

**MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Board of Governors Minutes**  
**March 10, 2023**  
**Billingsly Student Center**  
**Room 310**

The March 10, 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, Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg, Mariann Morgan, and Alison Hershewe.

Others in attendance were Dr. Jean Coltharp, John Hammons, Bethany Kendrick, Alicia Hughes, Rob Mallory, 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 1:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Governor Oplotnik recognized Dr. Bob and Dot Willcoxon's gift to support the *Lions Forward* campaign and thanked them for their generosity and support of Missouri Southern. Also, the Lady Lions are playing in the championship game so we will be getting score updates throughout the meeting.

### **MINUTES**

Chairwoman Oplotnik asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 13, 2023 Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Ron Richard to approve minutes of the January 13, 2023 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.*

### **Willcoxon's Gift**

The *Lions Forward* campaign is off to a great start and I appreciate the Board's endorsement and personal participation in the campaign. We are finding that by personally presenting potential donors with a set of priorities, they are responding in very generously ways. The *Lions Forward* Campaign is truly a team effort—thanks to everyone involved in our early success of the campaign.

### **Missouri Higher Education**

We continue to engage with our state legislators through meetings in Jefferson City and when they are back "in district." The Governor's fiscal year 2024 higher education budget recommendations are being well received in the legislature and, if approved by the House and Senate and signed by the Governor, would include a core increase of \$2 million in our budget. It would also be funding for our MOExcels project, which is the Center for Applied Data Analytics, in the amount of \$474,000. The Governor has also proposed additional capital funding primarily for projects that were approved in last year's state budget. For us that would be an additional \$7.5 million for our Health Science Innovation Center.

## **President (cont.):**

### **Joplin City Council Supports Project**

At the February 21 meeting of the Joplin City Council, the Council approved unanimously to provide \$80,000 to assist with a project led by the *Joplin Regional Alliance for Healthcare and Health Science*. As a reminder, the Alliance is a group of CEOs of major area healthcare and educational institutions—including KCU, Missouri Southern, and Crowder College—as well as other community leaders. A key goal of the Alliance is to capitalize on our region's unique strengths in healthcare and health science for the advancement of Joplin and the region. With the financial support of the City of Joplin and Alliance partners, a highly respected consulting firm (TEconomy Partners LLC) will help develop a strategic roadmap for Joplin and the region focused on the health sector.

This project exemplifies two important, larger points. First, that the City of Joplin is demonstrating that it is a very supportive partner in forward-thinking initiatives that will advance the city and region. The City's \$1.5 million investment in our Health Science Innovation Center is another example of that. And, that leaders in business, education, government, and the community are working together, striving to build a better future for all. As always, great things are possible when people work together.

### **Campus Events**

There are some exciting events coming to our campus including TEDxMSSU and a major concert to be held in Fred G. Hughes Stadium featuring Jesse McCartney. These events are sponsored by our student Campus Activities Board, but the entire community is encouraged to attend.

### **Gratitude**

I would like to conclude my report by expressing gratitude to our faculty and staff for their commitment to providing a high-quality, engaging educational experience for our students. Student learning and development are at the core of our mission, and it is our people—in concert with the efforts of our students—that enable Missouri Southern to be a place that continues to change lives.

## **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.*

### **Brochure for *Lions Forward* Campaign**

Each Governor was provided a copy of the leave behind brochure we use when we engage prospective donors in the seven campaign priorities. I would like to acknowledge the work of University Relations and Marketing and Kara Dixon in developing this brochure. It is very useful when we sit down with prospective donors and walking through the seven priorities.

### **Lions on Site**

This is a new initiative in the Office of Alumni Relations. We are taking our alumni roadshow to employers that have a high concentration of Missouri Southern graduates. We've done CFI, and The Commons here in Joplin and will be doing Liberty Utilities very soon. We've had great participation from alumni and the employers. It's a nice way to reach out to our alumni and the folks who employ our alumni.

