



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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DR. DEAN VAN GALEN

PRESIDENT

SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT PROVIDING STUDENT OPPORTUNITY



The Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) Scholarship Dinner, sponsored by the Missouri Southern Foundation, will take place on March 13. The special event provides an opportunity for donors and representatives to connect with the students who have received their private scholarship. As we continue to seek philanthropic support to further the university's mission, it's worth noting the significant impact that private gifts to the Foundation have on our students.

During the current fiscal year, over \$1.4 million has been provided in scholarships to over 731 Missouri Southern students through charitable support. These funds, which are transferred to the university from the foundation, represent more than 357 distinct scholarships and funding criteria. In many cases, these are named endowments designed to honor a family member or favorite professor, while providing financial support to a worthy student.

Financial contributions to student scholarships continue to be the greatest area of interest among our donors. To date, donors have designated more than \$13.9 million for scholarships in the Lions Forward campaign, which represents about 38% of the campaign total.

We are grateful to the individuals, businesses, and foundations whose generous donations help create educational opportunities for our students. We also appreciate the partnership between MSSU and the Missouri Southern foundation that makes this possible.

Meet Mikayla Berry



Mikayla Berry, a junior majoring in secondary English education, is the proud recipient of the prestigious Henry Morgan Award. Thanks to the generosity of the Missouri Southern Foundation Scholarships, she can focus wholeheartedly on her studies without the burden of financial stress.

"These opportunities have given me the freedom to dedicate myself to my education. I'm incredibly grateful to the donors who make this possible for students like me," Mikayla shared.

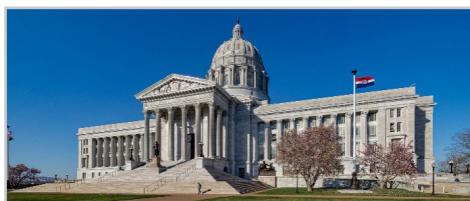
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Beyond her academic achievements, Mikayla recently completed her junior internship, where she built meaningful connections with local school staff and students. This hands-on experience not only reinforced her passion for teaching but also challenged her to grow as an educator.

“Teaching students lifelong skills while navigating the challenges of Charcot-Marie-Tooth, a form of degenerative muscular dystrophy, has strengthened my resilience. Despite the physical obstacles, I remain committed to achieving my goals,” she said.

Honored to receive this scholarship, Mikayla is determined to make the most of this opportunity as she continues her journey toward academic and professional success.

UPDATE ON STATE RELATIONS



The Missouri state legislative session is in full swing. Governor Mike Kehoe’s proposed budget for fiscal year 2026 includes a 1.5% increase in core funding for Missouri universities and community colleges. This would provide Missouri Southern with an increase of \$455,000, which is currently being used in budget planning for the next fiscal year.

Also important is the ongoing effort to secure a joint resolution to expand MSSU’s statewide mission in the General Assembly. Progress has been made with the Missouri Senate, which approved Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 on February 12 by a vote of 31-0. The legislative companion, House Resolution 6, is making its way through the Missouri House. Additionally, we continue to advocate for one-time funding for critical maintenance.

WILLCOXON INNOVATION IN HEALTH SCIENCES SUMMIT



The 2nd Annual Willcoxon Innovation in Health Science Summit will take place March 28 in the Taylor Performing Arts Center. The planning committee has assembled an exciting lineup of speakers to support this year’s theme of precision health. In a new addition to this year’s summit, attendees will have the opportunity to earn continuing education (CE) credits at no charge in the areas of respiratory therapy and radiology. The CE credits have been approved by the American Association for Respiratory Care and the American Society of Radiologic Technologists.

An overview of the Summit is provided on the following page:



WILLCOXON
INNOVATION IN
HEALTH SCIENCES
S U M M I T

MARCH 28, 2025

Hosted by Missouri Southern State University

7:30 AM | Registration, Check-in, and Breakfast

Begin your day in the lobby of Taylor Performing Arts Center with networking and a hearty start.

