

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**January 13, 2023**  
**Billingsly Student Center**  
**Room 310**

The January 13, 2023, meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by Chairwoman Anita Oplotnik. Governors in attendance were T. Mark Elliott, Bill Gipson, Carlos Haley, Anita Oplotnik, Ron Richard, and Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg. Mariann Morgan and Alison Hershewe were not in attendance.

Others in attendance were Jean Colthrap, John Hammons, Bethany Kendrick, Alicia Hughes, Ryan Snyder, Dr. Brad Hodson, Dr. Lisa Toms, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Shellie Hewitt, Linda Eis, Marcel John, and Jeanie Nice.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairwoman Oplotnik called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Governor Oplotnik acknowledged Governor Bill and Tracy Gipson's leadership gift to support the *Lions Forward* campaign and thanked them both for their contributions and continued support of the university.

**MINUTES**

Chairwoman Oplotnik asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the November 11, 2022 Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Carlos Haley to approve minutes of the November 11, 2022 Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).*

**City of Joplin Resolution of Appreciation**

Before the regular reports, Chairwoman Oplotnik recognized members from the Joplin City Council, including Joplin Mayor Doug Lawson, as well as City of Joplin Staff, who were in attendance to be presented with a Resolution of Appreciation. Dr. Van Galen thanked the City of Joplin for their tremendous support of the Health Science Innovation Center. On December 19, 2022, the City Council voted unanimously to earmark \$1.5 million in city ARPA funds for this project as it will have a transformational impact on the university, as well as the city and the entire region. Dr. Van Galen formally introduced each member of the City Council. Representing the City of Joplin included Joplin Mayor Doug Lawson, Mayor Pro Tem Keenan Cortez, Councilman Josh DeTar, Councilwoman Kate Spencer, City Manager Nick Edwards, and Assistant City Manager Tony Robyn. Governor Oplotnik read a portion of the Resolution and requested a motion from the Board of Governors to approve the Resolution of Appreciation. A motion was made by Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Bill Gipson. Motion passed unanimously. The members of City Council were asked to come forward for the presentation and a photo opportunity.

**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.*

**Gipson Gift**

Earlier this afternoon we celebrated a special moment in our university's history announcing a \$1 million leadership gift to the *Lions Forward* Campaign. I want to again thank Governor Bill and Tracy Gipson's extraordinary generosity, including the support of helping us launch a new academic program. Also, we appreciate their willingness to serve as Campaign Co-Chairs.

**Missouri Higher Education**

In December we hosted our annual legislative delegation on campus to listen to their perspectives and to provide them with an update on Missouri Southern, including the importance of their continued support for public higher education and, of course, for our university. We appreciate the strong support we continue to receive from our legislative delegation.

Next Wednesday, Governor Parson will present his State of the State address and we'll learn about the Governor's proposed FY2024 budget, including for higher education. We will know the outcome of budget decisions for FY2024 in summer, probably June.

**Holiday Happenings**

It was a tremendous event just prior to the holidays with great attendance from both students and the community. I want to thank all of those on the campus who had a part in making it happen. It is part of a larger commitment to increase the vibrancy and energy on our campus.

**Health Science Innovation Center**

We are making very good progress on securing matching funds, as we just acknowledged the City of Joplin for their assistance with this project with their financial support. We appreciate that message of partnership with the City of Joplin.

**Outstanding Staff**

On December 21<sup>st</sup> the university held its annual pre-holiday employee appreciation brunch and celebrated years of service and the 2022 Superior Service Awards. The 2022 recipients are Scott Timmsen and Becca Diskin. It was a nice reminder that it takes everyone's effort, working together, to make our university successful.

**Kick Off of New Semester**

First day of the new semester is this coming Tuesday. Before that, on Monday evening, we host the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Martin Luther King Day Jr Day of celebration. That celebration will be held in the North End Zone facility. The keynote speaker is our Head Football Coach Atiba Bradley. We will also award the Dr. Al Cade Beacon of Hope Service Award. All are welcome to attend.

