

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**March 11, 2022**  
**Billingsly Student Center**  
**Ball Room**

The March 11, 2022, meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by Alison Hershewe, Chairwoman. Governors in attendance were, T. Mark Elliott, Carlos Haley, Alison Hershewe, Ron Richard, and Dr. Rosenberg. Governors attending (via phone) were Bill Gipson, Mariann Morgan, and Anita Oplotnik. Others in attendance were John Hammons, Dr. Brad Hodson, Heather Lesmeister, Dr. David Locher (via phone), Rob Mallory, Brent Olson, Mike Opfer, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Julie Wengert, Rob Yust, Linda Eis, and Laura Boyd.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairwoman Alison Hershewe, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m., and officially welcomed Dr. Lisa Toms, Provost, and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

**MINUTES**

Chairwoman Hershewe asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 14, 2022, Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve minutes of the January 14, 2022; 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.*

**Fallen/Injured Officers**

Dr. Van Galen noted the university observed a moment of silence this morning at 10:00 a.m. in honor of the two Joplin Police Department Officers, Benjamin Cooper and Jake Reed, whose lives were lost in the line of duty on March 8, 2022, and a third who was seriously injured, Rick Hirshey. All three men were graduates of Missouri Southern's Law Enforcement Academy. Earlier this week, flags were flown at half-mast, and blue ribbons were tied on trees on campus in show of Southern's support.

**Governor Proposes Strong Investment in Higher Education**

Governor Parson has proposed significant new investment in Missouri public higher education for the Fiscal Year 2023 state budget. The governor's proposal is in the process of developing the next state budget and should be announced early summer. Major items proposed, along with potential impacts on Missouri Southern include:

- A 5.4% core budget increase for all public higher-education institutions (this would translate to approximately \$1.4 million increase for MSSU).
- \$31 million in funding for MoExcels projects (MSSU could potentially receive \$767,732 in one-time funds for a Digital Media and Virtual Production Center).
- \$475 million in capital investment in higher education, while challenging each institution to provide a 50% match from sources such as philanthropy, federal funds from governmental entities, etc. (the governor's budget includes a \$30 million project to construct a Health Science Innovation Center at MSSU.)

**President (continued):**

Dr. Van Galen noted our administration continues to engage legislators and communicate the value of investment in Missouri Southern. As an example, over 22,000 Missouri Southern alumni live within a 100-mile radius of Joplin which results in a tremendous economic and community impact on Southwest Missouri and the four-states region.

**Upcoming Changes in Campus Administration**

Several changes in administration structure and roles are planned to reduce approximately \$500,000 per year beginning July 1, 2022, which include a reorganization of existing programs into three academic colleges (which will need board approval). Dr. Van Galen acknowledged those who have worked together in developing this plan (led by Dr. David Locher), and especially thanked the faculty for their engagement and feedback on this process, and Academic Affairs for their work and leadership (including Lorinda Hackett) the last few months.

**Strategic Plan Update**

Southern's current strategic plan launched in 2018 and will sunset next year 2023. Earlier this week a group of faculty and staff administrators were invited to be a part of the Strategic Plan Task Force. The charge of this group includes assessment of progress on the current universities plan and the development of a roadmap for our next strategic plan. Over the coming months, the task force members will engage the board, external stakeholders, faculty, staff, and students. Provost, Dr. Lisa Toms will chair the task force, and Dr. Van Galen will be an ex-officio member.

\*On behalf of the Board, Chairwoman Hershewe acknowledged condolences to the families of the fallen and injured police officers.

**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.*

\*Chairwomen Hershewe thanked the Missouri Southern Foundation Board for their work, leadership, and dedication toward Missouri Southern State University.

**New Student Admission**

Dr. Hodson noted Southern is holding the 300 new student margin that we have had in the past year and anticipate that to tighten as we move into the summer. Our institution is up 28% (year to year comparison) for first-time freshmen and slightly up on transfer students (6% overall).

**The College Tour**

Missouri Southern has been invited to participate in Season 6 of the College Tour, a show on Amazon Prime. Missouri Southern is the first university in Missouri or Kansas to participate. Producers will be on campus April 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 to tape footage, and the condensed 30-minute video will air later in the calendar year.

