

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**November 12, 2021**  
**Billingsly Student Center**  
**Ball Room**

The November 12, 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, Alison Hershewe, Anita Oplotnik, Ron Richard, and Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg. Others in attendance were Lorinda Hackett, Paige Parrack, Dr. Brad Hodson, Heather Lesmeister, Dr. David Locher, Rob Mallory, Brent Olson, Ashley Brownfield, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Julie Wengert, Rob Yust, Linda Eis, and Laura Switzer.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairwoman Hershewe called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., welcomed, and wished everyone a Happy Veteran's Day.

**MINUTES**

Chairwoman Hershewe asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the September 10, 2021, Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by Anita Oplotnik and seconded by Bill Gipson to approve minutes of the September 10, 2021; Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).*

**Budget Audit Report - Presented by BKD Representatives Ryan Sivill and Allison Gardner.**

Due to the auditor's schedules, the board decided to move their report up on the agenda. The auditors presented during the budget audit committee. BKD representative, Mr. Ryan Sivill, gave a brief summary for the fiscal year 2021 annual audit for the year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The result of the audit was an unmodified opinion or a clean opinion. This opinion rating is the highest level that the university financial statements can receive. The Student Financial Aid Assistance program, the TRIO program and the HEERF program were also audited. These programs were audited for compliance and internal controls. There were no findings in BKD's evaluation. BKD also evaluated the University's internal controls over financial reporting and found no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. The BKD presenter thanked Missouri Southern's financial team, Rob Yust, Linda Eis, Becca Diskin, and all others involved in preparing the financials, for all their hard work in achieving this category of evaluation. More to follow in "New Business".

**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.*

**Veteran's Day**

Dr. Van Galen began with a message of thanks to all those who were involved in honoring our nation's veterans at Missouri Southern's Veteran's Day event in Billingsly Student Center. It was an opportunity to reflect on the role of Missouri Southern in supporting our veterans and their families. Missouri Southern State University is honored to provide educational opportunities for 118 current students who are veterans or are current active-duty military guard or reservists. We also have 55 current students who are dependents of veterans. Veterans and active military members bring experience, perspective and leadership skills that are shared with our campus community.

**President (continued):**  
**Green and Gold Tours**

Dr. Van Galen reported that since the previous Board of Governor's meeting, there have been two tours carried out. The two stops occurred in Monett and Nevada Missouri. Dr. Van Galen thanked Governor Gibson for joining the alumni luncheon in Monett. The goal of the Green and Gold tours is to connect with alumni and community leaders and to highlight to prospective students the wonderful opportunities available to them at MSSU. The next Green and Gold tour will be in Seneca Missouri on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Missouri Southern Engagement and Impact**

Heather Lesmeister recently requested that the President's cabinet along with MSSU faculty provide a list of community, state, and national organizations that they are engaged in. The list, while not exhaustive, is impressive. Over 80 organizations are listed, ranging from Heartland Opera Theatre to the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce to the Joplin School Board to the Lafayette House. Missouri Southern employees serve in leadership roles and contribute their expertise and talents to better the greater Joplin area and beyond. Dr. Van Galen acknowledged the commitment of the faculty and staff who are making a difference beyond the campus of Missouri Southern.

**Provost Search**

Dr. Van Galen reported that the process of identifying a permanent Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs is moving forward as anticipated. Currently, 79 applications have been submitted for this position. The Search and Screen Committee, chaired by Dr. Crystal Lemmons, is conducting video on-way interviews of selected applicants, which will be followed by live, interactive zoom interviews. In-person interviews will occur after Thanksgiving and will include opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to interact with each candidate and provide feedback. Dr. Van Galen expressed his thanks to Lorinda Hackett for providing outstanding leadership and service as she continues to serve in the roles as Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

**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.*

**Recruitment Events**

Dr. Hodson reported that the University has invested additional financing for recruitment events. The list is in the information distributed to the board and is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book. If the event did not have a date, it was not listed. Discovery Days, Lion Pride visit days which have gone well over the fall and late summer, and the Green and Gold tour. We are doing everything we can to get prospective students and their parents to come to the campus and fall in love with Missouri Southern.