**Many Good Things Happening**

Thank you, Board of Governors, for your support as we together seek to build a very bright future for Missouri Southern. This includes new academic programs, the *Lions Forward* Campaign, development of our next strategic plan, investments in facilities, and striving to better support faculty and staff. Many good things are happening.

**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.*

**TPAC**

Taylor Performing Art Center renovation is on schedule. We will be hosting our first event in that building next Wednesday with our Town Hall / Welcome Back meeting. The only delayed item is the main stage curtain that is scheduled to arrive February 2023. We are seeking an inaugural event to celebrate its completion.

**Endowment Report**

This report was mailed to any donor with an endowment with the foundation. It gives information about our fiscal year 2022 rate of return compared to national average.

**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.*

Jimmie Collins was introduced as the new Chief Information Officer. He is a 20-year employee of Missouri Southern. He served as interim CIO for a little over a year.

Currently we have 60 qualified high school student applicants for our MKEAP program. With concurrence of KCU, we may have the first full class. While many are local, we have an increasingly large number coming from other areas of the United States. This program is getting a lot of attention and traction with students who have a passion for medicine. The program will only allow 25 students into the curriculum. These students will complete their bachelor's degree in three years and must maintain a 3.5 GPA.

**Highlights**

Several of our student organizations participated in activities around the holidays. The Intensive English Program and International Club took over 40 students to experience Silver Dollar City on Friday, November 11. The Social Work Alpha Honor Society assisted in the annual "Chase the Chill" Southwest Missouri event. Each student took responsibility for collecting hats, gloves, coats, and scarves in various academic buildings and gave them to people in need.

The Law Enforcement Academy class had a 100% pass rate for the state POST exam. Ninety percent of the students were employed upon graduation.

**MOSO CAPS**

The inaugural class of MOSO CAPS has been very successful with 37 students completing the semester. Students chose one of three career strands, Health Sciences, Human Services, or Business/Marketing/Entrepreneurship. We had about 40 industry partners who let these students shadow and experience what it would be like to work in that industry. All the students are continuing to the next semester. We are also recruiting for the next class for next fall.

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

**SERRA (Strategic Employee Recruitment and Retention Analysis)**

You will recall last fall we went out for bid for a consultant with CBIZ being announced at the last Board meeting as the consultant to perform this service. Since then, HR has been working on gathering job descriptions. Before winter break, we provided CBIZ with 270 job descriptions. The consultants will take the next two or three months to look at market analysis, compensation, fringe benefits, etc. and will come back with a draft report in April.

**Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

It is that time of year that we are starting to look at a more formal development of the budget. We pay attention to enrollment, appropriations at the state level, savings we can garner, and any increases in expenditures. We will share more as the year continues.

**Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2022**

**Cash Graph:**

Ms. Eis noted the balance at the end of December 31, 2022, is \$17.4M.

**Statement of Net Position:**

**Total Assets:** \$185M

- Current assets reflect the ongoing activity for the MOSERS prepayment that will provide savings for FY23.

**Total Liabilities:** \$133M

**Net Position:** \$52M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$145k).
- **Total Operating Expenses:** Reflects a decrease of (\$4.6M).
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$6.6M). The difference is primarily from HEERF (Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding) in the prior year of \$7.9M. Current year HEERF funding is \$986k and it is the final/last draw for HEERF funding.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**  
Current Year: (\$1.4M) loss  
Prior Year: \$808k gain  
This results in a decrease from Prior Year: (\$2.2M)

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the December 2022 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for December 2022 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.*

**Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Strategies**

We have a new partnership with a company called VU Scholarships. This gives us an opportunity to proactively share scholarship awards before students apply to college. This is a way for students to learn about Missouri Southern and share what types of scholarships we can offer them before they even apply. Focus areas include Kansas City, St. Louis, Kansas, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Illinois. Next, they will be dipping into Arkansas.

## **Dean of Admissions (continued)**

There will be a lot of marketing coming out soon around our new scholarship model rollout for Transfer and International students. These scholarships will be available Fall 2023.

