

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
Board of Governors Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2025  
BSC Boardroom

The November 14, 2025 meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by chairman Carlos Haley. Governors in attendance were Carlos Haley, T. Mark Elliott, Rod Hendricks, Alison Hershewe, Mariann Morgan, Anita Oplotnik, Benjamin Rosenberg, and Michael Seibert.

Others in attendance included Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Lisa Toms, Dr. Shellie Hewitt, Linda Eis, Michelle Wood, Cori Reid, Dr. Nicole Shoaf, Dr. Stephanie Goad, Morgan Robinson, Peter Edwards, Diana Follmer, and Brittany Castell.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Haley asked if there were any announcements. None were noted.

## MINUTES

Chairman Haley asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the September 12, 2025 Board meeting; none were noted.

*A motion was made by Governor T. Mark Elliott and seconded by Governor Mariann Morgan to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2025 meeting. Motion passed unanimously (minutes are archived in the permanent record book).*

## REPORTS

### 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.*

### Campus Activities and Events

Dr. Van Galen reported that November was a very active month across campus. Missouri Southern hosted a variety of athletic events, including several games held in Young Gym. The University also presented multiple performing arts events, including the theatre production *River Stories: Remembering the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Additional engagement activities included the Business Gateway Competition, which welcomed K–12 students to campus.

### Veterans Recognition

The University recently recognized and honored the nation's veterans, including the approximately 150 military-affiliated students at Missouri Southern and the eight faculty and staff members who have served in the armed forces.

### Vibeathon Event

Dr. Van Galen highlighted a unique event recently hosted in Plaster Hall, Missouri's first Vibeathon. Approximately 50 participants took part in the 24-hour competition, which focused

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on “vibe coding”, a method of rapidly building software by using artificial intelligence as a collaborative tool. The event offered \$20,000 in prize money and centered on three healthcare challenges: improving patient appointment scheduling, making healthcare costs more transparent and understandable, and improving care navigation, including referral processes. Winners in each category will be invited to pitch their solutions to potential investors, with the goal of incubating startup companies in Joplin. The Vibeathon was a partnership between Codefi and the Joplin Regional Alliance for Health (JRAH), an organization formed approximately three years ago through collaboration among regional healthcare providers, educational partners, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Joplin.

### **Construction and Facilities Updates**

Dr. Van Galen directed the Board’s attention to construction updates beginning on page two of his written report. He noted that a recent site tour of the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center was provided to Senator Roy Blunt. Senator Blunt facilitated federal support for the project during his service in the United States Senate and has also generously donated memorabilia from his career. These items will be displayed in the building or preserved in the University archives.

### **Willcoxon Scholars Program**

Dr. Van Galen highlighted this year’s Willcoxon Scholars, seven Missouri Southern students conducting undergraduate research with faculty. The program is made possible through the generosity of Mrs. Dot Willcoxon and her late husband, Dr. Bob Willcoxon.

### **International Education Efforts**

A photograph on the bottom of page three of the report reflects a recent Study Abroad Fair hosted on campus. Dr. Van Galen emphasized the University’s continued focus on expanding international opportunities for students, noting that these efforts align with Missouri Southern’s statewide mission.

### **State Higher Education Funding**

Dr. Van Galen summarized recommendations adopted by the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education for fiscal year 2027. These include a 4 percent core funding increase, \$34 million in maintenance and repair funding, and support for up to 31 MoExcels projects. Dr. Van Galen noted that state budget projections are less favorable than in recent years, making the request ambitious. However, the University will continue working with Governor Kehoe and members of the state legislature to communicate the importance of public higher education to the state’s long-term success and competitiveness.

