

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Board of Governors Minutes
January 10, 2025
BSC Boardroom

The January 10, 2025 meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by Chairman Carlos Haley. Roll was taken with the following in attendance:

- Anita Oplotnik – present, via conference call
- Mariann Morgan – present, via conference call
- Rod Hendricks – present, via conference call
- T. Mark Elliott – present
- Carlos Haley – present
- Mike Seibert – present
- Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg – present
- Alison Hershewe – present, via conference call

Others in attendance were Maddox Studdard, Peter Edwards, Dr. Michael Beilfuss (via Teams), Leona Belk (via Teams), Rob Mallory (via Teams), Dr. Brad Hodson, Dr. Lisa Toms, Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Shellie Hewitt, Linda Eis, and Jeanie Nice.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Haley called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm and welcomed everyone. Governor Haley asked if there were any announcements. None were mentioned.

MINUTES

Chairman Haley asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the November 8, 2024 Board meeting; none were noted.

A motion was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Michael Seibert to approve minutes of the November 8, 2024 Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).

Chairman Haley asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the December 18, 2024 Special Board meeting; none were noted.

A motion was made by Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Michael Seibert to approve minutes of the December 18, 2024 Special Board meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Minutes are archived in the permanent record book).

Update on Nursing Program (Dr. Lisa Beals)

Dr. Lisa Beals, Director of Nursing, thanked the Board and the university for their support over the years. Dr. Beals recapped where we came from in the Nursing program. In August 2020 the Missouri State Board of Nursing (MSBN) determined our nursing program was severely deficient in several areas and moved us to a conditional approval status. As a result, we hired a department chair and seven faculty

Update on Nursing Program (continued)

members, we placed a moratorium on admissions to the program, and we revamped the program with a new shared governance model, new mission / vision / values statements, new curriculum and a new faculty mentoring program. A year later we had a successful focused site visit by MSBN which allowed the admission of 30 students. We admitted 21 students in Fall 2021. In Fall 2022 we admitted 26 students and had both the national and state conditional accreditations upgraded to full accreditations.

For 2023 and 2024 we had a 100% pass rate and above average retention rates for BSN program. Student demographics include 55% traditional students, 45% non-traditional students and 9% international students. Their ages range from 18 to 53 years old. Twenty-seven percent are of diverse backgrounds. The employment rate is 100%. Ninety-eight percent of senior students had employment prior to graduation (the remaining 2% had offers but had not finalized an employment choice). Fifty-four percent stayed in the greater Joplin area.

This current year, Fall 2024, saw 30 students admitted to the cohort of BSN pre-licensure program. We submitted a proposal to expand to an additional 20 students in the Spring, which was recently accepted, so applications open July 1st for Spring 2026 cohort. We were also recently awarded a \$347,252 grant by the Missouri Department of Education to support pre-licensure expansion, faculty retention and Graduate Nursing program development.

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.

Federal Advocacy

Dr. Brad Hodson and I made a trip to Washington D.C. to visit with federally elected officials and had very productive conversations. While the primary focus of our governmental relations efforts is at the state level, the federal government also plays an important role in higher education policy, and in providing resources to students and institutions. For example, about one-third of MSSU students receive a federal Pell grant based on having demonstrated financial need. About \$7 million in Pell grant funds were distributed to students through our campus last year. Also, our university's federally funded Project Stay program provided support and programming to 176 MSSU students.

People

It is people that make the difference and on page four you will find a photo of the latest recipients of our Superior Service Award: Amanda Curtis, Manager of Change Management, LMS & Help Desk in Information Technology, and Robert Frossard, Mechanical Maintenance Supervisor in Facilities Services. Both were cited for the excellence of their work. In nominating Amanda, a colleague noted, "*Amanda might be one of the busiest people I've ever met but still puts 110% into every task she works on. Even with her immense workload, she is always willing to help others when they ask, and always with a positive attitude.*" One of Robert's nominators stated, "*Robert's upbeat and productive attitude helps create a positive, motivated atmosphere at work, where solutions are prioritized, collaboration thrives, and challenges are met head-on.*" We are indeed fortunate to have many talented and committed staff who support our university's educational mission.