**Transition in Leadership**

Dr. Hodson reported that Lee Pound, who has served at Missouri Southern State University as the Alumni Director and the face of this institution to thousands and thousands of graduates across this country, is transitioning into a new position in the Foundations Office effective January 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Pound's new role will be with the Capital Campaign. Dr. Hodson sends Ms. Pound his thanks for her dedicated service. Chairwoman Hersheve acknowledged Ms. Pound for her service on behalf of the board.

**Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Lorinda Hackett):**

*Note: Highlights of Ms. Hackett'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.*

**Acacia Center**

Ms. Hackett reported that the Ribbon cutting was held in October for the new Acacia Center. In preparation for the official opening, Ms. Hackett reported that some cooperative work is being done between the Lion Cub Academy and the Acacia Center, and anticipates opening very soon for the first part-time and full-time clients for the center.

**Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (continued):****Mass Band Day**

Ms. Hackett reported that the Mass Band Day is a great opportunity to have over 300 high school students perform as a mass band. The Halloween theme was appropriate based on the time of year of the event. This event impacted a lot of students and there was a lot of buy in from faculty and students that are in the marching band to assist with the event.

**Dental Hygiene Tele-Dentistry**

Ms. Hackett reported that the dental hygiene tele-dentistry grant has provided for 2 very significant opportunities for our community. This grant allows Missouri Southern to provide for those seniors living at the communities of Wildwood, and elementary children in Jasper, Avila, and Sarcoxie.

**Changing Smiles Campaign**

Ms. Hackett reported that Dr. Van Galen was the winner of the Changing Smiles Loose Change Campaign. The campaign raised \$875 in small change across campus.

**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.*

**Mid-Western Esports Arena**

Dr. Wengert reported that The Mid-Western Esports Arena is in the bottom floor of the Billingsly Student Center within the Beimdeik Recreation Center. Dr. Wengert anticipates hosting many esports tournaments, computer coding classes and workshops, and provide internship opportunities for both Missouri Southern and Mid-Western Interactive. The club attendance went from 10 to 34 students after the opening of the arena.

**HEERF Student Aid**

Dr. Wengert reported that Missouri Southern received nearly \$6.7 million to distribute to the students. At this time, \$4 million of those funds have been dispersed - thanks to the work of the Treasurer's, Bursar's, and Financial Aid offices working together to distribute those funds. The funds were distributed to about 4,300 students, and out of these funds, \$143,000 were applied to student accounts. There will be another distribution of HERF funds for the Spring semester.

**Student Engagement Opportunities**

Dr. Wengert reported several opportunities for student engagement since the previous board meeting. In the Student Success Area, Global Leaders has invited guest speakers to campus including some alumni. There have also been career services opportunities with Networking 101, the Suit-up with JC Penny Internship expo, and themes within student activities to fit into the Japan themed semester. Many students participated in the Homecoming parade downtown by creating floats.

**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.*

**Campus Improvement Projects**

Mr. Yust reported that there are two major projects going on right now. The first is campus safety and improvements project. This is broken up in four separate projects, all of which are going on simultaneously.

- The pedestrian safety project in the main parking lot, putting raised medians in-between the parking spaces to make a clear path for pedestrians to cross from the tunnel to the entrance to the oval. Mr. Yust anticipates the improvements to be completed by next week. Pedestrians will be able to safely travel from one side of the parking lot to the other.

**Vice President for Business Affairs (continued):**

- The second project is the street improvement project. Mr. Yust reported that beginning next week, various streets on campus will be closed off. This is a major concern, some of the streets on campus need to be completely torn out and replaced. Beginning Monday morning, International from the light off Newman Road around to the front of Billingsly Student Center will be closed. The contractor will be digging the road up and replacing it. This project should be completed around the first week in December.
- The third project will involve reconstruction of the tunnel under Newman Road from the residence halls. The contractor is working on the entrances to both sides of the tunnel, which is a bit of an inconvenience to our students in the residence hall. They will need to cross at the light on International and Newman Road. This project should be completed by the end of December.
- The fourth project is the construction on the Oval. There are sidewalks being replaced at Hearnese Hall, Spiva Library, Reynolds Hall, and Webster Hall. New pavers are being installed at the entrance to all the aforementioned facilities. To complete the sidewalk/paver replacement, some trees had to be removed.

Mr. Yust noted, there is a lot of excitement going on right now that will cause a little inconvenience for a while, but the finished product should be great. Additional projects taking place include replacing a 40-year-old water pipe along with several infrastructure items, and new light poles will be installed towards the end of the Oval project. Mr. Yust anticipates all these projects will be completed in January or February of 2022.