**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.*

**Chemistry and Physical Sciences**

The Chemical and Physical Sciences Department has been accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS). The ACS Approval Program promotes excellence in chemistry education for undergraduate students through approval of baccalaureate chemistry programs. ACS-approved programs offer a broad-based and rigorous chemistry education that gives students intellectual, experimental, and communication skills to become effective scientific professionals. I wish to express my appreciation to Dean Marsi Archer, to Dr. James Donelson, chair of the department, and his faculty for all their hard work on this impressive designation.

**Black Student Alliance**

On February 20th, the Black Student Alliance participated in a Black History Month luncheon and panel at the Cornell Complex. Several MSSU black student leaders were part of a panel discussion, including Nakylah Bailey, Social Work Student and President of the Black Student Alliance, and Student Senate President, Marcel John.

**MOCAP**

On March 7<sup>th</sup> the Missouri Center for Advanced Power (MOCAP), a consortium of MSSU, Missouri State, Missouri S&T, and University of Missouri Columbia, along with industry partners of Aesir Technologies, Eagle Picher Technologies, and NorthStar Battery held their annual summit in the North End Zone facility. This consortium is devoted to research and development of new battery and advanced power technologies and educating a new high-tech workforce for the future. Faculty, students, and industry partners from each entity were present. A poster conference was held for student research projects related to battery and advanced power technology.

**MKEAP**

A total of 60 students were invited to interview to be a part of the fall 2023 MKEAP cohort, 58 of those attended. Late last week, 25 students received notification letters that they had been accepted and 13 students received letters that they were alternates. This was the largest class of applicants (over 100), the largest number to interview, and the largest number of invitations issued in the history of the program. This program is gaining a nationwide reputation, with applicants coming from all over the country.

**Nursing**

The nursing department recently received the annual NCLEX-RN first-time pass rates, a primary outcome for the Missouri State Board of Nursing. The pass rate is 87.80%, with a national rate for BSN programs at 82%. The BSN program opened the Fall 2023 application cycle on January 1st, and at present, there are 36 qualified applicants for the 30 seats available. The selection of candidates by faculty will occur in March.

Governor Gipson applauded those in the University who were instrumental in restoring our Nursing program. The State Board of Nursing will be on campus for their visit in April so we will be bringing a report of that visit to the Board in June. Once we are in good standing with the State Board of Nursing, we will have more opportunity to add students to the Nursing Program. We did very well in our accreditation last fall. We will need to make application to the State Board for the second cohort.

## **Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (cont.):**

### **Dental Hygiene**

Second-year dental hygiene students have been busy in the community working in elementary schools providing screening and sealant applications. They have been to Stapleton Elementary, Jasper Elementary and some have visited Wildwood Nursing Home. That funding is provided by a grant from the state.

### **Student Study Lounge**

A new student study lounge opened in Plaster Hall on March 8. Much of the funding was provided by faculty member, Dr. Beverly Block.

### **Strategic Planning Task Force**

The Strategic Planning Task Force continues to meet and are very close to having goals and objectives to put out to the campus community for comment. There has been great leadership from that group, and we look forward to bringing the new strategic plan to the Board to approve in June.

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

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

The strategic employee recruitment and retention analysis continues to move along with our timeline. We had a call with the consultant this week to discuss the work they have been doing on the market analysis. We still anticipate a final report in April that will affect our decision for the upcoming FY2024 budget and additional years to come.

### **Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

We continue to work on the FY24 budget. That is a collaborative effort by many people about needs, reductions of cost, and expenses, as we have SERRA, facility needs, Insurance (health & property), software increases, and MOSER increases to name a few. We are pleased with the encouraging news from Jefferson City that includes an increase in our base appropriations. Tuition revenue is analyzed in many ways including fluctuations in enrolled credit hours, various methods of delivery and the various rates charged. There is just a lot of information to get ready to submit to the Board in the June meeting.

### **Annual Audit**

It is annual audit time. We begin in March and am happy to share that we have already kicked off gathering data for our control questionnaires. We will move at a fast pace to meet our target of presenting the results at the November Board meeting. This year will layer in another new standard from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). It will somewhat mimic what we did with leases last year.

## **Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending February 28, 2023**

### **Cash Graph:**

Ms. Eis noted the balance at the end of February 28, 2023, is \$23M. Cash looks very good right now. A lot of that is from the influx cash from financial aid disbursements for Spring semester. Cash will continue to decline as we move throughout the fiscal year as we are impacted by the cycle of the semester with continued expense with less tuition revenue coming in. Also, we've had significant HEERF funding in the cash dollars and some of that residual is in this year.