### **Gratitude and Employee Recognition**

Dr. Van Galen highlighted the “Gratitude” section of his written report, emphasizing that the University’s success is driven by its people. He recognized Brenda Beasley, Academic Affairs Project Manager, who has served Missouri Southern for 18 years. Her responsibilities include compiling the University catalog, coordinating course and room scheduling for both internal and external groups, and managing relocations during facilities disruptions. Dr. Van Galen

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commended her competence, kindness, and problem-solving abilities, and expressed appreciation for her contributions and those of many others who serve the University behind the scenes.

### **Upcoming Events**

Board members were encouraged to attend upcoming University events, which are listed in their board binders. Dr. Van Galen specifically noted the annual International Student Thanksgiving event, scheduled for Sunday, November 16, 2025, at the Ron Richard Athletic Center.

### **President's Office Update**

Dr. Van Galen introduced Diana Follmer, who is serving in her second day as Executive Assistant to the President. Mrs. Follmer is a graduate of Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and brings significant executive support experience to Missouri Southern State University.

### **Questions:**

There were no questions from the Board.

### **Provost– Dr. Lisa Toms:**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Lisa 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.*

### **Professional Recognition and Library Initiatives**

Dr. Toms reported that the Missouri Library Association announced Amber Carr as the 2025 recipient of the Outstanding Professional Librarian Award. Ms. Carr serves as Assistant Library Director and Marketing Outreach Librarian at the Missouri Southern Spiva Library. With grant funding and administrative support, she has implemented and continues to expand food preparation and nutrition education programs for the campus community. Ms. Carr is also an active representative of the library on multiple campus committees.

### **Lion Co-op**

Dr. Toms noted that the leadership team for the Lion Co-op, formally known as the Center for Food Security on Campus, recently coordinated a food drive in response to delayed SNAP benefits. In addition to emergency support efforts, the Lion Co-op offers hands-on workshops in which students receive instruction on food preparation, are provided with ingredients during the session, and take both ingredients and recipes home. These initiatives support student wellness and retention.

### **International Art and Design Exchange**

Dr. Toms highlighted a special international exhibition featuring nearly 30 topographic works curated by Ed Outhouse, Associate Professor of Design. The works were created by 24 Missouri Southern design students and recent graduates and were exhibited from October 24 to October 31, 2025 at the School of Arts Atrium Gallery, a partner institution in China.

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### **Technology and Innovation Programming**

Dr. Toms reported on Lion Hog Tech 2025, a cross-institutional innovation hackathon hosted by the Department of Technology. Similar in spirit to the Vibathon, the event brought together high school and university students from Missouri and Arkansas to address real-world challenges using automation and artificial intelligence, with the theme “Automate.” The event aimed to increase awareness of emerging AI technologies while promoting creativity, STEM engagement, and regional collaboration. The initiative was a joint effort between Missouri Southern State University and the University of Arkansas.

### **Business Gateway Competition**

Dr. Toms reiterated highlights from the Plaster School of Business Gateway Competition, held on Thursday, November 6. The event marked a record-breaking year for both participation and fundraising. Dr. Lucas Dilley, Associate Professor of Accounting, served as event lead and reported that nearly 700 students from 27 schools participated, representing the largest registration in the event’s history. Competition categories included business law, economics, general business, international business, management, marketing, and personal finance. Judges included advisory board members, community representatives, and faculty. Corporate and private donations exceeded \$10,000, supporting event operations, student prizes, and promotional materials.

### **Information Technology Infrastructure Enhancements**

Dr. Toms reported that the Information Technology Department continues to support the University’s digital transformation and preparations for the opening of the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center. As part of this effort, campus internet bandwidth has increased from one gigabyte per second to two gigabytes per second. This upgrade enhances connectivity across campus and ensures stronger support for modern learning environments and emerging technologies.

### **Questions:**

There were no questions from the Board.

### **Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer – Ms. Linda Eis:**

*Note: Highlights of Ms. Linda Eis’ 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.*

### **FY25 External Audit Status**

Ms. Eis reported that the fiscal year 2025 annual audit of the University’s financial statements would be presented to the Board later in the meeting. As previously noted, the University is awaiting the federal compliance supplement to complete the compliance review of federal programs.

