

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Board of Governors Minutes
March 15, 2024
Billingsly Student Center
Room 310

The March 15, 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 and Michael Seibert.

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 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 January 19, 2024 Board meeting; none were noted.

A motion was made by Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve minutes of the January 19, 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.

Spring Enrollment

More students are selecting MSSU for their higher education experience. You may recall that last fall new student enrollment increased more than six percent compared to the previous year. This momentum is continuing during our current spring semester with a 4.7 percent overall enrollment increase compared to one year ago. Also, last fall, we achieved our highest first-to-second year retention rate in the past 17 years.

There are many factors in positively bending enrollment in a challenging environment. I am grateful to the Board for supporting strategies such as initiating new degree programs developed by our faculty. Student recruitment and retention is a team effort—and the progress we are seeing is a reflection of the efforts of every member of our campus community.

Legislative Update

The House Budget Committee, chaired by Representative Cody Smith, has begun work on the FY2025 state budget—there is a long way to go in this process. When we have more certainty on the state budget and projected enrollment for next year, we will begin to develop a budget proposal for the Board of

President (continued):

Governors to consider at their June meeting.

Our request to expand our statewide mission (already approved by the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education in September) is being well-received in the legislature. As the Board is well aware, these actions add to our current statewide mission of international education, immersive learning experiences, and health and life sciences. There are now three legislative vehicles to support the mission change: Senate Concurrent Resolution 22, Senate Bill 907, and House Concurrent Resolution 50. Over the past few weeks, the university has testified at the State Capitol in favor of all three of these initiatives. I am pleased to share that yesterday the Missouri Senate approved Concurrent Resolution 22 (26-4) and that legislation is on its way to the Missouri House. We are grateful for the support of our legislative delegation, especially Senator Jill Carter and Representative Cody Smith, in helping to move these efforts forward.

Mark your Calendars

In my written report to the Board, I highlighted several upcoming events. Thursday, April 11th will be a special day for our university as we break ground on the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center. More information will follow, but the Groundbreaking Ceremony will be at 1 p.m. on the Campus Oval. The entire campus and the community are invited to attend this event.

Following the groundbreaking, at 2 p.m. in the Taylor Performing Arts Center we will kick off the inaugural Willcoxon Innovation in Health Sciences Summit. This two-day event is funded through the generosity of Dr. Bob and Dot Willcoxon. The first speaker will be former U.S. Senator Roy Blunt who will share perspectives on healthcare, including at the federal level. All sessions are free and open to campus and the public.

My written report to the Board highlights other events in the coming months, including the World Music and Cuisine Festival, and the spring Campus Activities Board Concert—Plain White T's. These events will add to campus vibrancy and bring many visitors to our campus.

Purpose

To conclude my remarks, I want to highlight a recent event that exemplifies how we always strive to focus on students as our priority. I know that our Staff Senate President, Alicia Hughes, has referenced the Dress to Impress event in her report, but I also want to mention it. Now in its 10th year, Dress to Impress provides students with new or gently used professional clothing and accessories—free of charge. During the event, many of our staff serve as “shopping assistants” to offer guidance since, in many cases, they select their first professional suit, dress, jacket, shoes, and so on. At MSSU, we serve many students of modest means, and this event is a game changer for students participating in the event. All of this supports our mission: to educate and graduate knowledgeable, responsible, successful global citizens.

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.

Hearnes Hall Remediation/Renovation

Just before the Board met in January, there was a water leak of the sprinkler system on the third floor of Hearnes Hall that impacted all three floors. You can see in the report that just a few days

Executive Vice President (continued):

later we moved 85 staff out of that building to different locations across campus. Within a few days of that we had moved all the furnishing from a 45,000 square foot facility to a storage facility on campus. We hired Blackmon Mooring of Tulsa, OK (who had assisted us with the Lion Village water leak in the fall) who were on site within hours of the leak. Since that time, we have removed all water damaged flooring. We knew there was vinyl asbestos tile on the second floor from the 1967 construction of the building. It has been removed and will be replaced with modern material. Right now, we are focusing on letting departments make choices on carpet, tile, and paint. We are still on schedule to be back in the building by July 1, 2024. I would like to acknowledge the work of the staff in facility services, Information Technology, University Police, and all the impacted offices from Hearn Hall. They've all been very cooperative and understanding during this difficult transition.

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.