## **Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer (cont.):**

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

**Total Assets:** \$191M

**Total Liabilities :** \$132M

**Net Position :** \$59M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$608k).
- **Total Operating Expenses:** Reflects a decrease of (\$4.6M). This includes compensation (\$2M) changes made for the FY23 budget. The utilities increase is from a rate increase, additional fuel charges, and due to additional resident halls back online \$334k. Scholarships variance (\$3.5M) is primarily due to no student HEERF grants in the current year.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** Reflects a decrease of (\$5.9M). State appropriations for MOSERS represents a seven-month draw \$258k. HEERF has a variance (\$7M) due primarily to large HEERF funding in the prior year. This year, we have drawn our final HEERF dollars \$985k.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**  
Current Year: \$5.1M gain  
Prior Year: \$7M gain  
This results in a decrease from Prior Year: (\$1.9M)

### **Year End Activities**

Human Resources sent W-2's to all employees. 1099s were sent out from Finance. Working on IPEDS, HLC and HEERF annual reports.

*A motion was made by Carlos Haley and seconded by Bill Gipson to approve the February 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for February 2023 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.*

### **Spring Recruitment Initiatives**

In February we visited Neosho High School and McDonald County High School for Green and Gold Tours. This gave us the opportunity to speak with all high school student's 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade to give them information about the admissions process, our MOSO merit scholarships, our current and new academic programs, student resources to help them be successful, and activities that make them feel at home. We provided popcorn to the students, staff, and teachers at these schools. Alumni who work in both school districts receive a little swag from our Alumni Office. We allowed students to enter a drawing to receive a \$1000 scholarship at the evening basketball game. Each school had two students receive \$1000 scholarships. We are already planning for next Green and Gold Tours next Spring.

## **Dean of Admissions (cont.):**

### **On Campus Events**

In collaboration with many other areas on campus, we will host a total of sixteen group visits and Lion Pride Visit Days. This includes elementary students, high schoolers, transfer students and special groups like talent search and Upward Bound. There has been tremendous support across campus for these events and we know these future lions are having a memorable experience.

### **Spring Enrollment Highlights**

We saw an increase in graduate enrollment this spring of around 10%. We are excited that, in the future, we are going to have new graduate programs to recruit for. The board report shows our graduate students are coming from MO, AR, OK and surprisingly Florida.

Dual credit enrollment for Missouri Southern has been on the rise for the past few semesters. For spring we had a 19% increase in dual credit enrollment from last spring. The board report highlights the top high schools where our dual credit students come from. We are currently working to obtain new partner schools for dual credit. These students are included in our recruitment efforts to become first-time freshman and according to the data 10% of our dual credit students apply to MSSU as freshman. Our goal is to increase the percentage of dual credit students who become first-time freshmen. I want to give kudos to Brett Meeker and Martha Freeman for their hard work and dedication to this student population.

## **Director of Athletics (Mr. 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.*

### **Winter Sports Success**

The women's basketball team won the MIAA tournament championship in Kansas City last weekend as the #5-seed and entered the Central Regional tournament as #3-seed. The men's basketball team finished 17-13, which is a 3-win improvement over last season. Men's and women's track and field programs qualified 16 student-athletes for the national championship meet. Men finished in second place, women in third at the MIAA championship.

### **Women's Soccer Clinical Research**

The women's soccer team is participating in a research study designed to assess the impact of clinical yoga on student-athlete health, with a focus on stress and other mental health factors.

### **Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) Initiatives**

MSSU student-athletes completed 4,324 hours of community service. MSSU finished 5<sup>th</sup> nationally in the NCAA Teamworks Challenge during the fall semester. In another initiative, MSSU SAAC raised \$4,654, towards a goal of \$5,000, in support of Make-a-Wish.

### **MIAA Membership**

In January, current MIAA member Lincoln University announced that they will be exiting the association to join the Great Lakes Valley Conference beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year. This will impact our 2024 football schedule. There have been several schools that have dropped the MIAA and went to GLVC.