8:30 AM | Keynote Address by Dr. Marilyn J. Heine

“Strengthening the Focus on Precision Healthcare with an AI Twist”

Dr. Heine, a distinguished member of the AMA Board of Trustees, shares her expertise on precision healthcare and the role of AI in reshaping the field.

9:50 AM | Break

10:00 AM | Session 1 by Dr. Haval Shirwan

“Can the Immune System Be Trained as a Universal Platform to Prevent Cancer in High-Risk Individuals?”

Dr. Shirwan’s research focuses on modulating the immune system to treat various immune-based diseases at MU Nextgen Precision Health.

11:10 AM | Break

11:20 AM | Session 2 by R. Gabe Linke, BS, R.T. (R) (MR) (ARRT)

“Layer by Layer: Building Better Healthcare an Exploration into 3D Uses in Medicine”

R. Gabe Linke is a 3D Imaging and Advanced Visualization Program Manager at Children’s Nebraska.

12:00 PM | Lunch

Join us in Young Gymnasium for a networking, Willcoxon Scholars presentations, and an update on the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation in Health Sciences Center.

1:30 PM | Session 3 by Dr. Jeffrey Staudinger

“Genomic Insights into Drug-Mediated Metabolic Pathway Modulation in a Colon Cancer Cell Line”

Dr. Staudinger, PhD, is a Professor of Basic Sciences at Kansas City University.

2:30 PM | Closing Remarks

Hear details about the 2026 Willcoxon Innovation in Health Sciences Summit and wrap up the day’s insights.

3:30 PM | Tour of MSSU Facilities

Experience immersive learning firsthand with a guided tour of MSSU’s health and life sciences facilities.

DR. BRAD HODSON

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

ROY BLUNT HEALTH SCIENCE INNOVATION CENTER



Construction progress on the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center continues **on schedule and on budget**.

Steel erection continues with structural masonry completed last week. The concrete deck on the second floor of the welcome center wing of the building was poured in late February. The roof deck on that same side is currently under construction. Within the stair towers, the metal stairs themselves are being installed. Finally, the transformer, which had an extremely long supply chain lead time, has been received and set, and has been connected to the university's power system by Liberty Utilities.

Looking forward, the east facade will begin to take shape in the next month with interior metal studs being installed on the welcome center side around the same time. In April, the rough-in of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will begin also on the welcome center side of the building.

To date, **29 weather days have been claimed** by Crossland Construction, exceeding the 20 days built into the contract. This has pushed back final completion from late June 2026, to currently July 8, 2026. Crossland is mindful of the need to have the building ready for occupancy prior to the beginning of classes that August.

LEGGETT & PLATT ATHLETIC CENTER

Contracts have been successfully negotiated with the three contractors involved in Phase 1 of the Leggett & Platt renovation: Heartland Bleachers, Sports Floors, and Beynon Sport Surfaces.

The bids from those three contractors equaled the preliminary estimate for Phase 1 (bleachers, basketball court, and indoor track) provided by Facility Services of \$3.2 million.

Work on Leggett & Platt will begin with demolition immediately following May commencement ceremonies and it is anticipated the project will be completed shortly after January 1, 2026.

Separate from the Phase 1 interior renovations is the roof replacement. The contractor has been on site for several weeks and that project is expected to be completed by May 2025.

LIONS FORWARD CAMPAIGN



As of the end of February 2025, the Lions Forward fundraising campaign had surpassed its FY 2025 (June 30, 2025) goal of \$37 million, with a **current total of \$37,024,658**. This represents 87% of the campaign's overall goal of \$42.7 million being received with 28 months remaining in the timeline.

Totals commitments for the three primary priorities of the campaign are:

- Enhancing the Student Experience – 122% of goal received
- Fostering Academic Excellence – 88% of goal received
- Building the Campus of the Future – 83% of goal received

To date, nearly 2,800 individual donors have participated in the campaign with 224 commitments over \$25,000.