President (continued)

Anticipating a Bright Year Ahead

On Monday, the 2025 Spring semester will begin and we will be especially reminded of our purpose, and the importance of our work. I believe that the year 2025 will be a bright one for Missouri Southern as we look forward to much progress and some celebrations. For example:

- Later this month, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of women's athletics at MSSU with two special events to reflect on the impact that early trailblazers such as Sallie Beard have had on hundreds of women student athletes at our university.
- In March, we will host the second annual *Willcoxon Innovation in Health Sciences Summit*, a great example of how philanthropy supports our efforts to become more distinctive as a university.
- We anticipate continued strong progress on the Lions Forward Campaign as we see the power of a focused fundraising effort that connects donors with a set of well-defined priorities.
- We are hopeful for a successful legislative session in Jefferson City, including formal recognition by the legislature of our expanded statewide mission.

As always, it's all about providing educational opportunities to our students in an environment of meaningful relationships—connections that make a difference in the lives of our students.

Martin Luther King Celebration

On Monday evening the university will host the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration in the Ron Richard Athletic Center. Dr. King certainly valued education and, in that spirit, I share a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of a true education."

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.

Lions Forward Campaign

At the end of November, we had documented commitments of \$35.5M. We are in the process of wrapping up posting gifts from December and will have a year-end number very soon. We are exactly halfway through the campaign. We have two and a half years left and \$7.2M (at the end of November) left to raise. To better publicize the impact of philanthropy on campus we will be customizing a poster for every academic building demonstrating how that particular building has benefited from philanthropy. It is important for students, faculty, staff and visitors to understand the role donors and private giving have on the quality of education here at Missouri Southern.

Construction Updates

The Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center has changed dramatically in the last week. Last week there were stairwells and elevator shafts poking out of the ground. Now there is structural steel, and you can see where the hallways and the first/second/third floors will be. Masonry is on hold a bit as you cannot lay cinder block in less than 30-degree weather. Steel is right on schedule. We expect the slab pour on the east side of the building to begin at the end of this month and you'll begin to see interior metal studs go up to form walls and spaces in February. We are still on schedule for the July 2, 2026 opening.

Executive Vice President (continued)

Contracts for the Leggett & Platt Center renovations have been reviewed, or are in the process of being reviewed, by legal. We will be signing contracts soon and getting the ball rolling on procurement and be ready for a May launch of that construction project after commencement. The Board also allocated roughly \$190,000 for the roof at December's special meeting and Jeff Boman was in my office with a contract that afternoon. We are on schedule to have the roof work begin in February or March.

Legislative Relations

We met with our local legislative delegation in November and had the opportunity to share not only the Coordinating Board for Higher Education's priorities, which we support, but also some Missouri Southern specific priorities. You will also note that Cathy Jo Loy is the new representative for the 163rd District for Missouri Southern.

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.

Welcome Back

Academic Affairs hosted our all-faculty Welcome Back meeting yesterday morning in the Anderson Justice Center. Several departments shared how they are innovating in student recruiting, engagement, and retention. The Teacher Education department was one of the areas who shared. They have several innovative initiatives ongoing. One of those is their partnership with the Southwest Center as part of a TQP MoACT Grant, which will provide 15 new students for the Master of Arts in Teaching program in January 2025. MSSU is now considered to be one of the Southwest Center's go-to educator preparation programs.

Artful Medicine Symposium

The Artful Medicine Symposium was held on November 15th. Artists, physicians, and scholars presented oral and poster presentations about the medical humanities. This is an area where Missouri Southern is leading in curriculum, in immersive learning such as study abroad trips that partner biology and art, and in scholarly activities.

Law Enforcement Academy Class

The 158th MSSU Law Enforcement Academy class graduated on December 12th. The class had a 100% POST pass rate and 100% job placement.

Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer (Ms. Linda Eis)

FY 2026 Budget

We will be working intensely on the 2026 budget, looking at revenues and any additional expenditures. We know that we're going to have some additional costs, typically health insurance, and MOSERS are two of the bigger ones. We have had some conversations about property insurance and surprisingly since we are part of a group, we do not anticipate a significant increase in property insurance.

Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer (continued)

Human Resources

The Fair Labor Standards Act's new overtime rule was struck down on November 15, 2024. We implemented the ruling on July 1st (because at that time it was not struck down) and had 41 employees who were impacted. All but two were transitioned to salary nonexempt which allows for overtime. With the November 15th ruling, these employees reverted back to salary exempt status. We chose to do that January 1, 2025, to allow time for planned events in December. In addition, effective January 1, 2025, the state of Missouri increased the minimum wage rate. That impacted 32 full-time and 20 part-time employees.

