already outgrown BSC Ballroom, Richard Athletic Complex, and has almost outgrown Young Gym.





- **Vocal music students** performed songs that defined the decades from the 1950s through the 2010s in Southern Showcase Onstage 2024, which ran April 25-27. This was Dr. David Sharlow's last production as he has left to become Emporia State University's inaugural Dean of Visual and Performing Arts.

- On April 5, the **Southern Symphony Orchestra** and **Southern Symphonic Chorus** performed "Missa in Angustiis: Lord Nelson Mass." Both groups are composed of Missouri Southern students, faculty, and community members.

- 16 students graduated from the **Law Enforcement Academy** on May 8. This class had 100% POST pass rate.
- Faculty and students from the College of Arts and Sciences recently participated in four **Study Abroad** trips. History and Life Science students studied History, Environment and Well-Being in Costa Rica. Art and Design students are still studying photography in England and Sweden. MKEAP and Honors students studied Art and Anatomy in Italy. Finally, English and Honors students studied Literature, Tourism, and the Invention of Scotland and the English Lake District.



COLLEGE OF HEALTH, LIFE SCIENCES & EDUCATION



- The MSSU **BSN Program Pinning Ceremony** was held May 10. Twenty-one students graduated from the program and are now preparing for the Registered Nurse Licensure Exam.
- The MSSU **BSN Program** submitted an expansion proposal to the Missouri State Board of Nursing which will be reviewed by the Education Committee on June 26.
- The **Allied Health Department** had a very successful Spring semester! We graduated more than 75 students across our associate and bachelor degree programs. To date (5/29/2024) our pass rates are:
 - **Respiratory** 6/6 have passed, with four more left to test (10 total graduates)
 - **Dental Hygiene** 24/24 have passed clinical boards, 22/24 have passed written boards, with two left to test (24 total graduates)

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- **EMT** 3/3 have passed, with eight more left to test (11 total graduates); Paramedic graduates this summer
- **Radiology** 5/6 have passed, with three more left to test (9 total graduates)
- **Healthcare Administration** students do not have to test; 18 total graduates for this program



- This summer, we look forward to participating in the Science 2 Jobs camps offered in June, beginning the new Radiology cohort with 16 students, attending the Anatomage Conference in July with 10 faculty spanning multiple departments, 11 graduating Paramedic students, and preparing for a solid Fall Semester. At this time, Dental Hygiene has accepted 30 students for their new cohort, Respiratory Therapy is trending upward with a current 14 accepted and a likely overall enrollment of 20 students for fall, and EMT/Paramedic is experiencing booming enrollment as well. The Master of Science in Healthcare Administration will complete year 1 at the end of Summer and maintains a positive enrollment of 13 students, poised to graduate one year from now. The MHA has currently accepted 14 students for Fall 2024, with a total of 50 applicants to date. Additionally, we have hired a new full-time faculty member starting August 1 to continue to support the educational work in Healthcare Administration.

LINDA EIS

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2025



The fiscal year 2025 budget was reviewed with the Board Budget Audit Committee. The Board will be asked to formally approve the budget at the Board meeting. The budget reflects a positive cash balance due to significant campus-wide efforts in retaining and recruiting students. The budget includes tuition rate increases, changes in enrolled credit hours, incorporates the anticipated base appropriation allocation as well as compensation, MOSERS retirement increase, additional utility expense and other expenditure costs or savings.

AUDIT FISCAL YEAR 2024



We are in the final month of fiscal year 2024 and audit preparation is moving along at a fast pace as we prepare for the annual audit. Our external audit firm, FORVIS, has expanded. The new company name is FORVIS Mazars and they 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 evaluations. 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. This year we will continue building upon the GASB lease data from the implementations over the last two years.

In addition, the Financial Aid and Bursar's offices have worked diligently to close out the Federal Perkins Loan fund. Thank you to Sharon Fraser for leading the project. This is a federal loan program that has been discontinued. We have worked to assign the loans to the Department of Education and are nearing final close-out. There are strict procedures in closing this program and the auditors will audit our process and general ledger entries.

