

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**March 17, 2021**  
**Billingsly Student Center**  
**Ball Room**

The March 17, 2021 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, Bill Gipson, Carlos Haley, Alison Hershewe, Mariann Morgan, Anita Oplotnik, and Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg. Others in attendance were Dr. Paula Carson, Jon Dermott, Dr. Mikh Gunderman, Dr. Brad Hodson, Heather Lesmeister, Cori Reid, Debra Schow-Smith, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Hayley Ward, Dr. Julie Wengert, Rob Yust, Linda Eis, and Laura Boyd. Governor Ron Richard was in non-attendance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairwoman Hershewe called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**MINUTES**

Chairwoman Hershewe asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 20, 2021 Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve minutes of the January 20, 2021 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.*

Dr. Van Galen acknowledged and welcomed Cori Reid, Interim Athletic Director, as a new member of the President's Cabinet. Dr. Van Galen also noted Dr. Paula Carson will be stepping down as Provost, and returning to the faculty the end of June, 2021.

**Gratitude for Outstanding Faculty and Staff**

Dr. Van Galen noted gratitude towards the following:

- Becky Harshaw, a clinical instructor with the Dental Hygiene Department, who submitted applications resulting in two major grants in the amount of nearly \$180,000;
- Dr. Bill Fischer, assistant professor of history, coordinating a virtual version of MSSU's annual History Day, bringing in 140 entries from five area school districts; and
- Facility staff and others who battled the snow and ice in the cold in February, 2021.

**Vision for Project Launchpad and the MSSU Downtown Center**

Dr. Van Galen noted the university has been working collaboratively with the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Joplin and leadership of Joplin area school districts to develop an exciting vision for an innovative reuse of the former downtown Joplin Public Library building. This concept has been branded as the Launchpad project. This was presented to Mr. Toby Teeter, Joplin Chamber, and Dr. Melinda Moss, Superintendent of Joplin Schools at the Joplin City Council on February 8, 2021.

Dr. Van Galen noted the university would establish a Missouri Southern Downtown Center within the facility, and would provide information and access to university programs for prospective students and the community. Three additional initiatives as part of Launchpad include:

- The Small Business Development Center, currently located in Plaster Hall on our main campus;
- Establish a Missouri Southern Downtown Internship Hub to increase the number of qualities of internship opportunities for Southern students; and

**President (continued):**

- CAPS – the Center for Advanced Professional Studies, a national model for connecting school districts, higher education and industry. High-school juniors and seniors would devote half of their school day to CAPS courses, working on projects at Joplin area business, industry and non-profit locations.

Dr. Van Galen noted participating high-school students from Joplin, Webb City and Carl Junction (to begin with) would solve real-world problems and be mentored by Joplin area employers. The university would facilitate the program, and provide dual credit opportunities appropriate. Dr. Van Galen shared a power point regarding the Launchpad objectives and components.

Governor Gipson questioned what the anticipated cost of renovating the building to meet these objectives would be. Dr. Van Galen noted the anticipated cost would be \$10 million dollars to renovate the facility, and a large amount of this would be public funding through the City. The university would not owe the facility or its foundation, but remain a tenant of the facility.

Governor Oplotnik questioned the conversion time-line of this project. Dr. Van Galen noted it could be approximately 18 months before this becomes a reality.

**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.*

**Fundraising Income**

Dr. Hodson noted at this time, the fundraising totals of the third quarter are at \$3.4 million dollars (of a \$5 million-dollar goal), which is up 1.37% from this time last year.

**Hanover Study**

Dr. Hodson noted Missouri Southern is in a very competitive market for recruiting freshman and new transfers, which led to contracting with Hanover Research, a higher education national research firm. Dr. Hodson also noted Hanover's focus helps universities analyze business problems and find best practice solutions, such as, why students did or did not choose Missouri Southern from the last three recruiting cycles. Based on analysis of the data, Hanover gave three recommendations:

- *Extend more competitive financial aid packages* – many students enrolled elsewhere because of better financial aid offerings. This issue has been addressed, Missouri Southern recently expanded its institutional aid, known as MOSO Merit;
- *Highlight program specific information to prospective students* – students who eventually enrolled and those who did not, expressed an interest in hearing more about Southern's faculty, facilities, academic programs and campus life; and
- *Expand social media outreach* – students want to hear more digitally about Southern's faculty, facilities, academic programs and campus life.