To date, we have two new partnerships with Tulsa Community College and Coffeyville Community College. We continue to pursue partnerships with Crowder College, OTC, and Northwest Arkansas Community College.

## **New Student Admit Data (Spring 2023)**

The data provided shows the top high schools and community colleges for our spring admitted student population. Please note that many of our freshman admits are from high schools outside the United States. We had a huge influx of international student freshman applications. It is no surprise that Crowder College remains our number one feeder school for new transfer students.

## **New Programs – Marketing Initiatives**

New billboards will be popping up soon with our new tag line “Find Your Purpose, Find Your Pride”.

We’ve rolled out our paid social media campaigns highlighting new immersive learning opportunities and new TV commercials to complement our new programs.

## **Social Media**

Our strategy for utilizing social media to increase brand awareness and supplement in-person recruitment has been very successful. The data shows an increase in engagement compared to prior years including visits to our university website. As of yesterday, we received the finalized report on our December numbers and have seen another significant increase in performance on our paid advertising efforts. As we roll out the new website this summer, we should see the use of social media growing even more.

## **Digital Marketing Initiatives**

I’d like to point out that our current paid marketing campaigns focus on showcasing our scholarships and hands-on learning opportunities. These campaigns are broken up into two segments: local and regional. Both are performing quite well as noted in my report.

Governor Oplotnik asked about College Tour, and we are using the video on the website, on our social media and our digital media.

## **Director of Athletics (Mr. Ryan Snyder for Rob Mallory):**

*Note: Highlights of Ryan’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.*

## **Student-Athlete Academic Success**

The overall team GPA for varsity athletics for fall semester was 3.13 and four programs had GPA of 3.5 or higher. Those teams were softball, women’s basketball, women’s track and field and women’s golf. Additionally, 132 student athletes earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher during the fall term. Of those, 94 were

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

on the Dean's list and 61 earned a 4.0. Graduation rate for Missouri Southern is 52% compared to 34% for overall student population.

### **MIAA Awards for Fall Sports**

Sixty-four Missouri Southern student-athletes were named to the MIAA Academic Honor Roll. Nine of those student-athletes received "Scholar-Athlete" distinction, which is a 3.5 or higher. Three student-athletes earned the prestigious MIAA Academic Excellence award, which requires a 4.0 cumulative GPA and a minimum of two semesters of attendance. The Lions also had 22 student-athletes earn athletic honors highlighted by Head Coach Jamie Burnham being named MIAA Men's Cross-Country Coach of the Year. It was his fourth time in his career to earn this award.

### **Cross Country Finishes a Successful Season**

Missouri Southern men's program finished 9<sup>th</sup> at the NCAA Championship in December with it being the fifth top ten finish in the program's history. They were the top finishing program in the MIAA. The Lion won both the MIAA and Central Region Championships prior to the championship meet. Three runners finished in the top six and five in the top seventeen. Gidieon Kimutai won his third individual championship with his teammate Ryan Riddle finishing second. They again swept the individual and team championships at the NCAA Central Region championships. Gidieon won his third regional title earning him the Central Region Athlete of the Year. Jamie Burnham also won Coach of the Year for the region.

### **Men's Golf Strong Fall Season**

The had a tournament win, along with two runner-up and a third-place finish. We are currently leading the MIAA standing by virtue of a win and a runner-up. Ben Marckmann leads the individual standings with senior Tradgon McCrae currently in seventh place.

### **Lions Impact Community**

As of January 4, Missouri Southern student-athletes have completed 3,943 hours of community service with a 77% participation rate. Missouri Southern ranks fifth in the Division II standings.

### **Faculty Senate President (Dr. Jean Coltharp):**

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

Our execs have gone through some changes in the last semester. Amber Carr is now the Secretary. President Elect is currently vacant. Hopefully this will not impact things as I will be President until next May to get us back on track.

With the juggling we realized we needed to redo our Bylaws and Constitution. We need update these documents more in line with how we run our faculty senate meeting. We should have them completed this semester, go to the faculty for a vote, then go to the Board of Governors.