**Fundraising Campaign Feasibility Study**

J.F. Smith Group has been selected to conduct a fundraising campaign feasibility study. More than 400 individuals were invited to participate, and at this time, 124 interviews have been completed. Results of the final feasibility study is anticipated for May 2022.

\*Governor Haley asked if the construction on the Oval would be completed by the time the production crew arrived on campus to film the "College Tour."

Dr. Hodson noted conversations with R.E. Smith Construction, include the campus being cleaned up, grass growing and flowers blooming by Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. (Dr. Hodson also noted the date for filming was dictated by the producer's availability to be in Missouri).

**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.*

**College of Business Accreditations Move Forward**

Dr. Toms noted the Plaster College of Business is moving forward in seeking AACSB accreditation. The initial accreditation process in May of 2021 and their progress report required annually, was submitted on February 15, 2022. The next progress report will be in February 2023. The industrial engineering program is working on their Self-Study of ABET accreditation, and our university can expect an ABET site visit to campus in the fall of 2022.

**Students Accepted into Disney College Program**

Dr. Toms noted after a two-year hiatus because of the pandemic, Missouri Southern has re-engaged with the Disney College Program. Twenty-six students have applied for the Disney College Program and at this time, six have been accepted. This program provides one semester (6 months) paid internships for students on the grounds of Disney World.

**Dental-Hygiene**

Emily Valence, a second-year dental hygiene student discovered a pre-malignant cancerous lesion on her father-in-law while giving an exam. This early detection led to a positive outcome. Ms. Valence was recently featured on one of the local television stations and will be in the Crossroads Spring 2022 edition.

**George Washington Carver National Monument Art and Essay Contest**

This event is offered to area third and fourth graders each year. The Teacher Education program works with GWC to choose a theme, based on Carver's attributes. The awards ceremony will be held at the George Washington Carver National Monument on Saturday, April 2, 2022. Southern's mascot 'Roary' will be there for photo ops and to congratulate the winners. Roary and the winners will also be named honorary park rangers for the day.

**Lions and Tigers Together**

In the Fall of 2020, the Carthage School District reached out to Missouri Southern to establish a Grow Your Own Program, later named the 'Lions and Tigers Together' program by offering an EDUC 100 Introduction to Teacher Education as a dual credit course. This partnership has continued to offer their high school graduates' opportunity to become secondary and elementary school teachers. The first graduates of this program have been hired for the Fall 2022 academic year in the Carthage school district.

**Interim Vice President for Student Affairs (Dr. Julie Wengert):**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Wengert'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.*

**HEEF III – Student Grant Funds**

Dr. Wengert noted the final installment of student grant funds will be distributed over the next couple of weeks. This is the second half of the approximate \$7.6 million that was given to Missouri Southern for student distribution.

**Student Recruitment & Engagement**

A variety of co-curricular opportunities continue for students to be engaged in which include guest speakers and magicians to more professional events such as Dress to Impress and Spring Career Fair.

**Admitted Student Experience**

Dr. Wengert noted a variety of departments across campus have collaborated to establish an enhanced and engaging student experience for Southern's prospective and current students from the point of enrollment to the first 20 days of school.

## **Interim Vice President for Student Affairs (continued):**

### **Financial Forgiveness Project**

Later this month, the Admissions, Registrar, Bursar and Financial Aid teams will work together to communicate with students who left MSSU with an outstanding balance and unfinished degree. If stipulations are met, old debts will be forgiven for students to be able to come back and finish their degrees.

### **Community Engagement**

Missouri Southern Aquatics is partnering with the Alliance of Southwest Missouri, the City of Joplin's Park and Recreation Department, the Joplin Family YMCA and area firefighters to bring a Water Safety Program to the community. MSSU will host the first event in May 2022.

\*Governor Elliott questioned what the old debt for the financial forgiveness balance would be.

Dr. Wengert noted approximately \$1.3 million (going back to 2015).

\*Governor Haley questioned the number of students who are eligible.

Dr. Wengert noted letters would be going out to approximately 3,000 students.