COLLABORATION WITH QUAPAW NATION



Faculty and staff from Missouri Southern traveled to the Quapaw Nation in northeastern Oklahoma in late January to **discuss potential partnerships**. Representatives of the academic departments of biology and environmental health, early childhood education, entrepreneurship, computer science, social work, and engineering technology, as well as staff representatives from adult degree completion and athletics, participated in the visit.

A 60-day follow-up conversation is planned to document progress toward establishing long-term mutually beneficial partnerships in these important areas. Missouri Southern is **grateful to Quapaw Chairwoman Wena Supernaw and Barry Linduff**, executive director of communications, for facilitating this visit and opening the door for collaboration between the university and Quapaw Nation.

DR. LISA TOMS

PROVOST / VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

NWACC AGREEMENTS



On March 10, MSSU and Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will facilitate the transfer of their students to ours. Several of our academic programs have also developed 2+2 agreements that outline what courses students should take in Bentonville and what courses they will take to complete the bachelor's degree here. Some of those include health care administration, social work, biology, environmental health and safety, business, communication, and teacher education.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH, LIFE SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION

Spider Tortoise Host Institution



MSSU has been officially designated as a host institution for the care, conservation, and breeding of two subspecies of the critically endangered Spider Tortoise (*Pyxis arachnoides arachnoides* and *Pyxis arachnoides brygooi*). These tortoises are among the most endangered reptiles on the planet and one of the smallest, growing to just around five inches in length. This initiative is part of a collaborative effort with Zoo Knoxville, a leader in reptile conservation, and presents an incredible opportunity for both our university and students.

We are hosting two separate breeding groups of these small tortoises. The Common Spider Tortoise (*P. a. arachnoides*) is native to the spiny forests of southwestern Madagascar, where extreme droughts dominate the ecosystem. Currently, our new tortoises are in brumation at Zoo Knoxville and the St. Louis Zoo, experiencing a simulation of their dry winter season. We expect to receive them before the end of the Spring semester!

Spider tortoises, native to Madagascar, are under severe threat due to habitat loss and illegal poaching. With fewer safe havens in the wild, captive conservation efforts are essential for their survival. Without intervention, current estimates predict that these tortoises could go extinct in the wild within our lifetime. By joining this initiative, MSSU is directly contributing to the preservation of these remarkable animals while also positioning itself as a leader in scientific research and conservation education. This collaboration provides students with unique hands-on opportunities in reptile husbandry, conservation biology, and species management, offering valuable experience in the field of wildlife conservation.

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This is “live ammunition” conservation work, and our students will gain hands-on training, collaborate with an accredited Zoological Task Force, and take ownership of helping save a species from extinction. We are proud to claim, “Other universities teach about conservation of endangered species, MSSU students perform it.”

Second Annual Rod Anderson Sport and Recreation Management Symposium

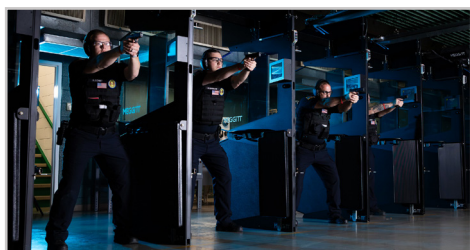
On February 26, the second Rod Anderson Sport and Recreation Management Symposium was held. The focus was on current issues in NCAA sports, specifically Name, Image, and Likeness and the transfer portal. There was a panel discussion over lunch with Jude Killey, athletic director at the University of Maine, Jared Bruggemann, Joplin Sports Authority, Amanda Schmelzer, head of compliance at Missouri State University, Rob Mallory, director of Athletics at MSSU, and Joshua Moore, interim volleyball coach at MSSU. Jude Killey provided the keynote address that evening.

MSSU Shootout

The highly anticipated Missouri Southern Shootout, an annual archery competition in partnership with Joplin High School and the Missouri Department of Conservation, kicked off on March 8. Now in its eighth year, the event hosted over 1,000 archers. Among the highlights of the competition, the highest-scoring male and female archers were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to MSSU.