Employee Appreciation Brunch

A tremendous amount of work is done by a lot of people to make this such a fun event. Human Resources is responsible for determining the theme, creating the decorations and coordinating the awards. This year's theme was Charlie Brown.

Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2024

Cash Graph:

Ms. Eis noted the cash balance for December 31, 2024, was \$20.5M. This was an increase of \$1.2M over the previous year.

Statement of Net Position:

Total Assets: \$194M

Total Liabilities: \$132M

Net Position: \$62M

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

- **Total Operating Revenues:** \$1.1M increase.
- **Total Operating Expenses:** \$2.6M increase. Compensation increases from additional grant filled positions and across the board raise. Other benefits include MOSERS retirement increases.
- **Non-Operating Revenues:** \$1.4M increase. This reflects an appropriations increase and funding from the Science to Jobs appropriation.
- **Income Before Other Revenues:**
Current Year: \$1.8M loss
Prior Year: \$1.7M loss
This results in a decrease from the prior year: \$101k.
- **Other Revenues:** Reflects an increase of \$5M. This funding represents state capital appropriations for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center.

A motion was made by Mike Seibert and seconded by T. Mark Elliott to approve the December 2024 financial statements as presented. Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for December 2024 is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book.)

Assoc. VP of Admissions and Enrollment (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.

Upcoming Spring Recruitment Events

Today MSSU was supposed to visit Riverton High School in Riverton Kansas to talk to students about Missouri Southern, but mother nature interfered with those plans. The trip will be rescheduled for February where we will be offering juniors and seniors an opportunity to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship.

We've seen an increased number of high schools in Arkansas and Oklahoma showing interest in MSSU and scheduling group tours.

Spring Enrollment Highlights

New graduate student enrollment continues to be on the rise, and we are seeing students from states other than KS, MO, OK, and AR such as Wisconsin and Illinois. At present, our top graduate program is MS in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, followed by Sports and Recreation Management. Our top program for new freshmen is Psychology and for new transfers it is Criminal Justice and Rad Tech. This week we've welcomed 53 new freshman, transfers and graduate international students. A couple new countries that we have represented this spring are Peru and Guyana.

University Marketing Initiatives

URM is rolling out a new project management system to campus this week. This new process will allow the URM team to prioritize requests to ensure the needs of the campus are being met, and we are strategically using our resources to increase enrollment. Many new marketing campaigns will roll out this spring including retargeted campaigns for freshman prospects, transfer campaigns that target our four core community colleges, and specialized academic program campaigns for both undergrad and graduate programs.

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.

Student Athlete Academic Success

Last semester the department GPA was 3.24, up significantly from the prior year. All but two of our teams were 3.0 or better and nine were above 3.25. You can see the top performing teams listed in the report. Additionally, 70% of all our student athletes earned a 3.0 or better and 80 of those earned a perfect 4.0 GPA. With that performance, the department's cumulative GPA currently stands at 3.27. That makes 13 consecutive semesters at 3.0 or better.

Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) Partnership

Name, image and likeness is certainly a hot topic in college athletics these days and the Missouri Southern Athletic Department has recently entered into a new partnership with Teamworks Influencer to launch a new NIL exchange. This will be a dedicated customized portal that connects Missouri Southern student athletes to business and other interested parties that would like to support NIL opportunities for our student athletes. Additionally, there are educational opportunities through this platform and compliance mechanisms to make sure we are in line with all NCAA and State requirements. We're in the

Director of Athletics (continued)

process of implementing the back end of this right now and we'll publicly roll it out to our student athletes hopefully later this month.

Lions After the Game

This semester there will be four events hosted by the student athlete advisory committee: one in January, one February, one in March and one in April. They will cover topics like job search, career preparation, and financial literacy. We'll once again host a "Life After the Game" panel featuring former student athletes and a "Navigating the Transition from Sport" session with Dr Brett Miller. We've heard from our student athletes that these topics are very important to them as they assist them in figuring out how to transition out of sports when sports have been such a big part of their lives. We will continue to add programs to "Lions After the Game" in future years.

Faculty Senate President (Dr. Michael Beilfuss)

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

The Faculty Senate continues to work to enhance communication across campus by inviting representatives from various units to our monthly meetings. In December, immediately following his return from China, Dr Hodson provided an update to Faculty Senate on facilities projects. We look forward to hosting Athletics at our February meeting.