### **Facilities Projects Update**

Ms. Eis highlighted updates included in the Board packet related to current facilities projects. All projects are progressing as scheduled and within budget. Recent developments at the Roy

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Blunt Health Science Innovation Center include landscaping, sidewalk installation, and additional exterior signage. Interior work has advanced with the installation of terrazzo flooring, and boilers have been fired and tested in preparation for colder weather. In addition, bleacher installation at the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center is underway.

**Human Resources and Employee Engagement**

Ms. Eis noted that October marked the open enrollment period for employee insurance selections for calendar year 2026. The Human Resources team worked closely with employees throughout the process to ensure timely and informed selections. A photograph included in the report reflected the most recent quarterly employee coffee, hosted by Human Resources, which provides an opportunity to welcome and engage new employees. At the most recent event, 27 new employees from across campus were welcomed.

**Financial Statements as of October 31, 2025**

Ms. Eis reviewed the financial statements as of October 31, 2025. The Statement of Net Position reflected total assets of \$218 million, liabilities of \$129 million, and a net position of \$89 million. She noted a \$4.2 million decrease in accounts receivable, primarily due to additional tuition and fee payments and a month-end payment related to the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center.

Ms. Eis then reviewed the Comparative Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position, focusing on the difference column, which reflects cumulative activity from July through October for both the current and prior year. Operating revenues decreased by \$559,000, primarily due to declines in auxiliary, revenue, and reductions in federal and state financial aid awards. Operating expenses decreased by \$1.1 million, largely driven by lower scholarship awards reflecting fewer Pell and state and federal awards, as well as timing shifts in contributions. Repair and maintenance expenses decreased by approximately \$700,000, largely attributable to project timing, and were partially offset by an increase of approximately \$570,000 in health insurance claims.

Non-operating revenues decreased by \$1.4 million, largely due to timing differences related to subcontractor reimbursements for the Science to Jobs program, decreases in Pell awards, and contribution timing. Income before other revenues for the current year totaled \$2.0 million, compared to \$2.8 million for the same period last year, representing a decrease of \$800,000.

Ms. Eis noted that capital gifts during the period supported renovations at the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center and funding for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center. Capital appropriations for both years consist of State of Missouri funding for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center. To date, the University has received nearly \$27 million of the \$30 million in state appropriations committed to the project.

**Questions:**

There were no questions from the Board.

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### **Approval of Financial Statements**

*A motion was made by Governor Anita Oplotnik to approve the October 31, 2025 financial statements as presented. The motion was seconded by Governor Hendricks. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Interim Vice President of University Advancement – Mrs. Michelle Wood:**

*Note: Highlights of Mrs. Michelle Wood'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 Capital Campaign Update**

Mrs. Wood reported that the Lions Forward capital campaign continues to progress at a strong and steady pace. As of the end of October, the campaign had raised \$40.4 million, representing 95 percent of the \$42.7 million goal, with more than a year and a half remaining in the campaign timeline. The campaign has already surpassed its goal for enhancing student experience and continues to make strong progress across all remaining priorities. Mrs. Wood noted that this momentum reflects strong donor engagement, effective communication, donor confidence, and the collective efforts of the University community, with relationship-building at the core of the campaign's success.

### **Advancement Staffing Updates**

Mrs. Wood announced the addition of two alumni leaders to the University Advancement team. Sydney Crider, Class of 2020, has joined the team as Director of Leadership Annual Giving. Abi Almandinger, Class of 1996, is now serving as Director of Alumni and Donor Relations. Mrs. Wood noted that both individuals bring strong community relationships and a deep connection to Missouri Southern.

### **Alumni, Donor, and Community Engagement**

Mrs. Wood highlighted several recent engagement opportunities with alumni, donors, community partners, and friends of the University. The Gipson Center for Applied Data Analytics dedication, held on September 12, 2025 in conjunction with the Board of Governors meeting, was exceptionally well attended and celebrated the generosity of Bill and Tracy Gipson.