## **Vice President for Business Affairs (Mr. Rob Yust):**

*Note: Highlights of Mr. Yust'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.*

### **Construction**

Mr. Yust noted updates on the campus improvement projects, funded, by the Federal Budget Stabilization Fund including:

- Pedestrian safety in the main parking lot (completed)
- Street replacement/crosswalks (completed)
- Tunnel safety improvements (anticipated completion, late-March)
- Oval infrastructure
  - Revamping the entrance to Hearnese Hall (completed)
  - New pavers in front of Webster Hall (completed)
  - New pavers and seat in front of Reynolds Hall (completed)
  - Concrete benches and planters have been poured, pavers started at the Oval entrances to Hearnese and Spiva
  - Sidewalk replacement and tree removal (completed)
  - Replacement of old water line (completed)
  - Installation of new light poles on the Oval (anticipated completion, late March)

## **Taylor Performing Arts Center (TPAC)**

Mr. Yust noted all the MEP demo is complete. The steel erection is ongoing, and the helical anchors are near completion. The seating/carpet demo is scheduled for October, and the installation should follow in November/December 2022. Anticipated completion of this project is January 2023.

### **Trail Project**

The City of Joplin has executed the deed and conveying the land to Missouri Southern.

## **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.*

### **Record-Setting Season for Women's Basketball**

Mr. Mallory acknowledged the success of the women's basketball program (currently 24-6). Ronnie Ressel was named unanimous pick for MIAA Coach of the Year, and freshman point guard Lacy Stokes, was named MIAA All-Defensive Team. This is first time in conference history that a freshman has won the Player of the Year honor. Additionally, Madi Stokes was named MIAA All-Defensive Team and 3<sup>rd</sup> Team All-MIAA, while Amaya Johns also received 3<sup>rd</sup> Team All-MIAA recognition.

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

### **Lions Among National Leaders in Community Engagement**

NCAA Team Works, which coordinates community service efforts at NCAA championships, and Helper Helper, a volunteer management and tracking platform, launched the community service competition in 2017 to recognize student-athletes who give back to their communities. Missouri Southern finished sixth in Division II in the Fall 2021.

### **NCAA Convention Recap**

During the convention, held on January 20, 2022, the NCAA membership voted in favor of a new constitution. The constitution pushes more responsibility to the respected divisions to govern themselves. Missouri Southern is currently in the process of specific legislation that we may revise - in accordance with the new constitution.

## **Treasurer (Ms. Linda Eis):**

### **Cash Graph:**

Ms. Eis noted the balance at the end of February 2022, is \$24.8M. As a reminder, this is the beginning of the spring semester and there is always a spike with tuition and fees being paid. This also includes the \$6M in HEERF II and \$3.9M HEERF III.

### **Statement of Net Position:**

**Total Assets:** \$189.8M

**Total Liabilities:** \$131.6M (a semi-annual interest only bond payment was made in the amount of \$937k this week).

**Net Position:** \$58.2M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$4.1M), a reflection of a (\$3.5M) decline in enrollment which offsets a tuition increase.
- **Total Operating Expenses:** Reflects an increase of \$2.2M. Many of the expenses have continued to increase over the last year (FY21) which had significant reduced activity due to the impact of COVID.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** Reflects an increase of \$4.7M from primarily increased base appropriations.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**  
Current Year: \$7.0M  
Prior Year: \$8.7M  
This results in an increase from Prior Year: (\$1.7M)
- **Capital appropriations-state:** Current year reflects the capital appropriations funding for the Taylor Performing Arts Center (TPAC).

**Other items:** Ms. Eis noted, her office is gearing up for the annual audit with BKD.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the February 2022 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for February 2022 are attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

## **Faculty Senate President-Elect (Dr. David Locher, Faculty President):**

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

Dr. Locher noted since the January Board meeting the Faculty Senate have been:

- Actively stream-lining course and program changes (anticipated completion by next BOG meeting).
- Working on stream-lining language in some Faculty Handbook sections.
- Primary focus from the faculty senate has been the restructuring and reorganization of the academic colleges.