We will be starting to work with administration on our promotion and tenure standards also this semester. Specifically, with advising. Some of our faculty members have over 50 advisees and some have single digits. Both are held to the same promotion and tenure standards, and we just want to make it fair.

**Staff Senate President (Ms. Alicia Hughes):**

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

For the angel tree project, the university campus community contributed to 43 families impacting 80 children. Very thankful for everyone's generosity. We are very proud of that project.

We are currently revamping Staff Senate's mission to make it more focused on the Senate's role being an active partner of campus governance in staff support and in communication role. We didn't currently have a vision statement, so we are developing one designed to align with the campus's new strategic plan. One of the themes that came out of the strategic plan was to create a culture of caring. We want to align that theme of making Missouri Southern the best place to work. For our mission and vision, we also want to set goals, so for the next 18 months Senate is going to work on some goals in hopes of laying some ground work and foundation to keep the rest of the Staff Senate moving forward. We also redesigned our meeting structure to not be so committee report heavy. We want to give the Senators time to collaborate. We've assigned each senator a building or two to visit each month to get an idea and feel of what's going on in those buildings and allow the people in those buildings to get involved or be heard. The Senators have been directed to bring back "points of pride"...positive tidbits of what's happening on campus and what people are doing so we can hear what's going on and build more pride and support for our employees.

**Student Senate President (Mr. Marcel John):**

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

In Student Senate, we are doing things that are on the go, for example, we hosted hot chocolate and donuts for finals week. Students just grabbed and kept going to classes. The other thing we're doing is working with Chloe McCain to create some t-shirts. I've been invited to the Governor's Leadership Forum in Jefferson City. I'm from Jefferson City so this is an opportunity for me to show my school in Jefferson City that MSSU is my school and this is what we're doing at Missouri Southern. I will also be the MC for the MLK event.

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

The committee did not meet, so there is no report.

**Academic Affairs (Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg, Chair):**

We reviewed three new academic programs, Nursing RN to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Spanish for the Professions Certificate (Undergraduate) and Teacher of Leadership Certificate (Graduate).

*A motion was made Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Bill Gibson to approve the new programs. Motion passed unanimously.*

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

Had an update on the SERRA project and reviewed our bond updates and scheduling. External audit engagement was also discussed to extend that for a one year. We also had an update on the *Lions Forward* campaign. Budget Chairman Haley also extended his thanks to the Gipson's for their contributions. We are considering architects for the Health Science Innovation Center RFQ. With that, a motion was brought forward from the Budget Audit committee:

As the first step in the planning and design of the construction phase the Board would authorize the university to issue a request for qualifications for architectural planning and design services for construction of the new Health Science Innovation Center on the campus of Missouri Southern State University.

*A motion was made Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to start the process for an RFQ for the Health Science Innovation Center. Motion passed unanimously. (Governor Richards abstained from voting.)*

**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A

**NEW BUSINESS** – N/A

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meetings of the Board are as scheduled:

March 10, 2023

June 8, 2023

**Closed Executive Session:**

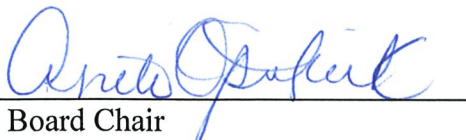
Chairwoman Oplotnik noted the Board needed to go into closed Executive Session pertaining to the following state statutes:

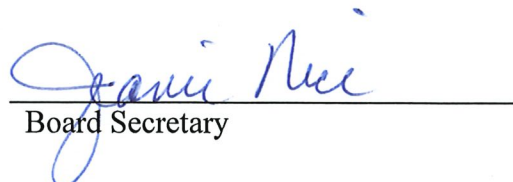
**RSMo 610.021 (1)** Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys; and

**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 Carlos Haley and seconded by Benjamin Rosenberg under RSMo 610.021 (1 & 3). A roll call was made by Jeanie Nice, 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

  
Board Secretary