The actual audit data gathering, fieldwork, writing the narrative, producing the financials and supporting tables will encompass the next five months with the results expected to be presented at the November 2024 Board meeting.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

Lions **Forward**. Lions **Together**.



DR. SHELLIE HEWITT

DEAN OF ADMISSIONS

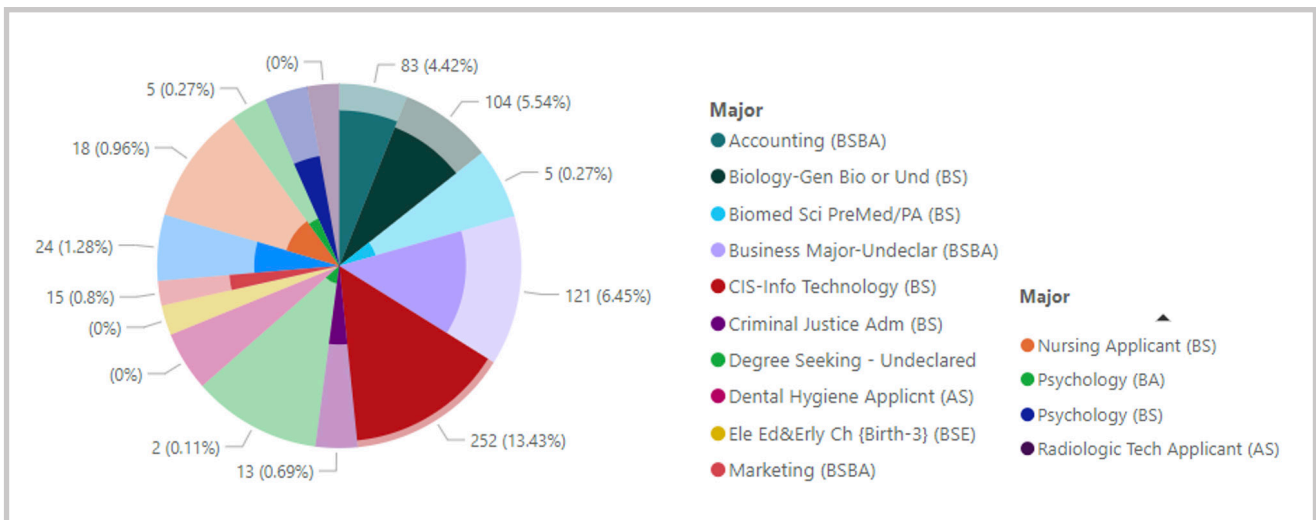
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES



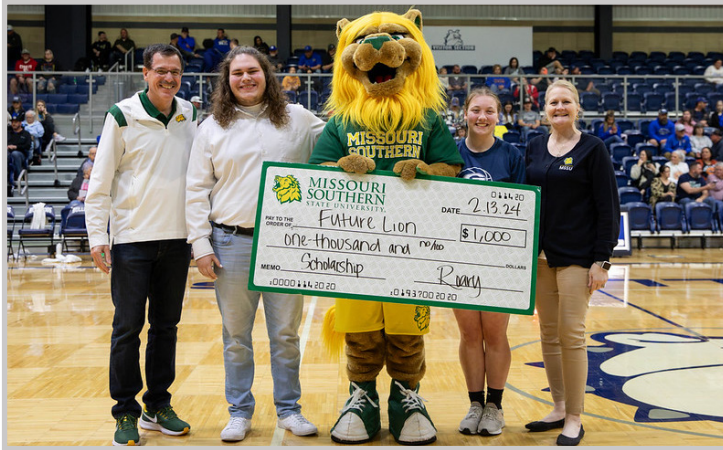
For another consecutive year, Missouri Southern is making great strides with international recruitment. For the upcoming fall 2024 semester we have received more than 1,600 international student applications from 45 different countries. Currently the top ten countries include Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Japan, Kenya, Niger, and Korea.