President's Game Day Gatherings, hosted in the Ron Richard Athletic Center, have continued throughout the football season, bringing together alumni, donors, healthcare partners, and campus supporters at each home game. The sixth and final President's Game Day Gathering is scheduled for November 15, 2025, with kickoff at 1:00 p.m.

On October 24, the University hosted the Alumni Awards Dinner, recognizing outstanding alumni for leadership, service, and lifetime achievement. The 2025 alumni award recipients included Sallie Beard, Lionhearted Award; James Jordan, Outstanding Alumnus; Ryan Sprowls, Distinguished Alumnus; Mark Williams, Distinguished Alumnus; Rick and Sue Utter, Spirit of Service Award; and the Tupper family, Outstanding Family Award.

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### **Upcoming Advancement Events**

Mrs. Wood outlined several major upcoming events. On December 4, 2025, the University will host Holiday Happenings at the Mansion. Volunteers are completing preparations for 11 themed Christmas trees and seasonal decorations throughout the Mansion as part of a campus-wide holiday celebration.

On December 5, 2025, the Advancement team will partner with the Music Department to host the annual Choral Flourish event, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Harry M. Cornell Complex and transitioning to St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church at 7:30 p.m. The event will bring together Lantern Society members, Board members, guests, and supporters for an evening of engagement and student musical performances.

### **Future Planning and Digital Engagement**

Looking ahead, Mrs. Wood reported that planning is underway for the Willcoxon Innovation and Health Sciences Summit, scheduled for March, 2026, with strong early interest already expressed. In addition, University Advancement is enhancing its digital presence through refreshed alumni webpages, a new alumni benefits page, and updated donor-focused web content designed to support storytelling and engagement.

### **Closing Remarks**

Mrs. Wood concluded by noting that University Advancement remains focused on strengthening relationships, nurturing donor confidence, and building momentum that will extend well beyond the current capital campaign. She thanked the Board for its continued leadership and support.

### **Questions:**

There were no questions from the Board.

### **Associate Vice President 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.*

### **Admissions and Enrollment Priorities**

Dr. Hewitt reported that the Admissions and Enrollment Services teams continue to refine processes aimed at strengthening recruitment and retention. Current efforts are focused on stabilizing freshman enrollment, increasing residence hall occupancy, and enhancing the overall student experience.

### **Recruitment Funnel and Outreach Strategies**

Dr. Hewitt noted that a primary objective is to stabilize freshman enrollment while expanding out-of-state recruitment. To strengthen the recruitment funnel, the University is transitioning from transactional outreach to more personalized, data-driven communication. Recruitment messaging emphasizes educational value, post-graduation outcomes, study abroad opportunities, and immersive learning experiences. Additional efforts include promoting the

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vibrancy of campus life and the Joplin community to attract students beyond the four-state region and expanding parent engagement, recognizing parents as key influencers in students' college decision-making processes.

### **Brand Positioning and Messaging**

Dr. Hewitt discussed efforts to reframe the Missouri Southern brand by aligning the University's mission and strengths with messaging that resonates with today's students and parents. Key actions include partnering with industry experts to refine brand messaging with an emphasis on cost, value, and trust. The University is introducing affordability conversations earlier in the recruitment process through transparent cost comparisons, highlighting employment outcomes and earning potential to demonstrate the long-term value of a Missouri Southern degree, and elevating the University's educational excellence and statewide mission through unified, authentic storytelling.

### **Yield Strategy and Financial Wellness Initiatives**

Dr. Hewitt reported that yield strategies are being embedded across recruitment and retention initiatives, with scholarships and financial aid aligned more closely with institutional priorities. Financial wellness efforts have expanded, with default prevention now incorporating proactive financial education focused on early financial literacy, responsible borrowing, and student financial empowerment. These initiatives support student success beyond graduation while protecting the University's federal funding eligibility by mitigating default risk.