MSSU Finalist at American Association of Anatomy

Several anatomy research students from MSSU are heading to Canada to present their studies at the American Association of Anatomy's annual meeting. Their outstanding work has earned them spots as finalists for the AAA Undergraduate Poster Award at AAA's Anatomy Connected event, set for March 22-25, in Toronto. Out of 400 abstracts submitted from the US and Canada, two of the eight projects selected through rigorous blind evaluation by AAA CECA judges are from MSSU. Additionally, one of their presentations was accepted for oral presentation.

College of Arts and Science

The Division of Theatre performed "The Great Gatsby" February 29th - March 2nd. Each of the four performances were either sold out or were nearly sold out. The staging was innovative, and the acting was superb.

The Concert Band held their Winter Concert "Fracas" on Thursday, February 22nd. They performed with Music faculty, alumni, and future Lions. Several sectional ensembles were performed, including brass, woodwind, percussion, and even a faculty ensemble.

College of Business, Communications & Technology

On February 24th the Missouri SBDC at MSSU, in collaboration with the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, hosted a training called "AI Myth-Busting Panel Discussion." Dr. Sarah Holtzen, Assistant Professor of Management, was one of the panelists. Throughout the event, participants had the opportunity to engage with industry experts and gain valuable insights into the practical applications of AI in business and personal use. Overall, the event was attended by a diverse audience, including entrepreneurs, business owners, students, academics, and tech enthusiasts. Their enthusiasm and curiosity about the future of business made the event truly dynamic and engaging.

The Communication Department had seven entries and won two prizes at the 2024 American Advertising Awards from the American Advertising Federation. This is an annual regional advertising award that many regional universities participate in, such as Missouri State University, Pittsburg State University, Drury University, Evangel University, and Ozark Technical Community College. The first award was an

Provost and VPAA (continued):

audio public service announcement (PSA), entitled 'Golden Paw' created by student, Shawnda Casner. The second was a social media campaign project entitled 'One Joplin' created by the following students: Makenzie Puriton, Haylee Smith, Corbin Beal, Oscar Campa, and Chad Anderson. The ADDY Award Ceremony took place on March 2, 2024, at Downstream Casino. The awards ceremony is a wonderful opportunity to network with professionals.

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

Southern Summit

Southern Summit was put on by our Human Resources department. The Summit offered 18 informative sessions highlighting academic programs, campus vibrancy, cybersecurity, international student engagement, student support and other engaging topics. The event had over 190 participants. Our keynote speaker spoke about the power of Positive Leadership and how, as leaders, we set the tone and empower our team to succeed, not only as a whole, but also individually.

Your U Finances

As the President mentioned in his written report, employees had an opportunity to engage in a series of presentations to learn more about our university. The finance sessions included information on our sources of revenue and how those resources are expended. The sessions included a presentation but most importantly allowed for extended time to have informal questions and discussion.

FY24 Audit

We are nine months into the fiscal year and are planning for June 30, which is our fiscal year end. We will work on internal control questionnaires and begin to outline the timeline for the compliance and finance reviews.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

We keep our eye on enrollment and the enrollment trends as they have a significant impact on our budget. We also continue to be mindful of the discussion at the state regarding state appropriations.

Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending February 29, 2024

Cash Graph:

Ms. Eis noted the balance at the end of February 29, 2024, was \$25.3M. This is \$2.1M over the prior year. The prior year reflects a MOSERS prepayment of \$1.7M so the actual cash variance is \$400k.

Statement of Net Position:

Total Assets: \$192M

The semi-annual bond payment of interest only was paid this week.

Total Liabilities: \$135M

Net Position: \$57M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** \$3.2M increase. Tuition increased \$1.8M due to an increase in hours and tuition rate. Auxiliary increase of \$752k which is made up of additional occupancy in the residence hall and an increase in digital book revenues offset by decrease in textbook sales from the bookstore.

CFO/Treasurer (continued):

- **Total Operating Expenses:** \$3.5M increase. Scholarships \$1.6M increase, contract services \$752k that includes new grant activity, food service expense due to Residence Hall occupancy increase; and additional repair and maintenance from remediation projects at Lion Village and Hearnese.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** \$1.5M increase. State base appropriations \$1.3M; Science to Jobs appropriation \$590k and other nonoperating revenue \$354k..
- **Other Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of \$843k
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**
Current Year: \$6.3M increase
Prior Year: \$5.1M increase
This results in an increase from Prior Year: \$1.2M.

A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Michael Seibert to approve the February 2024 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for February 2024 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.