Recruitment initiatives contributing to the 144% increase in applications include new partnerships with agencies and organizations around the globe. We are looking forward to having many new degree-seeking international students on campus this fall.

Below you will find the top academic programs international students wish to pursue at Missouri Southern.



NEW STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

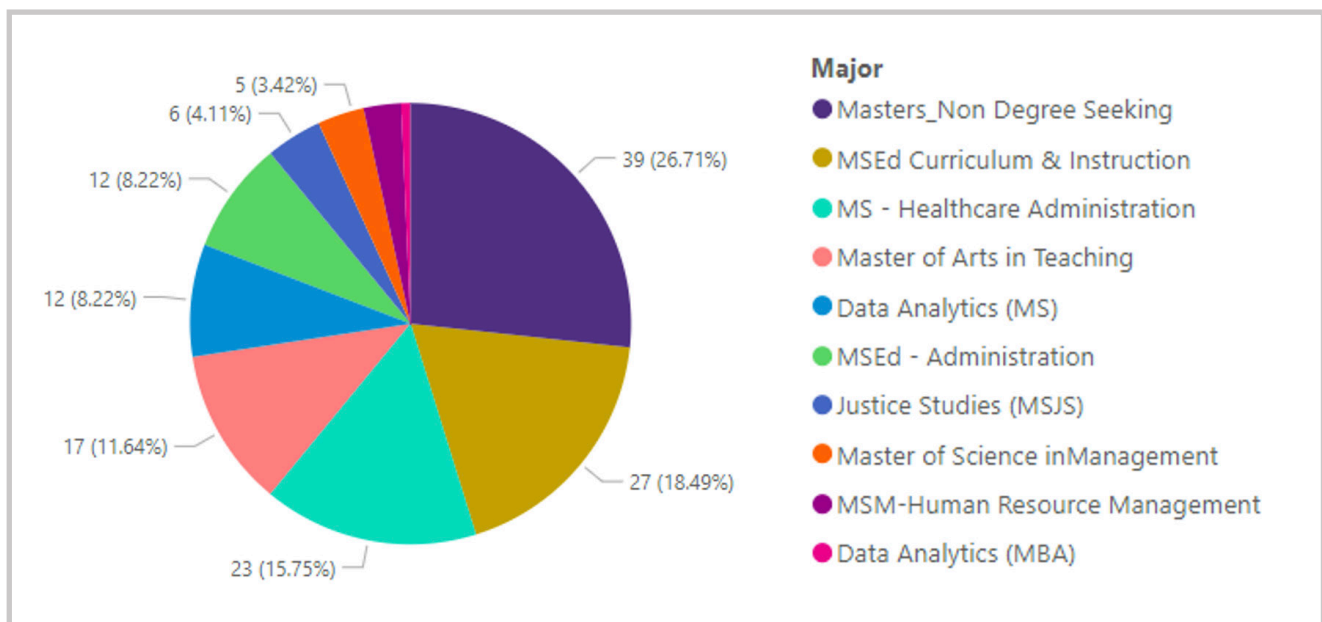


This past spring, Missouri Southern visited three high schools, two in Missouri and one in Kansas, for Green and Gold Tours. During these visits we provided students with a chance to win scholarships, apply for admission, and learn more about MSSU’s academic programs, campus life and more. These events helped Missouri Southern increase our presence in the schools and gave admissions and university marketing staff an opportunity to show their Lion Pride!

Additionally, staff from the Student Success Center and Admissions visited nine high schools, including one high school in Oklahoma over the past several weeks welcoming our new Lions and helping them create their course schedules for the upcoming year. These students were excited to be able to get enrolled early and were grateful Missouri Southern came to their school.