### **Commitment to Student Success**

Dr. Hewitt emphasized that all admissions and enrollment initiatives are guided by a shared commitment to student success, from recruitment through graduation.

### **Questions:**

There were no questions from the Board.

### **Deputy Director of Athletics – Mrs. Cori Reid (on behalf of Rob Mallory, Athletic Dir.)**

*Note: Highlights of Mrs. Reid'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 Advisory Committee and Community Engagement**

Mrs. Reid reported on recent activities of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, which includes two representatives from each athletic team as well as representatives from the cheer and dance programs. The committee meets twice monthly and focuses on community service, student-athlete engagement, and leadership development. The Student Athlete Advisory Committee recently organized the annual "Trick-or-Treat So Others Can Eat" food drive, now in its 17th year. Student-athletes created and distributed flyers throughout the community and later collected nonperishable food items for donation to Souls Harbor. The drive is intentionally held in October to support the organization during its highest-need period ahead of the holiday season. This year's effort resulted in the collection of 6,156 food items. Mrs. Reid noted that in prior years, donations typically sustained the food pantry through March, but due to increased

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need, this year's donation is expected to support operations through the beginning of the new year.

### **Cross Country Championships**

Mrs. Reid reported that, for the seventh consecutive year, Missouri Southern hosted the NCAA Division II Central Region Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships at the Tom Rutledge Cross Country Course. This marked the ninth time Missouri Southern has hosted the regional championship in the past 13 seasons and the 13th time overall, which is believed to be the most of any Division II institution. The University will not host the event in 2026 as it rotates to another location, but it is scheduled to return to campus in 2027. Mrs. Reid also noted that two members of the men's cross-country team qualified for the NCAA National Championships and will travel to compete the following week.

### **Men's Basketball Team Recognition**

Mrs. Reid reported that the 1999–2000 Missouri Southern men's basketball team returned to campus in early October following its induction into the Joplin Area Sports Hall of Fame on October 9, 2025. The team completed its season with a 30–3 record, earning both the MIAA regular season and tournament championships, and advanced to the national semifinals, where it lost by a score of 75–74. The following day, team members and coaches attended the Lion Pride Luncheon, where they engaged with student-athletes, community members, and fans. Mrs. Reid noted that the event was well attended and provided an opportunity to celebrate Missouri Southern athletics and shared memories.

### **Upcoming Athletic Events**

Mrs. Reid noted a busy upcoming weekend of home athletic events. The final home football game of the season will take place the following day against Washburn, with kickoff scheduled for 1:00 p.m. The game will also serve as Senior Day, with recognition of senior football student-athletes prior to kickoff. Women's basketball was competing earlier that day, and Missouri Southern is also hosting the MIAA–GAC crossover event for men's basketball, with the first game scheduled for that evening at 7:30 p.m. in Young Gymnasium against Arkansas Tech.

### **Additional Cross Country Event**

In response to a Board question, Mrs. Reid clarified that the cross-country event observed on campus that morning was not hosted by Missouri Southern, but rather the National Christian College Athletic Association Championship, which was being held on the University's course. Four races took place that morning.

### **Questions:**

There were no further questions from the Board.

### **Faculty Senate President – Dr. Nicole Shoaf**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Shoaf'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.*

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### **Faculty Senate Priorities and Engagement**

Dr. Shoaf provided updates on the priorities outlined at the previous Board meeting, noting that Faculty Senate is focused this year on encouraging broader faculty engagement. As part of this effort, Faculty Senate has begun inviting campus partners to present at monthly meetings.