The Senate has tasked the Handbook Committee with conducting more comprehensive annual reviews of the handbook.

Additionally, we have some reports coming in from the Faculty Welfare Committee that we'll be discussing with Administration in the coming weeks and months.

One thing I want to highlight is a recent discovery regarding an employee emergency fund. A faculty member faced a medical emergency right before the fall semester last year, and there were some questions about whether such an emergency fund existed. We eventually discovered that there is a fund that exists within the foundation, and it has a small balance. I'd like to work on increasing the balance and increasing the visibility of that fund in case anybody has use for it in the future.

In my report, I included a few select student comments from last year's Outstanding Teaching Award nominations. These comments highlight the excellent work of three of the 52 faculty members who were nominated for that award.

Lastly, we're all looking forward to the beginning of the new semester next week and we appreciate all the work the folks in facility services are doing to prepare campus, especially after all the snowfall.

Staff Senate President (Ms. Leona Belk)

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

Our Angel Tree project is probably our favorite service project that we do throughout the year. This year we had lower numbers than normal as we did have some issues with changes in financial aid. We were able to serve 55 children this year. I do want to give a huge shout out to the EMS students. They collected

Staff Senate President (continued)

financial donations, as well as gift donations, and were able to provide stocking stuffers for every single child this year, as well as the gifts to the students they adopted through the program. We look forward to continuing this and look forward to the rest of our Senate year.

Student Representative (Mr. Maddox Studdard)

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

Students are eager to return to campus and resume classes, with a sense of enthusiasm for the opportunities ahead. On a personal note, I recently returned from an immersive learning trip to China, and I can confidently say it's an experience I miss every day. It has broadened my perspective and given me a deeper appreciation for the global connections our university can provide.

Our student-athletes are beyond excited about the university's and board's approval of the renovations at the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center. I've received a short testimony from the men's basketball student assistant, who is thrilled about the impact these improvements will have on their experience and performance. MSSU student Brent Worley says, "As a student assistant for men's basketball, I'm really thankful the university is renovating the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center. It's exciting to see the facility getting the upgrades it needs to support our athletes and fans. These improvements will make a big difference for everyone involved in our program!" This excitement is felt across campus, energizing the student body.

An update from our student governance, the Student Senate recently passed an amendment allowing whoever is appointed to the Board of Governors Student Representative position to also serve as a Student Senator. This amendment will strengthen the collaboration between the student body and the student senate. The amendment is now heading to the student body for approval, and I look forward to seeing this enhanced representation take shape in the near future.

As we step into this semester, I am optimistic about what we can accomplish as a university. We look forward to a successful and engaging spring semester.

Board Committees:

Personnel/Compensation (T. Mark Elliott, Chair)

The committee did not meet. There is no report.

Academic Affairs (Mariann Morgan, Chair)

The Academic Affairs Committee met this morning and have two recommendations for consideration of the full Board. The first one is the approval of the academic calendars for 2026 through 2027 and 2027 through 2028.

A motion was made by Anita Oplitnik and seconded by Benjamin Rosenberg to approve the calendars for these two academic years. Motion passed unanimously.

The other recommendation that the Academic Affairs Committee had for the full Board is two faculty sabbatical recommendations: Leslie Smith for a full year and David Penning for half a year.

A motion was made by Michael Seibert and seconded by Benjamin Rosenberg to approve the sabbatical recommendations. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget Audit Committee (Michael Seibert, Chair)

The main item of discussion was a standardized course fee for graduate level courses for fiscal year 2026.

A motion was made by Michael Seibert and seconded by Mariann Morgan to authorize administration to charge a \$42 per credit hour fee to graduate students effective fall 2025 (FY26) and eliminate existing graduate fees. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None was mentioned.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Van Galen recognized Scott Westwood as this is his last day at the University. Scott has moved on to other opportunities. He has done outstanding work in arranging the technology for events. He is super engaged on campus and has done a great job, so I'll just put it on the record - a debt of gratitude that we have for Scott Westwood and wishing him the best. Thank you, Scott, for your service to Missouri Southern.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meetings of the Board are as scheduled:

- March 14, 2025
- June 12, 2025

Closed Executive Session

Chairwoman Haley noted that 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 was made by T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Benjamin Rosenberg to move to the closed executive session. A roll call was made by Secretary Jeanie Nice, 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