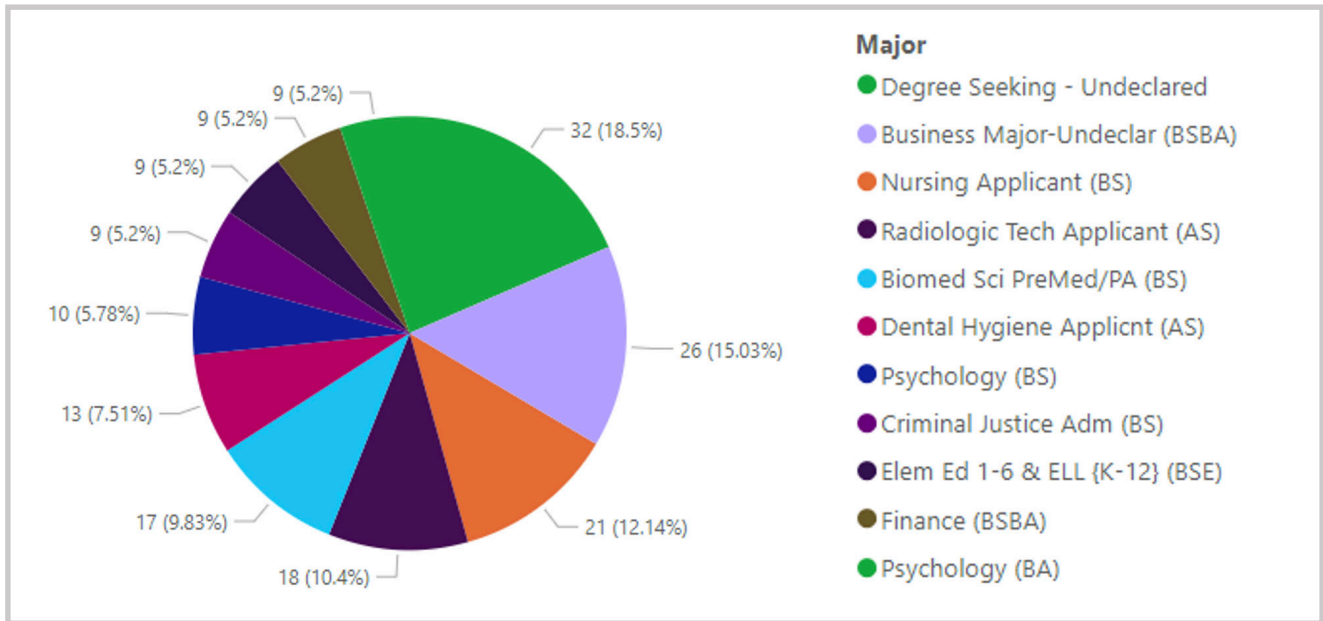
FALL NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Currently, graduate student enrollment is looking very promising. The breakdown by major is below:



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Furthermore, new freshman enrollment is moving in a positive direction. Below are the top programs for the fall semester.



UNIVERSITY MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

This spring, Missouri Southern significantly increased graduate marketing efforts. This was achieved through collaboration with University Marketing, Plaster School of Business, and the Healthcare Administration Program.

From February through April, Missouri Southern ran general graduate program marketing while additional campaigns ran for Data Analytics, Healthcare Administration, and the new MBA.

These efforts delivered over 3.7 million impressions and 26,790 clicks to our website for a click-through rate of .71%. During these campaigns, 134 new applications were started, and 37 graduate applications were submitted. 64% of graduate applications came from locations within our paid marketing regions.

As of June 3, our graduate program applications are up 25% when compared to last year.



ROB MALLORY

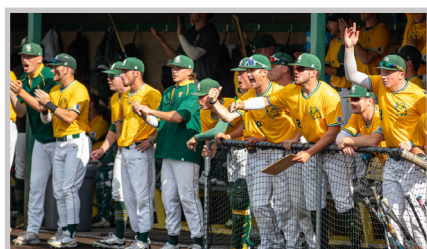
DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

SPRING SPORTS SUCCESS

It has been a fantastic spring for Lion Athletics!



The **men's golf** team captured both the MIAA regular season and tournament championships at Shoal Creek Golf Club in Kansas City, MO on April 17. **Luis Limon** was named MIAA Golfer of the Year. The team advanced to the NCAA Regional in Edmond, OK where they finished 7th, missing out on qualifying for the national championship by just 5 strokes. Luis Limon qualified for nationals as an individual and represented MSSU at the Division 2 Spring Sports Championship Festival in Orlando, FL. The **women's golf team** continues to improve, finished a program-best 4th place at the MIAA Championships at Silo Ridge Golf Club in Boliva, MO.