**Staff Senate President (Mr. Mike Opfer):**

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

Mr. Opfer noted:

- The Communication Committee is currently working on "Southern Swap," an event resulting in staff and faculty members exchanging their "tenderly worn" MSSU clothing.
- Staff Senate Elections will begin next month for the first quarter Southern Service Champ Award.
- Staff conversations continue regarding:
  - the excitement to see the Oval project on campus completed; and
  - concerns with the upcoming realignment (changes in administration/roles structure) and what campus will look like once complete.

**Student Senate President (Mr. Brent Olson):**

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

Mr. Olson noted the Student Senate anticipate completion of the following three projects in the next year:

- Green and gold solar power hammock gardens that would power outlets for charging phones, laptops, etc. This idea came from a collaboration with a Cottey College student within a Government Association meeting. This proposal has gone through Senate, monies have been secured, and Senate is currently working with the facilities task force regarding location.
- The Lion Tank (a version of the Shark Tank) will be a pitch from students in giving ideas and concerns of campus improvements that their organization would like to see. Once all pitches are made, Faculty Senate will make their choice and "invest" in that organization.
- In the early stages of acquiring outdoor art/sculptures for campus in an affordable way. An option found is to lease sculptures for approximately \$2,000 each for two years, bringing various sculptures to campus over time.

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

N/A

**Academic Affairs (Anita Oplotnik, Chair):**

Governor Oplotnik noted this committee met prior to the open Board meeting for the purpose of four action items and requested board approval ~ which included:

- *Consideration of the Degree Programs*
  - Undergraduate Certificates
    - American Studies
    - Nutrition
    - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Major Programs
    - Bachelor of General Studies Business Emphasis
  - Graduate Certificates
    - Certificate in Electroencephalography
    - Certificate in Intraoperative Neuromonitoring
  - Graduate Major
    - Master of Science in Neurodiagnostic Technology
    - Master of Health Administration

## **Academic Affairs (continued):**

Other:

The Art Department has updated their name to the Department of Art and Design.

The Master of Accountancy (MAcc) is currently not accepting new students.

*A motion was made by Dr. Rosenberg and seconded by Ron Richard to approve the Degree Programs as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the approved Degree Programs is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

### ➤ *Restructure of Academic Colleges*

- Academic Affairs recommends the restructure of the academic college units from four colleges to three colleges. While this proposal is in response to the budget needs of the University, it was designed to provide innovations and synergies across disciplines.

*A motion was made by Dr. Rosenberg and seconded by Ron Richard to approve the restructure of the academic college units from four colleges to three colleges as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the attached proposal is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

### ➤ *Tenure Recommendation*

- President Van Galen requested that the Board approve tenure for Dr. Lisa Toms, effective March 11, 2022.

*A motion was made by Governor Elliott and seconded by Dr. Rosenberg to approve tenure to Missouri Southern's new Provost, Dr. Lisa Toms as presented. Motion passed unanimously.*

### ➤ *Sabbatical Recommendation*

- The Sabbatical Committee recommends that a sabbatical be granted for Kyle McKenzie, for Spring 2023.

*A motion was made by Dr. Rosenberg and seconded by Governor Richard to approve the sabbatical as presented. Motion passed unanimously.*

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

Governor Haley noted this committee met prior to the open Board meeting for the purpose to discuss the following:

- Preparations of the FY 2023 budget, the process is still on going and Governor Haley anticipates approval at the June board meeting.
- Results of the Procurement Card audit (which began in 2020 performed by BKD), were recently given and policy updates were made. This will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis going forward.
- Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program and the number of faculty and staff who are eligible and who would like this opportunity. Once the numbers are reviewed, monies will be paid from the FY2022 budget.

\*No board approval actions were needed at this time.

## **Ad Hoc Pandemic Committee (Bill Gipson, Chair): N/A**

\*Chair Hershewe questioned Dr. Wengert if she had any news regarding the COVID-19 Task Force Committee.

Dr. Wengert noted the committee continues to meet, the next meeting is scheduled for mid-April.

Dr. Van Galen noted due to recent CDC data, campus protocols have been revised. Southern's face masks are no longer required, but certainly welcome (this includes classrooms). Face masks are still required at the Willcoxon Health Center, and Lion Cub Academy.

**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.

**Closed Executive Session:**

Chairwoman Hersheve 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 roll call was made by Laura Boyd, Board Secretary, 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