Telling Our Story

Our university marketing department is utilizing multiple outlets for telling Missouri Southern's story. In my report you see two examples showcasing our academic programs and health and life sciences. Additionally, we are promoting scholarship offerings and student life/immersive learning opportunities. In reviewing the data associated for undergraduate paid searches, we found that our scholarship ads are performing best in regions outside Joplin. In Joplin our student life/immersive learning ads are getting the most interactions. With increasing our reach outside of the local area, we have seen significant performance increases in our advertising in Pittsburg, Tulsa, Fayetteville, Bentonville, Miami, Rogers, Anderson, Seneca, and Monett. To connect with more rural communities, we have had great success with YouTube ads and, in fact, now have seen spiked interest in areas such as Grove, Pittsburg, Girard, Columbus, Anderson, Granby, and Baxter Springs. This past month we have seen the biggest growth with graduate program paid searches. We have had significant growth in Springfield, Tulsa, Neosho, Pittsburg, Joplin, Webb City, Broken Arrow, Nixa, Ozark, Carthage, and Republic.

Fall Admissions Highlights

This semester the admissions team, and others from across campus, have been very busy with on campus events and visiting high schools and community colleges. Those efforts are paying off with increased freshman and transfer admits, as I've shared in my report. Graduate student admits are also moving in a positive direction and our new programs are performing quite well. As of this morning, graduate admits are up 300% from this time last year. We are telling our story and welcoming prospective students and families to campus so they can experience what it's like to be a Lion. I believe, as a campus, we are doing a great job of showcasing Missouri Southern as a top destination for education.

Director of Athletics (Ms. Cori Reid for Mr. Rob Mallory):

Note: Highlights of Cori'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.

Winter Sports Success

Winter sports have concluded with the highlight being our Track and Field teams at the National Championships. Our men's team finished fifth as a team, (one spot out of the podium) which was a great finish for them. We had two athletes finish as national champions: Jon Watts in men's long jump and Peyton Barton in weight throw (for the second year in a row).

Inaugural Lion Pride Giving Challenge

The MSSU athletic department, in coordination with the development office and Missouri Southern Foundation, conducted our first ever "giving challenge" from February 26 – March 4. While not every program achieved their initial goal, the event was a big success for the department, generating \$120,917 in funding from 285 donors.

Spring Sports

The spring sports season kicked off on February 1st. Baseball is currently 21-4, while softball is off to a 20-7 start. With both programs coming off outstanding 2023 seasons, expectations are high as baseball was picked #2 and softball #3 in the MIAA preseason coach's polls. Our men's golf team won their first tournament.

NCAA Convention Recap

The NCAA Convention was held January 10-13 in Phoenix, AZ. During the Division II business session, the membership considered and took action on several legislative proposals. Additionally, during their annual in-person meetings at the Convention, the Division II National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) elected MSSU softball student-athlete and MIAA National SAAC representative Kara Amos as Vice-Chair for the 2024-25 academic year.

Faculty Senate President (Dr. Jean Coltharp):

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

Faculty Senate, along with administration, have been discussing the pros and cons of going to a full week off at Thanksgiving. Currently, 10 out of the 13 public universities in Missouri have the full week off. There are a lot of good points on each side of the issue.

Thanks to Dr. Toms, a new finals exam schedule has been created. This came at the request of faculty to make things less confusing for students. It will be implemented in Fall 2024.

Administration is looking into changing faculty contracts from 10-month to 9-month contracts. We are the only college/university in the area (and Missouri) that has 10-month contracts. No one is quite sure how this started and if there is a reason behind it. This potential change will help with recruitment and faculty morale.

After over 10 years of work, the faculty has an Intellectual Property Policy ready for the Board to (hopefully) approve. I can personally attest to work being done on this every month for at least the last four years. There have been many ad hoc committees, drafts, and meetings with administration and Husch-Blackwell. For the most part, the faculty is excited for it to be done!

Faculty Senate President (continued):

Lastly, this will be my last Board of Governors meeting. Michael Beilfuss will be joining you in June. Thank you for being so welcoming! I enjoyed the experience.

Staff Senate President (Ms. Alicia Hughes):

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

Dress to Impress

Student Success Services heads up our Dress to Impress event. During the last half hour of the event, employees were allowed to 'shop.' These employees also agreed to help pack up the event. More than 10 employees benefited from this added component of the event.

Swap Shop Update

The relocation of Hearnese employees caused a slight delay in the opening of the swap shop. We plan on sending an all-campus email in the coming weeks to solicit donations. Donations can be dropped off at Spiva 102. Our plans are to open this summer.