Dr. Hodson noted date to date (one year ago today) Missouri Southern is currently up 11% in new freshman who have been admitted (this is students who have applied, met the criteria, and have their complete packet in place), and currently up 1% in new transfer students. Dr. Hodson noted his team is still working on the goal of having 900 new freshman and 400 new transfers – on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of classes in September.

Chairwoman Hershewe questioned the conversion rate, from being admitted to being enrolled. Dr. Hodson noted statistically, about a third admitted will end up enrolling.

**Academic Affairs (Dr. Paula Carson):**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Carson'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.*

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

### **Earth Day**

Dr. Carson noted the Environmental Health and Safety Program/Biology and EH&S Club are planning to host a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle-themed art/poster/product competition for area middle and high-school students on April 15, 2021. The group is also organizing a campus trash pick-up on April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Earth Day). The target clean-up includes: the prairie, cross-country course, and the riparian area of Turkey Creek.

Dr. Carson acknowledged the biology department and physical plant for the clean-up of debris of tree limbs on the cross-country course over the winter months, and noted new bees will be purchased to repopulate - due to the cold weather.

### **2020-2021 Dual Credit Updates**

Dr. Carson noted during this academic year, Dual credit partnered with five new schools and have two new schools that will join in the 2021-2022 academic year. Missouri Southern welcomed six new high-school instructors and will add three more in 2021-2022. Dr. Carson also noted in the Spring 2021, students enrolled in 1.2% more credit hours than in 2020. The “On the Move initiative,” waiving up to six hours of concurrent enrollment tuition for students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch, has been available to students for five semesters, including summer. A total of 182 students have taken advantage of this initiative.

Dr. Carson noted Southern’s newest program set to launch this summer, “Get Ahead Together,” will provide an accelerated concurrent enrollment summer experience to students. A cohort will be created of concurrent enrollment students who will take a designated group of courses together over the next three summers.

### **Run with the Pride**

Dr. Carson noted this event was cancelled due to COVID last year, but will be held this year for faculty, staff, and students *only* with a maximum of 50 runners. Funds raised from this event will help support students within the Kinesiology Department. The race is scheduled for Sunday, April 25, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. on Missouri Southern’s campus.

### **Fire Program**

Dr. Carson noted the new Certificate program begins this summer in collaboration and joint development with Joplin Fire Department. Interviews have begun and her team is very excited to get students (the goal of 11-15) enrolled and meet these disciplines. Classes will be held in the Training Center located at Joplin Fire Department’s Public Safety Training Facility.

## **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.*

### **HEERF II – Student Grant Funds**

Dr. Wengert noted Missouri Southern recently received nearly \$2.4 million in HEERF II (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund), the second installment of student grant funds provided by the federal government during the global pandemic. Dr. Wengert also noted her team has worked diligently and anticipates checks going out to students no later than this week.

### **Dress to Impress, Career Services**

Dr. Wengert noted the annual event scheduled for March 3-5, 2021 was successful in serving more than 320 students and noted appreciation to the 114 volunteers between the community, Joplin Area Chamber, and campus who helped facilitate in equipping MSSU students with professional clothing.

### **Global Leaders**

Dr. Wengert noted Ryan Orcutt has been selected as the Director of the newly established Global Leaders program. Mr. Orcutt joins us from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College and will begin employment with Missouri Southern on April 1, 2021.