In October, Dr. Rebecca Shriver, Executive Director of International Education, presented updates on her vision for expanding and enhancing international programs. In November, Faustina Abrahams from the Registrar's Office joined Faculty Senate to discuss office updates and to explore opportunities to streamline processes related to the significant volume of academic paperwork handled by her office. Dr. Shoaf reported that in December, Scott Snell from Digital Learning will present on topics including Blackboard support, the Center for Integrated Educational Excellence, and upcoming changes related to ADA Title II web compliance.

### **Course Access and Waitlist Process**

Dr. Shoaf reported that Faculty Senate is working to reduce administrative barriers for students and faculty, with an initial focus on addressing course waitlists. While the University has the technical capacity to manage waitlists more effectively, the challenge lies in establishing a consistent, implementable institutional policy. Faculty Senate is collaborating with campus stakeholders to develop a solution that would improve student access to high-demand courses and reduce the need for manual intervention by faculty and staff.

### **Faculty Communication and Transparency**

Dr. Shoaf reported continued efforts to improve communication between faculty leadership and the broader faculty body. Updates have been made to the management of submissions received through the Faculty Senate online comment form, which has seen increased usage. Faculty members may submit comments either anonymously or with their name attached. A new process has been implemented to ensure that all submitted comments are shared in their entirety and without editing with the full Faculty Senate, reflecting a commitment to transparency.

### **Faculty-Led Academic and Programmatic Initiatives**

Dr. Shoaf highlighted several faculty-driven initiatives in addition to those noted in the Provost's report. The Department of Language and Literature recently opened a new "Book Nook," a reading and book exchange space located in the Annex. The space allows students and faculty to donate books and select new reading materials. A grand opening was held on November 1, 2025. Dr. Shoaf noted that faculty contributions helped support the initiative and encouraged Board members to visit the space.

Dr. Shoaf also reported significant momentum within the pre-law program. Missouri Southern has established a new 3+3 pathway with the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. The program allows students to complete 90 undergraduate credit hours at Missouri Southern, begin law school at UMKC, transfer their first-year law credits back to Missouri Southern to complete their bachelor's degree, and then finish their law degree at UMKC. Dr. Shoaf noted that this pathway provides a cost-effective option for students and represents a

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strong partnership. An official signing ceremony was held on October 23, 2025 attended by the Dean of UMKC Law.

**Pre-Law Program Engagement and Partnerships**

Dr. Shoaf reported strong support from the legal community following the announcement of the UMKC partnership. Four guest speakers participated in pre-law programming during the current month. Local legal professionals have expressed strong interest in engaging with Missouri Southern students, often volunteering their time following the program announcement.

In addition, the local bar association hosted an event on campus earlier in the month and invited Missouri Southern students to attend. Approximately a dozen students participated, and the event provided valuable networking opportunities. Attorneys have since expressed interest in hosting a follow-up event on campus in the spring.

Dr. Shoaf also noted that approximately \$2,500 in LSAT preparation scholarships, provided at no cost through testing companies, will be awarded to students in January as part of continued pre-law program development.

**Board Question and Response**

In response to a Board question regarding the start of the 3+3 pre-law program, Dr. Shoaf confirmed that students may begin participating immediately. While application timelines for law school admission are advanced for those seeking to enroll in the upcoming fall semester, interested students may still apply, and Faculty Senate and advising staff are prepared to support students as they enter the program. Dr. Shoaf concluded her report and offered to answer additional questions.

**Questions:**

There were no further questions from the Board.

**Staff Senate President – Dr. Stephanie Goad**

*Note: Highlights of Dr. Goad'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.*

**Employee Engagement and Community Support**

Dr. Goad reported that Staff Senate is currently supporting the Roary's Gift Express program. At the time of the meeting, 66 children were registered. Staff and faculty are encouraged to select a tag from the tree, scan the QR code on the back, and enter their contact information to sponsor a gift. The Angel Tree is located outside the President's Office on the second floor.

**Staff Policy Review**

Dr. Goad reported that an ad hoc Staff Senate committee is working with the Human Resources Department to review the staff dress code policy. Feedback has been provided and revisions have been made, with the updated policy currently under review by the committee. Once

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finalized, the policy will be forwarded to the President's Cabinet for consideration and approval.