Student Representative (Mr. Maddox Studdard):

Brother2Brother

Brother2Brother is one of our newest student organizations here on campus. This organization is part of the national organization Student African American Brotherhood (SAAB) and is open to men of color. One of the objectives of B2B is to be a role model for each other, as well as other men of color, in the community. It is our hope that B2B members will be well prepared to enter the workforce as professionals and be amongst the best in competing for a meaningful place in the community and our society. To achieve these goals and objectives, B2B will provide educational and cultural activities for its members and others. I currently serve as vice president of the organization. Several of us will be attending a national conference in Springfield next Friday. Nii Abrahams and Coach Atiba Brady have agreed to be sponsors of the organization.

Efforts to Reduce Stress

The Green Bandana Project recently hosted the first of a three-part self-care yoga series for students, faculty, and staff. Yoga mats are provided. The next yoga series is April 3rd. The Green Bandana Project has been a visible presence on campus to help students deal with the pressures that can come. Many faculty and staff members have been great partners in this initiative.

Our student gardening club had a fundraiser on Valentines Day to support our proposed community garden. Members of the gardening club are students who come from a variety of majors, and they enjoy gardening. Many see it as a stress release.

Lion Statue

The Student Senate passed a motion to adopt a lion statue from the Rotary Club's Joplin sculpture garden at Mercy Park.

Board Committees:

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

There is no report as the committee did not meet.

Academic Affairs (Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg, Chair):

We had several updates from Dr. Toms. There were two new degree programs, B.S. in Food Science and Nutrition and B.S. in Business with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship. We dropped the B.S. in Entrepreneurship.

A motion was made by Mariann Morgan and seconded by Alison Hershewe to approve the proposed academic programs additions and deletions. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reviewed the Intellectual Property policy. This has undergone legal review. The committee made several small changes. Under section 4a, we added a statement “Expenses related to disputed resolutions will be an expense deducted from net income.” Under section 5a, we added the statement “No net income as defined in section 4a and 4c will be distributed until all disputes have been resolved.” Under section 7, the first sentence was inserted “This policy will be reviewed initially in one year, and at three-year intervals thereafter.”

A motion was made by Michael Seibert and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve Intellectual Property policy with the changes mentioned. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget Audit Committee (Carlos Haley, Chair):

The committee met to discuss the new undergraduate course fee, called the LION fee. The LION fee will be charged on a per credit hour basis. All course and special program fees will be removed.

A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the new LION fee. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS – N/A

None was mentioned.

NEW BUSINESS – N/A

The Board has been asked to consider updates to four existing Board policies. This process of review and update is consistent with best practices for the work of the Board. Our Board Counsel, Mr. Peter Edwards, has reviewed and provided proposed updates for each of the policies for the Board to consider. I suggest that we consider these policies one at a time. For each policy, I would invite an opportunity for discussion, followed by a motion and second. I also invite Mr. Edwards to comment on any of the policies and proposed revisions.

Board Attendance Policy – A grammatical correction was made in section 3, second paragraph, second line, word “of” removed.

A motion was made by Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve the Board Attendance Policy with correction. Motion passed unanimously.

Delegation of Authority to University President Policy – No changes to the policy were suggested.

A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the Delegation of Authority to President Policy as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Conflict of Interest Policy – A MSSU document reference was removed on page 2, section 3. Under Disclosure of Relationship, line 3, the words “officer or employee” was replaced with “Board member”.

A motion was made by Mariann Morgan and seconded by Mike Seibert to approve the Board Conflict of Interest Policy with corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

Open Records and Notice of Meeting Policy – It was clarified that the updates correlate with the new Sunshine law verbiage.

A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve the Open Records and Notice of Meeting Policy as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Future Meeting Date:

The next meetings of the Board are as scheduled:

- June 13, 2024
- September 13, 2024 *(proposed)*
- November 8, 2024 *(proposed)*
- January 10, 2025 *(proposed)*
- March 14, 2025 *(proposed)*
- June 12, 2025 *(proposed)*

Chairwoman Anita Oplotnik thanked the leaders of the university for their hard work and efforts.

Closed Executive Session:


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

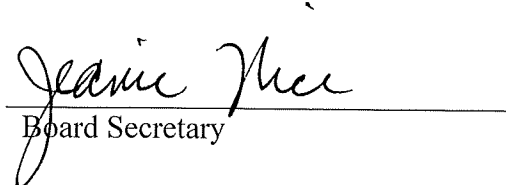
RSMo 610.021 (1) Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys; and

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 Carlos Haley and seconded by Mariann Morgan 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.


Board Chair


Board Secretary