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Missouri Blue Scholarship



The Missouri Southern State University Law Enforcement Academy has been awarded \$187,217 from the Missouri Blue Scholarship. This scholarship provides up to \$5,000 for each selected non-sponsored recruit to help cover the costs of attending a Missouri basic law enforcement training academy.

Performing Arts Events



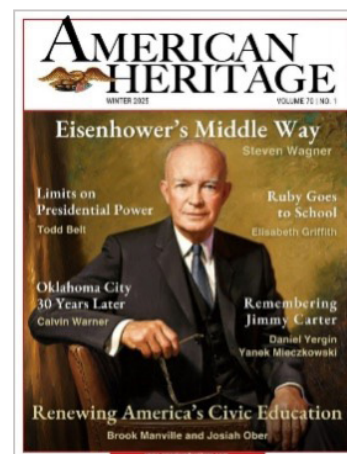
The Performing Arts Department hosted several events in February, including the Southern Symphony Orchestra on February 2, a performance by guest trombonist Dr. Cory Mixdorf and pianist Dr. Miroslava Panayatova on February 5, the MSSU Concert Band Winter Concert on February 28, and Dr. Cheryl Cotter’s Faculty Clarinet Recital on February 25. Additionally, the spring play *The Importance of Being Earnest* was held at TPAC from March 6-8. The department also completed the Performing Arts Lion Pride Giving Challenge from February 24 to March 2.

History Day

The Department of Social Science hosted the annual History Day on March 7, with this year's theme focused on "Rights and Responsibilities in History." A total of 175 students from 13 schools participated, competing in categories such as paper, documentary, website, performance, and exhibit. The Exhibit Hall was located in the Billingsly Student Center's Ballroom, while performances were held in Corley Auditorium. Other events took place in classrooms throughout Webster Hall.

Eisenhower for Our Time

An excerpt from Dr. Steven Wagner's book, *Eisenhower for Our Time*, is featured as the cover story in the latest edition of American Heritage Magazine.



Phi Alpha Honor Society



On February 10, we celebrated dedication, hard work, and the top 35% of social work students as the newest members into Phi Alpha Honor Society! We have 10 new members along with an honorable guest, one of our social work professors, Stephanie Brady, inducted into Phi Alpha. This induction ceremony marks the beginning of an incredible journey filled with growth, service, and leadership. We are proud to uphold our traditions and values, embracing those who have demonstrated unwavering commitment and passion.

Advocacy Day

The Social Work faculty and students Advocacy Day in Jefferson City on March 4 organized by the National Association of Social Work - Missouri Chapter. This was a wonderful opportunity for social work students to engage directly with the legislative process. Students attended a Behavioral Health Professions Rally. Representative Lane Roberts (House District 161); Representative Cathy Jo Loy (House District 163); and Senator Jill Carter (District 320) set time aside to meet specifically with MSSU Social Work students to share more about their representation in the districts MSSU is located.

International Women's Day

The League of Lions and the Green Bandana Project hosted the Third Annual International Women's Day on March 12. This year's international Women's Day at Missouri Southern recognized and highlighted the contributions of multicultural women within our faculty, staff, and student body, showcasing their achievements and impact through a "lioness" panel. It was an opportunity to network and celebrate the advancement of women.

LINDA EIS

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

FY2025 AUDIT



In March and April of each year, we begin work on the internal control questionnaires. We continue to review monthly account balance reconciliations. The audit includes the compliance section which is a review of Financial Aid and federal grants and awards. As part of the compliance section, the federal ARPA funding from the state for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center will be an additional review. The finance portion will include review of all general ledger activity and the management of those transactions.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET



We continue our work on the FY 2026 budget. Tuition revenue is examined for changes in enrolled credit hours, delivery method and the various rates charged. Both the fall and spring semesters reflect a small percentage overall decrease in credit hours. The new Graduate Lion Fee will generate additional resources for initiatives that impact our students. We are mindful of the discussion at the state regarding state appropriations. Compensation and benefits are our largest expenditure that currently includes the annual MOSERS retirement increase and the increase from minimum wage. Operating expenses include general increases in costs including insurance, bond payments, residence hall food service, travel, and software as well as some savings in a few areas.