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

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

We have a new President Elect. Michael Beilfuss, the previous at large member, has volunteered to be President Elect. He will not take over until August 2024. Dr. Laura Schisler has volunteered to take his place as the at large member.

An ad hoc committee was created, with input from Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Dr. Toms, to revamp the current promotion and tenure standards. We had quite a few people volunteer but didn't want the committee to be too big. We want equal representatives across the colleges and different ranks of faculty members. Earlier this week, Dr. Toms, the chair of the committee and I met to get on the same page. I am excited about the progress this committee is going to make.

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

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

Staff Senate needed a new mission and vision. We needed to have a better, stronger direction for Staff Senate and how we are going to get there. For the last couple of meetings, we've been working on our new mission and vision, which has been approved by Staff Senate and is included in the notes. We want it to be something that can be maintained year after year with Senate.

We also changed our monthly meeting structure to eliminate our reporting. We have sent senators out to visit buildings and departments to meet with other staff members to bring back "Points of Pride – POP ins". These POPs are positives and great things that are happening across campus. We want to build more pride and more information sharing with the community.

Going forward we are building new goals and objectives. We approved new goals earlier this week and they will be included in next Board of Governor's meeting information. I am here until June 2024 and am looking for a mentally healthier, physically healthier and a happier campus before I'm done with the presidency.

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

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

In Student Senate, one small project we are working on is outside the Lion's Den. We're still trying to see if this is something people want. Another project is campus vibrancy. I want to create a small tradition next fall that will create an identity for MSSU, and people will carry on. Something that people, i.e., students, staff, faculty, and the community, will remember MSSU for.

**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 our minutes from the previous January meeting. We received updates from Provost Toms. We are recommending dropping four certificate programs and adding three new academic programs: Cultural Anthropology Certificate (Undergraduate), History Certificate (Graduate) and Digital Course Design and Delivery Certificate (Graduate).

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

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

Approved minutes and got an update on the budget. Dr. Hodson provided an update on the *Lions Forward* campaign and the three-year facility planning projects.

We have three motions that we would like to submit to the Board. First motion:

The selection committee will make a recommendation to the University President on the selected vendor for architectural services for the Health Science Innovation Center. The Board authorizes the University President to engage in a contract/agreement with an architect for the Center.

*A motion was made Carlos Haley and seconded by T. Mark Elliott on the selected vendor for architectural services for the Health Science Innovation Center. Motion passed unanimously.*

Second motion:

As the next step in the planning/design/construction phase, the Board authorizes the University to issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) for a Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for construction of the new Health Science Innovation Center (HSIC) on the campus of Missouri Southern State University.

*A motion was made Carlos Haley and seconded by Ron Richard on the request for qualifications (RFQ) for a Construction Manager at Risk for the Health Science Innovation Center. Motion passed unanimously.*

Third motion:

The selection committee will make a recommendation to the University President on the vendor chosen as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR). The Board authorizes the University President, in consultation with the Board Budget Audit Committee Chair, to engage in a contract/agreement with the CMAR for the Health Science Innovation Center (HSIC).

*A motion was made Carlos Haley and seconded by Bill Gipson to make a recommendation on the vendor chosen as the CMAR for the Health Science Innovation Center. Motion passed unanimously.*

The committee also received an update on the state's engagement of a consulting firm, NCHEMS, to develop a performance-based funding model potentially for base appropriations for FY25. The University is providing information to NCHEMS.



**OLD BUSINESS** – N/A

**NEW BUSINESS** – N/A

**Future Meeting Date:**

The next meetings of the Board are as scheduled:

June 8, 2023

September 8, 2023

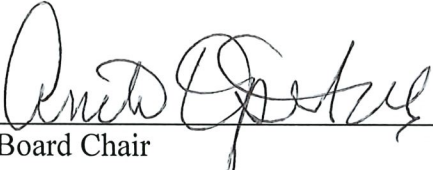
November 10, 2023


January 19, 2024

March 15, 2024

June 13, 2024

*A motion was made by Mariann Morgan and seconded by Ron Richard to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion passed unanimously.*

  
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Board Chair

  
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Board Secretary