**TPAC Renovation**

Monday, **November 15, 2021**, the contractor, RE Smith, will be coming in to begin the process of renovating the Taylor Performing Arts Center. Hopefully in one year's time, TPAC will be back open.

\*Governor Ron Richards asked about the cross walk from the football stadium parking to across the road. Mr. Richards questioned the lack of light for pedestrians. Mr. Yust explained that the decision belongs to the city of Joplin. Traffic studies have been done by the city; however, their findings do not justify a turn lane.

\*Mr. Richards mentioned that perhaps the legislature can put some revenue on public safety in universities, then maybe an ADA foot bridge could be installed.

\*Chairwoman Hershewe commented that the construction and projects are very exciting and are signs of growth, even if there is a little inconvenience along the way.

**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.*

**NCAA Governance**

Mr. Mallory reported that on July 30<sup>th</sup> the NCAA Board of Governors announced the decision to convene a constitutional convention and the formation of a 28-person constitution committee. As of Monday November 8<sup>th</sup> the membership has received a draft of this new constitution. This draft reduces the current constitution to approximately one-fourth the length of the current constitution. The primary focus of the new constitution is on efficiency, responsiveness, flexibility, and autonomy within the divisions. It outlines nine core principles that the NCAA will promote from a national perspective. The national office will still oversee the conduct of NCAA championships and the governance of student athlete safety, rules, and guidelines as well as sport specific playing rules. The draft constitution also reduces in size the NCAA Board of Governors from 21 to 9 and adds a student athlete as a voting member.

Within each of the three NCAA divisions the draft constitution highlights independent authority to govern themselves in the areas of academic eligibility, governance structure, membership requirement, name, image, and likeness standards, championship selections, and compliance enforcement. The draft constitution maintains the current financial distribution within the NCAA structure, which provides NCAA division 2 with 4.37% of all NCAA revenue. The new constitution calls for consistent investigation and decisions when it comes to compliance, and to the greatest extent possible that penalties do not punish programs or student

**Director of Athletics (continued):**

athlete's innocent of infractions.

An NCAA special convention is scheduled for Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. There will be no vote on the constitution at this time. This convention provides an opportunity for review and feedback. An association-wide vote will take place at the NCAA national convention in Indianapolis on January 20, 2022. If adopted, each division will be charged with forming an implementation committee to bring each division's bylaws into compliance with the new constitution.

**Trick-or-Treat So Others Can Eat Campaign**

Mr. Mallory reports that this campaign is a student athlete advisory committee led effort. This effort by our student athletes collected 6,302 non-perishable items that were donated to Souls Harbor in Joplin Missouri. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the program, which was started in 2015. Over those seven years Missouri Southern student athletes have collected a total of 41,870 items for a local homeless shelter.

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

The balance at the end of October is at \$18.8M. This does reflect the \$6M in HEERF funding that has come through and is now in the unrestricted cash balance.

**Statement of Net Position:**

**Total Assets:** \$184M

**Total Liabilities:** \$131M

**Net Position:** \$53M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$2.6M)
- **Total Operating Expenses:** Reflects an increase of \$2.9M  
Scholarships represent about \$2.2M which includes the HEERF funding that was provided to the students.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** Reflects an increase of \$2.4M  
State appropriations show an increase of \$1.8M. Federal Pell Grants show a decrease of (\$1.2M) due to enrollment decline. The difference in the two years on the HEERF/CARES funding is \$1.6M, those funds are for both students and institutional funding.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**  
Current Year: \$2.1M  
Prior Year: \$5.1M  
This results in a decrease from Prior Year: (\$3M)

In addition to closing out the FY21 audit, the Treasurer's office is working collaboratively with athletics on the NCAA agreed upon procedures that is completed every three years, as well as working on the report.

*A motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by Ron Richard to approve the October 2021 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for October 2021 are attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

**Faculty Senate President (Dr. David Locher):**

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

Minor adjustments have been made to the Grievance Committee and the Tenured Promotion Committee, in terms of membership fine-tuning, and the handbook. The Intellectual Policy process is nearing completion, on the faculty side. The faculty Welfare Committee is in the middle of their faculty salary across campus, which is nearing completion. The roles of certain committees are being examined involving academic policies in terms of the distinct roles between them and trying to eliminate redundancies.