YOURU SERIES



Last year, we presented Finance information to the campus as part of the YourU series. We are offering two sessions again this year, in April, to revisit foundational information and then share new layers of data that include various tuition rates applied to credit hours and how providing institutional scholarships to students increases enrollment and impacts retention.

FINANCIAL SERVICES



The Financial Services and Information Technology teams are working on a project that will streamline our accounts payable payment process. They are working through implementation to transition paper check payments to ACH. This enhances our process of timely payments. We take immense pride in issuing payments to our vendors promptly. ACH payment benefits include faster vendor payments, fewer returned or lost payments, reduced processing of voided checks, less labor-intensive and provides cost savings. The anticipated timeline for full implementation is FY 2026.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending February 28, 2025.



DR. SHELLIE HEWITT

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

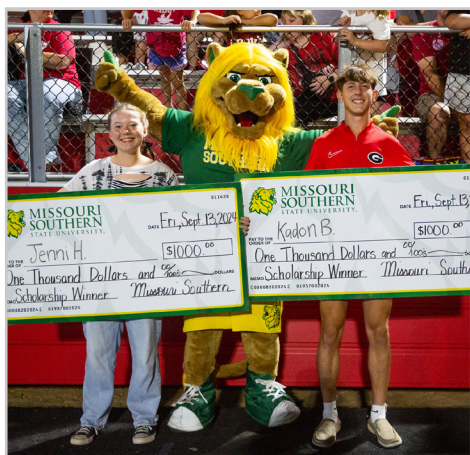
SPRING 2025 ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS



This spring, Missouri Southern experienced some growth in several areas including new freshman, transfer, and graduate students. Additionally, when comparing student classification of spring 2024 to 2025, there were increases in freshman, senior, and graduate student categories.

Looking at residency, Missouri Southern noted increases in resident and non-resident students. Many of our non-resident students this spring hail from Minnesota, Arizona, California, Nevada, Alabama, Virginia, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio, Alaska, New Jersey, Oregon, and Georgia. Furthermore, dual credit student enrollment continues to grow for the spring semester as well.

FALL 2025 RECRUITMENT UPDATE



This semester continues to be filled with on/off campus recruitment events where MSSU faculty and staff have the opportunity to speak with prospective students and their families. Our last Lion Pride Visit Day was a success and we had representation from all our recruitment territories. Our group tours this semester have increased as well and we were excited to have a group of students from Classen SAS High School from Oklahoma City visit campus to learn about the many STEM programs we offer. Additionally, we wrapped up our final Green and Gold Tour events for this academic year at Riverton High School, where we experienced a lot of excitement for their students to have the opportunity to win a scholarship and attend MSSU.

International student recruitment is continuing to flourish. We are working on new partnerships with institutions in China and renewing partnerships with long standing partners like H. Lavity Stout in the British Virgin Islands. Additionally, we have our first group of international graduate students admitted this fall for the MS in Data Analytics, MS in Justice Studies, and MS in Sports and Recreation Management. These graduate students are from Ghana, Bangladesh, and Brazil. Likewise, admitted undergraduate international students for the upcoming fall are from Kenya, Cameroon, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Curacao, Japan, Vietnam, and the British Virgin Islands.

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT COUNCIL UPDATE

The Strategic Enrollment Council (SEC) is excited to announce we have a Strategic Enrollment Plan that will be implemented for 2025-2028. The SEC, along with many other key stakeholders across campus collaborated to ensure recruitment, marketing, enrollment and advising efforts are aligned with best practices and data-driven decisions. This plan provides a foundation and roadmap for growing enrollment and providing our students with resources and the quality education they need to be successful.