**Interim Vice President for Student Affairs (continued):****Student Success Center Tutoring Certification**

Dr. Wengert noted appreciation toward the Student Success Center for their accomplishment in being approved for ~ Stage Three, Level I certification of the International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) through the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA). Dr. Wengert also noted the certification is valid through February 8, 2026 (five years is the maximum time a program can go without a review).

Governor Gipson questioned how many applications have been submitted for the Global Leaders program. Dr. Wengert responded - at this time, there are a low number of applicants with a high number of qualified students, and when Mr. Orcutt arrives he will be recruiting eligible MOSO Merit level scholarship students to apply for the program.

Governor Oplotnik questioned if the applicants for Global Leaders were incoming freshman or upper classman. Dr. Wengert responded – they are all incoming freshman who are in that premier level of MOSO Merit level scholarship.

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

*Note: Highlights of Rob's report are as follows:*

**Residence Hall**

Mr. Yust noted construction continues ~ the roof is complete on all sections. The HVAC and main water line connections are complete. Walls are complete in section "C" up to the fourth floor. Glass storefronts have been installed on section "B", and the sheetrock is being installed on sections "A" and "B." The residence hall will be approximately 92,000 square feet, four story facility, and house approximately 300 students. The project is scheduled for completion by Summer 2021 with occupancy in the Fall 2021. Mr. Yust anticipates an open invitation to the Board of Governors to tour the facility at the next Board of Governors meeting.

**Trail project with the City of Joplin**

Mr. Yust noted Missouri Southern is waiting on the conveyance of property from the City to MSSU. Fitness equipment will be installed (purchased from the Wellness Committee funds), once the ground is solid enough in allowing a cement truck in the field. A formal ribbon cutting is being planned.

**HEERF II**

Mr. Yust noted the institutional portion of the HEERF II funds is approximately \$6 million, and his team is currently waiting for the Department of Education's guidance on what the portion of funds can be used for Missouri Southern (hopeful funds can be used to offset lost revenue).

**Budget**

Mr. Yust noted the budget preparation process is ongoing.

**Interim Director of Athletics (Mrs. Cori Reid):**

*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**

Mrs. Reid noted:

- at the conclusion of our winter sports season, Missouri Southern is currently in the lead for the MIAA Commissioner's Cup, based on a points system, reflecting the finish of each team in conference play;
- The track and field program sent 13 student-athletes to the NCAA Division II Indoor National Championships March 11-13, 2021. The men ranked 10<sup>th</sup> nationally and the women ranked 11<sup>th</sup>. In addition, Ryan Riddle was named the Central Region Track Athlete of the Year; and

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

- The men's and women's basketball team completed their season by competing in the MIAA Tournament. Cam Martin was a first-team All-MIAA pick, and Stan Scott earned All-MIAA honors. Carly Turnbull and Madi Stokes were also named All-MIAA.

**Spring Season**

Mrs. Reid noted:

- Southern's baseball team is currently 4<sup>th</sup> in the National Poll;
- Football has opened up spring practice and will play against Southern Nazarene on Thursday, March 18, at 3:00pm;
- Softball is currently in fifth place in the MIAA standings; and
- Golf programs have begun, the men's team finished second recently at the Rogers State tournament - with one student finishing as an individual champion.

Mrs. Reid also noted Southern will be hosting two events this season; the 2021 MIAA men's golf championships at Shangri-La Country Club April 19-20, 2021, and the MIAA baseball tournament on campus, May 20-23, 2021.

**Treasurer (Mrs. Linda Eis):****Cash Graph:**

Mrs. Eis noted in reviewing the statements for the period ending February 28, 2021, the Cash Graph reflects cash at \$18.6 M a decrease of nearly \$1M from last year.

**Statement of Net Position:**

Mrs. Eis noted a reserved cash line has been added representing internally unrestricted designated funds, e.g., athletic camps that need to be tracked separately for NCAA reporting, etc. Also, looking at the cash variance from the prior year, there's a difference of \$4.5M, in part, due to the timing of student financial aid disbursements, as one year the department may disburse in January, and then the next year the disbursement may occur February.