**Staff Senate President (Ms. Ashley Brownfield):**

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

- There were 50 Angels between 26 students across campus accepted for the Angel Tree program. The wrapping event is scheduled for November 30<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome to participate. The gifts will be distributed to the students on December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The quarterly service champ staff members are nominated by other staff members across campus.

Third quarter recipients include:

- Bryce Burns ~ Custodian (Rover)
- Jesse Cook ~ Information Technology (End User Services Team Lead)
- DeAnn Isenhower ~ Library (Cataloging Specialist)

Ms. Brownfield noted, the Staff Senate continues to have meetings with the President's Cabinet every month and continue to have staff conversations, which have included budget and the construction across campus.

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

Mr. Olson noted the Finance Committee has approved more than \$5,000 to registered student organizations. These monies are used to help various organizations meet their goals and helps in representing MSSU by going to conferences and various other activities.

The Student Senate is working on increasing their Social Media presence. The goal is to reach more students than they have been able to. Student Senate would also like to use the Social Media platforms to get more input from a wider group of students.

Dr. Hodson attended a Student Senate meeting and spoke about the construction on the MSSU campus. The Student Senate was able to relay that information to students across campus.

The Student Senate has approved \$20,000 to the Wildlife Society for field research equipment that is going to help Biology students gain research experience, field experience, and potentially lead to jobs and internships. Currently the Student Senate is evaluating another \$20,000 proposal for sand volleyball pits near the Lion Village.

Mr. Olson also noted the current five vacancies for Student Senate should be filled next semester.

**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 discussing new certificate programs ~ Conservation Management and Social Institution, and a new Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship.

**Budget Audit Committee (Bill Gipson, Vice Chair, in the absence of Carlos Haley, Chair):**

Governor Gipson noted this committee met prior to the open Board meeting for the purpose of discussing the audited Financial Statements and MOU between Missouri Southern State University and Missouri Southern Foundation.

**Ad Hoc Pandemic Committee (Bill Gipson, Chair):**

Governor Gipson noted this committee did not meet however, Mr. Gipson acknowledged the COVID task force that is co-chaired by Dr. Wengert and Mr. Yust, a group that represents every aspect of the campus and who considers all the various issues that need to be taken care of during this time of pandemic.

**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A

**NEW BUSINESS**

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

*A motion was made by Anita Oplotnik and seconded by Dr. Rosenburg to approve the new certificate programs – Conservation Management and Social Institution and the new Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the approved Certificates and Degree are attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

**Budget Audit Committee (Bill Gipson, Vice Chair, in the absence of Carlos Haley, Chair):**

Governor Bill Gipson reported that the budget audit committee met with the auditors and management team this morning and recommended to the full board, approval of audited Financial Statements as presented.

*A motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by Ron Richard to approve the audited financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously.*

Governor Gipson reported that the budget committee heard an update on the MOU between Missouri Southern and the Missouri Southern Foundation.

*A motion was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by Anita Oplotnik to approve the new Memorandum of Understanding between Missouri Southern State University and the Missouri Southern Foundation. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the approved MOU is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).*

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, January 14, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

**Closed Executive Session:**

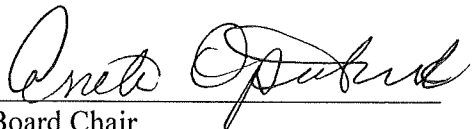
Chairwoman Hershewe noted the Board needed to go into closed Executive Session pertaining to the following state statutes:

**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

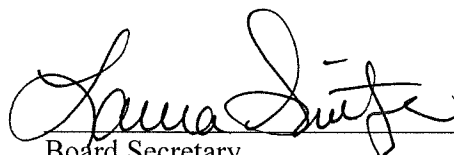
**RSMo 610.021 (3)** Hiring, firing, disciplining, or promoting of particular employees by a public governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded.

*A motion to go into a closed Executive Session was made by Bill Gipson and seconded by Anita Oplotnik under RSMo 610.021 (1 & 3). A roll call was made by Laura Switzer, in the absence of 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.*



Board Chair  
Anita Oplotnik, Board Vice-Chair  
(in the absence of Alison Hershewe, Board Chair)



Board Secretary  
Laura Switzer (on behalf of Laura Boyd)