**Staff Communication and Transparency**

Dr. Goad noted that the Staff Senate Communications Committee has developed a system to track comments submitted by staff members. Comments may be submitted anonymously or with a name attached. To promote transparency and accountability, Staff Senate now maintains a shared tracking spreadsheet that reflects when comments are forwarded to the President's Cabinet or other campus leadership and notes any actions taken. Dr. Goad acknowledged that while anonymous comments can limit follow-up, the system allows staff to view progress and outcomes on submissions made.

**Staff Senate Elections**

Dr. Goad reported that the Staff Senate Elections Committee is addressing a vacancy resulting from the departure of a senator who also served as Executive At-Large. At the most recent Staff Senate meeting, an Executive At-Large position was filled to ensure representation on the Executive Committee. Efforts are ongoing to fill the remaining vacant senate position.

**Board Question and Response**

In response to a Board question regarding the number of anonymous comments received, Dr. Goad noted that Staff Senate has recently received approximately three anonymous submissions, with the majority of comments typically submitted with identifying information. Dr. Goad concluded her report and offered to answer questions.

**Questions:**

There were no further questions from the Board.

**Student Senate President – Miss. Morgan Robinson**

*Note: Highlights of Miss Robinson'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 Representative to the Board of Governors**

Miss Robinson reported that Student Senate has received two completed applications for the Student Representative to the Board of Governors. One additional application is needed before the selection process can move forward.

**Student Activities and Homecoming**

Miss Robinson reported that Homecoming activities were recently completed and were well received. The Campus Activities Board hosted a series of events throughout Homecoming week and coordinated decorations that contributed to a festive campus environment for students.

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### **Breast Cancer Awareness Initiatives**

Miss Robinson reported that Student Senate partnered with Dr. Toms earlier in the semester to support Breast Cancer Awareness initiatives. Activities included fundraising through the sale of shirts, bandanas, pins, and other items. Student Senate also hosted a ceremony in partnership with “Hope 4 You”, a local organization that provides breast cancer awareness and mammogram services for underinsured and uninsured women in the Ozarks. Fundraising efforts will conclude with the upcoming Powderpuff event, after which a final fundraising total will be reported.

### **Student Engagement and Feedback**

Miss Robinson reported that Student Senate welcomed several visitors this semester, including State Senator Jill Carter, who attended a Senate meeting, and President Dean Van Galen, who met with Student Senate to discuss areas of interest and questions for student input. In response, Student Senate hosted a “Speak to a Senator” initiative, which included sessions held in the Lion’s Den to gather student feedback on a variety of topics. Additional feedback efforts will continue through online forms and other engagement methods.

### **Support for Student Organizations**

Miss Robinson reported that Student Senate approved multiple appropriations for registered student organizations during the semester. These allocations support student-led programming and initiatives that enhance the educational and co-curricular experience of Missouri Southern students.

### **Questions:**

There were no questions from the Board.

### **Personnel/Compensation Committee – Governor T. Mark Elliott, Chair**

The committee did not meet.

### **Academic Affairs Committee – Governor Mariann Morgan, Chair**

The Academic Affairs Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed several new academic program proposals. Three motions were presented to the Board.

*A motion was made by Governor Morgan to approve the new graduate academic programs as presented and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee, including the Master of Science in Nursing and the Master of Science in Nursing with an Education Emphasis. The motion was seconded by Governor Anita Oplotnik. The motion passed unanimously.*

*A second motion was made by Governor Morgan to approve the new bachelor's degree programs as presented and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee, including the Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging and the Bachelor of Science in Education in General Science. The motion was seconded by Governor Benjamin Rosenberg. The motion passed unanimously.*

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*A third motion was made by Governor Morgan to approve the new undergraduate certificate programs as presented and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee. These programs include the undergraduate certificate in Diagnostic Medical Sonography, the undergraduate certificate in Magnetic Resonance Imaging, the undergraduate certificate in Computed Tomography, the undergraduate certificate in Animal Husbandry, the undergraduate certificate in Entrepreneurship, and the undergraduate certificate in Sports Communication. The motion was seconded by Governor Benjamin Rosenberg. The motion passed unanimously.*

There was no additional business from the Academic Affairs Committee.