**Total Assets**

As of February 28, 2021, Total Assets are \$184M. Mrs. Eis noted when looking at Total Liabilities, the institution has \$126M. The semi-annual bond payment of nearly \$1M (interest only) was paid out in March. Total Net Position of \$58M.

- **Comparative Statement of Revenues Expenses and Changes in Net Position:**

**Total Operating Revenues** When looking at the "difference" column appearing cumulative, Mrs. Eis noted a decrease in the two years of nearly \$5M which includes over \$1M attributed to the timing of summer registration. Also, the state and local grant contracts reflect a decrease of \$126k, but noted an offset of a Lion Cub Academy Autism Grant of which \$350k has been received.

- **Total Operating Expenses** reflect a decrease of (\$4.9M). Mrs. Eis noted this is due to decreases in many categories including compensation, supplies, and scholarships.
- **Non-Operating Revenue** decreased (\$1.7M). Mrs. Eis noted the Governor has released the withholdings that were in effect in July, and as our institution moves towards the end of the year, and if there are no withholdings, we should reflect an increase of close to \$1M, compared to the dollars we received last year for our base appropriations. Also, a new line item reflects the federal stabilization appropriations that provides restricted additional money the university draws down for much needed projects such as repairs and maintenance on campus.
- **Income (Loss) Before Other Revenues** reflects a gain in the current year \$8.7M, and a gain in the prior year at \$7.3M reflecting an increase of \$1.4M from the prior year.

**Other:**

Mrs. Eis also noted BKD is working to finalize the FY20 audit by reviewing the CARES and HEERF funding, and anticipates the audit's completion by June 30, 2021.

**Faculty Senate President (Dr. Mikh Gunderman):**

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

Dr. Gunderman noted this would be his last Board of Governors meeting as Faculty Senate President, and expressed gratitude to the Board for their work during these difficult times. Dr. Gunderman also noted confidence in his upcoming successor, Dr. David Locher, who will be replacing him at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Gunderman noted the below:

- the Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) have been working diligently on projects focused on faculty welfare and betterment of the University and have been in discussion with Dr. Van Galen about securing the IDEA Survey for Administrators;
- Members of FSEC have met with other campus leaders in two workshops focused on student retention and fundraising opportunities for the University;
- the updated language to the Faculty Grievance Process will be discussed at the next senate meeting;
- the Intellectual Property Policy (which has been passed by Faculty Senate) has been forwarded to Husch-Blackwell for review; and

Dr. Van Galen will be providing feedback on the Master Instructor Language as soon as it is available.

Dr. Gunderman noted on behalf of faculty, appreciation to Dr. Carson for her years of service as Vice President of Academic Affairs and welcome her back as a colleague in the classroom.

**Staff Senate President (Ms. Debra Schow-Smith):**

*Note: Highlights of Ms. Schow-Smith's report are as follows.*

**Staff Senate Update**

Ms. Schow-Smith noted an update on the 2020-2021 Staff Senate Year has been added to the Board packets and sent to all University staff earlier this week highlighting many Staff Senates efforts this academic year including information on shared governance activities, special events, campus projects, and a staff conversation overview featuring updates on the top three staff-identified priorities for Staff Senate: advocating for staff compensation, increasing staff morale, and improving student retention and attainment numbers.

**Spring 2021 Community Service Project**

Ms. Schow-Smith also noted the Staff Senate Community Service Committee is collaborating with the campus Wellness Committee to host a planter contest on Earth Day in April. Teams will be provided a planter to decorate/paint and fill with flowers and vegetation. Students will judge, and after winners have been selected, planters will be placed around the residence halls to beautify outdoor community spaces.

**Staff Senate Elections**

Ms. Schow-Smith noted the Staff Senate Elections committee is preparing for the 2021 Staff Senate election process. A call for nominations will be sent to staff in early April with election of new Senators occurring the first week of May. The 2021-2022 Staff Senate body will take over immediately following the June 2020 Staff Senate meeting to elect officers and begin plans for the next Senate year.

Ms. Schow-Smith also noted this would be her last meeting, and expressed appreciation and gratitude toward the Board, for the privilege and honor in communicating and representing (roughly) 350 staff members.

**Student Senate President (Ms. Hayley Ward):**

Ms. Ward noted:

- The COVID ad hoc committee recently requested an altered spring break, but given the responses from both staff and faculty senate, the committee has decided to renounce that request;

**Student Senate President (continued):**

- Campus Development committee has been collaborating with Dr. Hodson regarding products that would benefit Missouri Southern's campus and students as a whole; and
- Campus Relations committee has been working with a club on campus in order to *better* the mental health of Missouri Southern students, and are currently planning events (during dead week and before finals) in order to uplift their spirits through finals.

**Board Committees:****Budget Audit Committee (Carlos Haley, Chair):**

Governor Haley noted the Budget Audit Committee met this morning prior to the board meeting and are:

- Currently working with BKD to finalize the Audit;
- Monitoring this year's budget, while also planning for next year's budget; and
- looking at opportunities to make sure Missouri Southern is fiscally responsible, and cash stays steady.

**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A**NEW BUSINESS****Consideration of Academic Policies Proposals (Dr. Paula Carson)**

Dr. Carson brought forward the following Certificates and Major and Graduate Programs which have been approved/accepted by the respective College Curriculum Oversight Committees, Academic Policies and Faculty Senate as of March 1, 2021:

*Undergraduate Certificates*

- Global Citizenship - Social Science/IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) Department;
- Percussion Specialist – Music Department;
- Musical Theatre – Music Department;
- Musical Theatre – Theatre Department;
- App Development – CIS Department;
- Website Administrative – CIS Department;
- Information Assurance and Security – CIS Department;
- Professional Communication – Business Department;
- Integrated Marketing Communication/Public Relations – Business Department; and
- Digital Marketing Communication – Business

*Major Programs*

- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre Performance – Theatre Department; and
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Production – Theatre Department

*Other*

New Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management – this certificate will benefit graduate-level students with any undergraduate background by enhancing their degree with additional education; providing graduates with a competitive advantage in the job market.

Governor Haley questioned if the new certificates would be budget neutral. Dr. Carson noted, the request would be budget neutral, and there would be no additional investment or cost. Dr. Carson also noted the 40 majors in theatre would allow students in those majors to be able to specialize in a specific area.

Chairwoman Hershewe questioned if the same could be said of the Major Programs. Dr. Carson noted the certificate would carve out an area of specialization. Regarding the BFA's (Bachelor of Fine Arts) – Missouri Southern will have students who would like to have careers in performance and would likely come here as opposed to a BA (Bachelor), and current students could convert from a BA to

**Consideration of Academic Policies Proposals (continued):**

BFA's because of the respect of that degree in the field.

Chairwoman Hershewe noted appreciation to the committees and their work on programs presented, however, the desire of the board is to have the Graduate Certificates discussed with Academic Affairs so that the committee would have the opportunity to ask more in-depth questions.

A proposal was made by Chairwoman Hershewe to advance the Certificates and pass on the Major and Graduate Programs until the Academic Affairs Committee has a recommendation for the board.

*A motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the Undergraduate Certificates and to pass on the Major Programs and the Graduate Programs convening the review of the Academic Affairs Committee. Motion passed unanimously.*

Governor Oplotnik, Chair of Academic Affairs Committee, noted she would reach out to Dr. Carson soon with a date/time to meet and further discuss the proposed Major and Graduate Programs.

*Another motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by Mariann Morgan for the Academic Affairs Committee to be given the authority to investigate and approve or disapprove (at their discretion) the proposed Major and Graduate Programs. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

**Closed Executive Session:**

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


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

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

*A motion to go into a closed Executive Session was made by Anita Oplotnik and seconded by T. Mark Elliott under RSMo 610.021 (1 & 3). 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.*

  
Chair

  
Secretary