The **baseball** team also won an MIAA Championship, knocking off #1 seed Central Missouri in a thrilling 18-16 game to claim the title in Pittsburg, KS. After ranking as high as 3rd in the national polls, the Lions earned the #2 seed in the Central Region and earned the opportunity to host an NCAA Regional for the second consecutive year. The team ended their season in the Regional with a record of 44-15.



The **outdoor track & field** teams finished 2nd (men) and 4th (women) in the MIAA Championship Meet. The Lions earned 20 All-MIAA honors and took home 7 MIAA individual titles. 18 student-athletes qualified in 25 events for the NCAA Outdoor National Championship meet, which took place May 23-25 in Emporia, KS. The men finished a program-record 4th in the event, while the women finished in 20th place. The Lions earned 12 All-American finishes, lead by **Peyton Barton** capturing the National Championship in the Hammer Throw. It was Barton's 4th career national championship in three different events.

LIONS 3RD IN MIAA COMMISSIONERS CUP

Missouri Southern finished third in the MIAA Commissioners Cup, tying last year for the highest ever finish for the department in a year in which all sports seasons were completed. Schools earn points based on their regular season finish in the MIAA standings. Each institution's grand point total is then divided by the number of sports the school sponsors in order to attain an average overall finish. MSSU's finish was driven by a strong spring with a championship in **men's golf** and runner-up finishes in **baseball** and **men's outdoor track & field**. That gave the Lions an average of 9.97 points earned per season, edging out Washburn and Central Missouri for third.

LIONS EXCEL IN THE CLASSROOM



The spring semester was another strong academic performance for MSSU student-athletes, as they collectively earned a 3.07 GPA. That makes the overall athletic department GPA a 3.21, marking the 12th consecutive semester the department GPA has been above a 3.0.

135 student-athletes earned a 3.5 GPA or better for the spring, while 69 finished with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Leading the way in the classroom for the Spring 2024 term were **women's golf** (3.61), **volleyball** (3.58), **softball** (3.57), **women's cross country/track & field** (3.48), and **women's basketball** (3.38).

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 5 programs in service hours were:

1. **Football** – 1,492 hours
2. **Women's Track & Field** – 793 hours
3. **Men's Track & Field** – 710 hours
4. **Women's Softball** – 563 hours
5. **Women's Volleyball** – 463 hours

The top organizations impacted by MSSU student-athletes were Missouri Southern, Ronald McDonald House, Souls Harbor, Bright Futures/Joplin Schools, Webb City CARES/Webb City Schools, and Special Olympics.

STUDENT-ATHLETE AWARDS BANQUET

On Monday, May 6th the athletic department celebrated the accomplishments of the year at the annual Student-Athlete awards banquet. After dinner in Young Gymnasium student-athletes, coaches, and staff made their way to the Taylor Performing Arts Center for the awards ceremony.

Major award winners from the event can be found below.

- Harry Greninger Heart of a Lion Award: **Maya Greenquist** (Soccer), **Darin Oplotnik** (Football)
- Female Newcomer of the Year: **Briar Gillum** (Outdoor Track & Field)
- Male Newcomer of the Year: **Darius Dawson** (Men's Basketball)
- SAAC Mentor of the Year: **Markie McCoy** (Assistant AD – External Operations)
- Community Service Award: **Maya Greenquist** (Soccer)
- Team Community Service Award: **Volleyball**
- Female Athlete of the Year: **Ryan Franklin** (Women's Basketball)
- Male Athlete of the Year: **Peyton Barton** (Track & Field)
- Female Career Achievement Award: **Yazmin Vargas** (Softball)
- Male Career Achievement Award: **Peyton Barton** (Track & Field), **Henry Kusiak** (Baseball)
- E.O. and Virginia Humphrey Award: **Henry Kusiak** (Baseball)