NEW STUDENT EMERGENCY GRANT

Missouri Southern has established a new student emergency grant as part of the initiatives supported by the Lion Fee. This grant provides financial assistance to currently enrolled students to address unplanned expenses that impede their academic progress, such as utilities, housing, rent, food, meals, medical and dental expenses, prescription eyeglasses, personal automobile expenses, gasoline, public transportation costs, childcare, and travel due to serious illness or death in the immediate family.



ROB MALLORY

DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

50 YEARS OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

Missouri Southern celebrated the 50th anniversary of women's athletics with a reunion weekend on January 24-25. More than 350 former female student-athletes attended multiple events throughout the weekend. The celebration included a dinner and social, a brunch, recognition during halftime of both the women's and men's basketball games, and a Missouri Senate proclamation read by Senator Jill Carter.

Women's athletics at Missouri Southern began in 1974 when four female students approached faculty member Sallie Beard, asking to start a basketball team. From that initial meeting, the program was born, achieving more than those early student-athletes could have ever imagined. To date, MSSU women's athletics has earned 41 Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) Championships, seven National Championships, 142 All-Americans, and more.



WINTER SPORTS RECAP

The Lions are wrapping up the winter sports season with the men's and women's indoor track and field teams competing at the Division II National Championship meet in Indianapolis this week.

At the MIAA Championships, held February 28 – March 2 in Maryville, Missouri, MSSU finished in fourth place. The Lions earned two individual championships: **Joy Udo-Gabriel** won the Women's 60m Dash, and **Cedric Pearson** claimed the top prize in the Men's Shot Put. Seven other Lions posted All-MIAA finishes: **Chase Sorrell** (3rd – Men's Mile), **JaDarius Pigg** (3rd – Men's 60m Hurdles), **Ryan Riddle** (3rd – Men's 3000m), **Jamale Williams** (2nd – Men's Shot Put), **Dailynn VanDeren** (2nd – Women's Shot Put), **Kristen Womack** (3rd – Women's Shot Put), and **Caleb Manning** (3rd – Men's Triple Jump).

Ten MSSU track student-athletes qualified for the Indoor National Championship, part of the Division II Winter Sports Championships Festival.

The Women's Basketball team concluded their season at the MIAA Basketball Championship in Kansas City, finishing with a 19-14 record, narrowly missing a fourth consecutive 20-win season. The Lions defeated Northwest Missouri State in the first round of the tournament before falling to regular-season champion Pittsburg State in round two. **Ryan Franklin** was named 3rd Team All-MIAA, and **Kaitlin Hunnicutt** earned Honorable Mention honors. Hunnicutt also set a new MSSU record for made 3-point field goals, with her 199th coming in a February 27 victory over Central Missouri.

The Men's Basketball team ended their season with an 11-17 record. **Martin Macenis** received Honorable Mention All-MIAA recognition.

UDO-GABRIEL REWRITES NCAA & MSSU RECORD BOOKS



Joy Udo-Gabriel, a sophomore sprinter on the Women's Track and Field team, has been rewriting the MSSU record book this season. At the MIAA Championship meet, she set a new all-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II record with a time of 7.13 seconds in the 60m Dash. Udo-Gabriel, a sociology major from Nigeria, has broken the MSSU school record in the event six times this winter. Her NCAA record-setting time was the fifth fastest across all collegiate levels, including Division I, this year.

LION PRIDE GIVING CHALLENGE

The MSSU Athletic Department, in partnership with the development office and Missouri Southern Foundation, held the second annual "giving challenge" from February 24 – March 2. Each athletic program set goals and priorities for funding through the event. Driven largely by social media, these philanthropic initiatives have become a staple in higher education and intercollegiate athletics. While donations are still being tallied, the initial total shows strong success, with 250 donors contributing \$102,624 in support of student-athletes. Over the first two years of the campaign, more than 500 gifts have been received, raising over \$220,000. The department looks forward to another successful campaign in 2026.