**Budget & Audit – Governor Michael Seibert, Chair**

The Budget & Audit Committee met prior to the Board meeting and addressed two agenda items.

**FY25 External Audit**

Governor Seibert reported that the committee reviewed the fiscal year 2025 audit and approved moving it forward for Board consideration. He invited representatives from Forvis Mazars to present the audit.

Ryan Sivill from Forvis Mazars reported that the firm issued an unmodified opinion on the University's financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, indicating that the statements are free from material misstatement and fairly presented in accordance with applicable accounting standards. It was noted that the audit packet is shorter than in prior years due to the pending issuance of the federal compliance supplement, which governs the audit of major federal programs.

Ryan Sivill explained that while many compliance procedures have already been completed based on draft guidance, the final compliance report related to federal programs cannot be issued until the Office of Management and Budget releases the finalized federal compliance supplement. The formal due date for the compliance portion of the audit is March 31, 2026, and based on prior experience, an extension may be granted if the supplement release is further delayed. Absent significant changes in federal requirements, the firm anticipates issuing the final compliance report within a few weeks of the supplement's release.

It was further noted that the audit report and related communications satisfy current State of Missouri reporting requirements, including preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The financial statements required no audit adjustments, providing assurance that financial information presented to the Board throughout the year was materially accurate. Significant changes in the financial statements primarily reflect progress on the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center, including construction in progress and related state capital appropriations.

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**Fiscal Year 2025 Short-Form Audit**

*A motion was made by Governor Seibert to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Short-Form Audit, as presented by Forvis Mazars. The motion was seconded by Governor T. Mark Elliott. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Residence Life Rate Increase**

Governor Seibert reported that the committee also reviewed proposed residence life rate increases. The proposal includes a 3% increase to housing rates and a 4% increase to meal plan rates.

*A motion was made by Governor Seibert to approve the fiscal year 2027 residence life rates as presented. The motion was seconded by Governor Alison Hershewe, who noted that Ms. Linda Eis had explained the basis and calculations supporting the proposed increases. The motion passed unanimously.*

There was no additional business from the Budget & Audit Committee.

**Old Business**

Chairman Haley asked if there was any old business to come before the Board. There was none.

**New Business**

Chairman Haley opened the floor for new business.

**Board Secretary Transition**

Chairman Haley noted a transition in the role of Board Secretary and invited Dr. Van Galen to provide an introduction. Dr. Van Galen expressed appreciation to Brittany Castell for her exemplary service as Interim Board Secretary during a period of transition. He then welcomed Diana Follmer, Executive Assistant to the President, and noted her willingness to serve as Secretary to the Board of Governors if approved.

*A motion was made by Governor Anita Oplotnik to appoint Diana Follmer as Secretary to the Board of Governors. The motion was seconded by Governor Rodney Hendricks. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Future Meeting Dates**

Chairman Haley reminded Board members of upcoming dates noted on the agenda. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is set for January 9, 2026. Chairman Haley also reminded members that December includes commencement ceremonies and encouraged Board members to mark their calendars for graduation on December 13, 2025, with ceremonies scheduled for 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. In addition, Board members were reminded of the Board retreat scheduled for December 4, 2025.

There was no additional business brought before the Board.

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
Board of Governors Meeting Minutes  
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**Adjournment**

*A motion to adjourn was made by Governor Benjamin Rosenberg and seconded by Governor Anita Oplotnik. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.*

Board Chair:



Board Secretary:

