



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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DR. DEAN VAN GALEN

PRESIDENT

Governor Kehoe Visits Campus for Compass Academy Network Event



On February 9, Governor Mike Kehoe visited campus to highlight the work of the Compass Academy Network, an educational nonprofit dedicated to fostering growth, learning and social development through immersive summer enrichment programs for middle school students in underserved rural communities.

During the event, the university announced that the Joplin Compass Academy will be

held on the MSSU campus in summer 2026. The program will provide middle school students with a dynamic learning environment and an opportunity to experience life on a university campus.

The university is grateful for its partnership with Compass Academy Network and its founder and CEO, Debra Humphreys.

Lions Forward Campaign Surpasses Milestone and Continues



The Lions Forward Campaign is the most ambitious fundraising campaign in our university's history. At the end of January, we reached a milestone in the campaign as we surpassed the \$42.7 million campaign goal. This was achieved with 17 months remaining in the five-year campaign.

We are grateful to those who have invested in our mission, we also appreciate the partnership with the Missouri Southern Foundation and the staff and volunteers who have supported the campaign. Charitable support of student scholarships continues to represent the largest donor designation of gifts, totaling \$16 million. The Lions Forward Campaign will continue through June of 2027, as scheduled, as we continue to ask for philanthropic support from our alumni and friends.

MSSU 3D Printed Cadaver Heart Takes Flight at Medical Drone Event



In collaboration with Valkyrie UAS Solutions and the Joplin Regional Alliance for Health, the university hosted an event on January 23 to explore the use of long-range drones to improve access to and quality of health care in rural areas.

The initiative is centered on a proposal for Valkyrie UAS Solutions to establish a Joplin Rural Healthcare Drone Hub. A highlight of the event was a drone demonstration in which the “cargo” was a 3D-printed human heart produced on campus at the Missouri 3D Printing Center for Precision Health.

Southwest Missouri Day in Jefferson City

Missouri Southern will have a prominent presence at the Southwest Missouri “Day at the Capitol” event in Jefferson City on April 21. The event will take place at the Capitol Plaza Hotel from 6-8:30 p.m. State elected officials and other leaders will be able to learn more about the dynamic region of our state and the organizations, including MSSU, that serve as a driver for progress. Missouri Southern will highlight its expanded statewide mission through engaging and interactive displays.

Plans Underway for Grand Opening of Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center



The grand opening and ribbon cutting of the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center will take place on August 13, at 10 a.m. We look forward to welcoming state and community leaders to celebrate the formal opening of this transformational facility.

Our Mission Personified

It is always inspiring to see the impact that our university has on the lives of our students. We challenge students to learn and grow, we support them when they face challenges, and we celebrate their success.



In January, we hosted a dinner event in Washington, D.C. to update our alumni and friends on the progress of the university. One of our alumni guests was Delia Gilbert, a non-traditional student who in 2020 successfully completed her degree in environmental health and safety. Delia had high praise for the program and our faculty, especially Dr. Teresa Boman. Delia told me that she now has her dream job as an environmental health officer at the U.S. Public Health Service and will continue to be an enthusiastic ambassador for Missouri Southern. Delia is just one of countless examples of how our university makes a difference in the lives of individuals and in the broader world.

DR. LISA TOMS

PROVOST / VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

Dress to Impress



The 12th Annual Dress to Impress event was held on Feb. 25 and set a record with 445 students and alumni served. Volunteers assisted with sorting, sizing, folding and hanging clothing, as well as serving as shopping assistants during the event.

Special thanks to Alex Gandy, the Student Success Center staff and all other volunteers for making this opportunity a success for students.

Public Safety and Forensics Institute



The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the MSSU Public Safety and Forensics Institute was held Feb. 26. The immersive learning center provides students with hands-on experience using drones, 3D scanning equipment, handheld alternate light sources and other forensic and law enforcement technologies for training.

Performing Arts



MSSU Performing Arts has launched a collaboration with Connect2Culture, adding the Southern at the Cornell series to its established Concert Series and Recital Series.

The new series featured "An American Love Song" on Feb. 14, with Glenda Austin, adjunct faculty member and accompanist, performing alongside several vocal students. The series continued Feb. 21 with "Love Letters," a choral performance by Concert Chorale.

History Through Games



Dr. Bill Fischer is bringing immersive learning and engagement to his course, "History Through Games." Students assumed the roles of diplomats at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference, negotiating a treaty based on the interests of the historical figures they portrayed. Throughout the remainder of the semester, students will play and critically evaluate historical tabletop games, assessing their accuracy in representing topics ranging from the Tokugawa Shogunate to the Watergate scandal.

Social Work



MSSU's Social Work Honor Society inducted nine new members Feb. 10. The new inductees represent the top 35% of their social work cohorts and will join fellow members in service and leadership activities.

The department will use awarded Lion Fee funding to provide social work majors with an immersive learning opportunity at LEAD Advocacy Day on March 4 in Jefferson City. Each year, mental health professionals gather at the state Capitol to build relationships with legislators, discuss key policy issues and network with Missouri human service leaders.

MSSU Teacher Education Annual Performance Report



Missouri Southern's Annual Performance Report to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shows the university's program exceeds the state average in all nine areas of the Missouri Educator Evaluation System. Program completers have increased 32% since 2022, compared with a 15.6% decrease statewide.

The growth is due to the work of the Teacher Education faculty, professional semester orientation and training for students, university supervisors and cooperating teachers, strong partnerships with P-12 and campus partners, and immersive learning experiences. Those experiences include principal chats, mock individualized education programs, and simulated parent-teacher phone calls and conferences.

Environmental Health and Safety

The Environmental Health and Safety program received reaffirmation as a Qualified Academic Program by the Board of Certified Safety Professionals, allowing students to earn the Graduate Safety Practitioner designation upon graduation.

Spring 2026 Nursing Cohort



The Spring 2026 Nursing cohort is off to a strong start, with 18 applicants and 18 admitted students, reflecting continued interest and growth in the program. There are currently 55 students in the BSN program. Seniors who will graduate in May are applying for licensure in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas. This reflects the program's geographic reach. The MSN has been approved by MDHEWD and HLC. The program website is live, and information requests from prospective students are being received.

Kinesiology

In Kinesiology, Dr. Alasmar and Dr. Theiss attended the Central States meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine. Eisha Alam and three classmates were awarded a research grant for their work with the PENDL, and their research was highlighted in the Joplin Globe. In addition, another MKEAP student working with Dr. Alasmar had an abstract accepted for presentation at the national American College of Sports Medicine conference in June.

LINDA EIS

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

During the week of Feb. 23, the President's Cabinet hosted six sessions for faculty and staff to provide information on the development of the university's Fiscal Year 2027 budget. The sessions were well attended, and the information shared spoke of our mission and our commitment to students. We also provided foundational knowledge regarding credit hours across a variety of student populations.

The overview provided categories of university resources and operating expenditures. Tuition and state appropriations are our most significant sources of revenue. Our largest expenditure is compensation as an investment in our employees that provide support and investment in our students.

We will continue to provide updates and engagement as we build the fiscal year budget.

Facilities Plan Advisory Task Force

The Facilities Plan Advisory Task Force began their work last fall. They have done tremendous work gathering information and providing a report to President's Cabinet that outlines projects and initiatives, including priority projects, as well as identification of opportunities to reduce our active footprint and increase energy efficiency. President's Cabinet reviewed and prioritized projects for presentation to the Board. This plan will provide a critical roadmap that will span multiple years based on our current understanding of needs and resources.

Members of the task force

- Dr. Julie Wengert (Chair)
- Jeff Boman
- Jimmie Collins
- Dr. Megan Douglas
- Dr. Zak Watson
- Dr. Zack Rice
- Cori Reid
- Lisa O'Hanahan
- Scott Snell
- Abby Morris
- Madyson Fox/Jason VanMill
- Linda Eis (ex-officio/PC liaison)



Facilities

Dianne Mayes Student Life Center Lower-Level

The Dianne Mayes Student Life Center lower-level project has been awarded to Construction Services Group (CSG). Renovation of the space began on March 9, 2026, with anticipated completion in August 2026.

The architectural rendering is of the game hall.

Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center



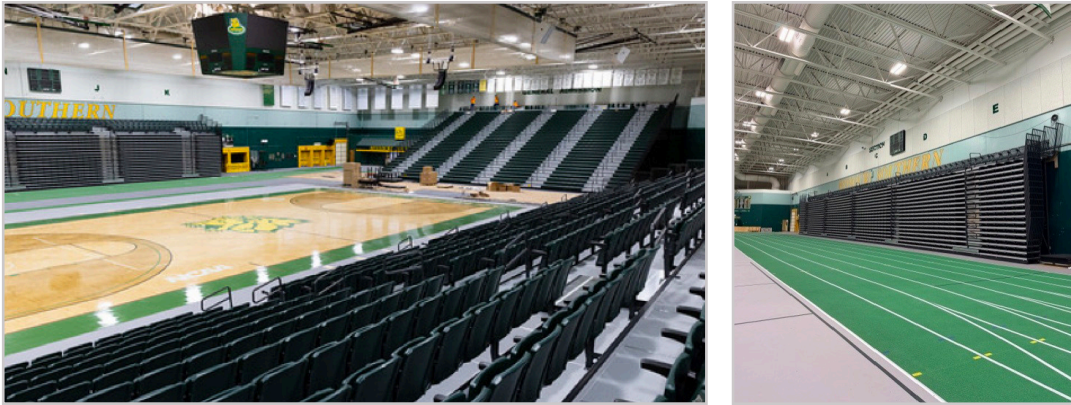
Current work in progress includes interior construction finishes, wall graphics, signage, completion of ceiling tiles, and equipment installation. Substantial completion is anticipated by the end of March. We will conduct a walkthrough of the facility and begin developing punch list items.

In April, additional equipment installation and finishing of interior construction will take place, along with further landscaping and exterior work. Critical inspections will also be performed, and punch list items will be addressed.

Through May and June, equipment delivery and installation will continue, furniture will arrive, and additional signage and artwork will be installed.



Leggett & Platt



Phase 1 of the Leggett & Platt project is nearing completion. The new basketball court flooring will be installed soon. Once installed, the floor requires four weeks of curing time before it can be used. The indoor track is complete. Bleacher installation is nearly finished, with only a few final touches remaining. We look forward to commencement returning to this facility for the spring 2026 ceremonies.

Phase 2 of the project is moving forward thanks to a generous philanthropic gift for this facility. This phase will include painting, installation of a new videoboard and sound system, new scorer tables, and updates to the restrooms.

Financial Statements

Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending Feb. 28, 2026.



MICHELLE WOOD

INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

LIONS FORWARD CAMPAIGN – FUNDRAISING UPDATES



As of the end of January, the Lions Forward fundraising campaign has raised \$42,756,924 toward our \$42.7 million goal. This represents 100.13% of the campaign's overall goal, with one year and four months remaining in the timeline.

Progress by Campaign Priority:

Enhancing Student Experience:

- Goal – \$15,000,000
- Raised – \$22,157,283
- 148% of Goal

Building the Campus of the Future:

- Goal – \$8,500,000
- Raised – \$7,596,350
- 89% of Goal

Fostering Academic Excellence:

- Goal – \$8,000,000
- Raised – \$8,564,973
- 107% of Goal

Total Dollars Raised:

- Goal – \$42,700,000
- Raised – \$42,756,924

As of January 31, there have been:

11 Commitments of \$1 Million+
319 Commitments of \$25,000+
3,275 Individual campaign donors
509 Major Gift Solicitations



Alumni Gathering in Washington D.C.



Missouri Southern hosted an alumni gathering at Old Ebbitt Grill in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 17. The event welcomed a full room of alumni and friends for an evening of connection and fellowship. President Dr. Dean Van Galen gave a presentation highlighting recent institutional progress, mission statement expansion initiatives, and future priorities. The evening reinforced the strength and reach of Missouri Southern's alumni community in the D.C. and surrounding area.

100 Years of Mission Hills



Director of Alumni and Donor Relations Abi Almandinger has met with the Alumni Board to establish strategic goals and continues to work collaboratively to plan additional events in celebration of the 100-year anniversary of Mission Hills.

Leadership Annual Giving

Prospective donors with a leadership giving capacity of \$1,000–\$24,999 have been identified through DonorSearch screening. This group includes 2,653+ unassigned constituents who historically have not received the same level of intentional cultivation as higher-capacity donors.

Development has launched a focused initiative to engage and qualify this segment through targeted outreach and streamlined cultivation efforts. This new emphasis expands the mid-level donor base, strengthens the future major gift pipeline, and supports sustainable philanthropic growth.

Annual Giving Challenge

In just seven days, the Lion Pride Giving Challenge raised \$91,477 from 334 donors, demonstrating the power of focused messaging and matched giving to drive participation and momentum. Beyond the dollars, this campaign strengthened engagement across our community — supporting athletics, art, music, and theater — and expanded our pipeline for future annual and major giving.

MAJOR GIFT OFFICER



Brandon Myers serves as the director of Development for Missouri Southern, bringing a deep-rooted connection to the institution and a proven history of service, leadership, and relationship-building.

A proud Missouri Southern alumnus, Brandon earned his Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication in 2004 and later completed a Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion and Wellness in 2014. He also holds a master's degree in athletic training from the University of Arkansas.

WILLCOXON INNOVATION IN HEALTH SCIENCES SUMMIT

Planning continues for the Willcoxon Innovation in Health Sciences Summit, scheduled for March 27. This signature event will bring together leaders and practitioners to examine the future of healthcare. As of Feb. 18, 276 individuals have registered to attend. An increase in participation from area healthcare providers is anticipated as promotion begins for the complimentary Continuing Education credits approved by both the American Association for Respiratory Care and the American Society of Radiologic Technologists.

WEB & DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Recent efforts have focused on modernizing Missouri Southern's website, including enhancements to alumni and donor-facing pages to improve engagement and consistency. In partnership with Crescendo Interactive, the university is finalizing a redesigned estate giving website with clearer legacy giving pathways. Preparation is also underway to meet updated ADA Title II requirements effective April 24, ensuring compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standards.

STATEWIDE MISSION EXPANSION

Explore Boldly. Care Deeply. Impact Globally.

Lisa O'Hanahan and Abby Morris serve as co-chairs of the Statewide Mission Expansion Committee, leading efforts to advance awareness and engagement surrounding Missouri Southern's expanded statewide mission. The committee's work supports institutional priorities including donor engagement, strategic partnerships, and student recruitment. A comprehensive communications toolkit is being developed to ensure consistent messaging through roadshows, campus presentations, and outreach to schools, healthcare partners, and community leaders. Broad campus representation continues to support alignment and shared understanding as implementation moves forward.

DR. SHELLIE HEWITT

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

META MAJOR INITIATIVE

To strengthen Fall 2026 enrollment outcomes, several coordinated initiatives are underway spanning both recruitment and student success efforts. These strategies are designed not only to increase new student enrollment, but also to support persistence and retention once students' matriculate.



A primary focus area is the intentional promotion of Missouri Southern's Meta Majors framework to prospective students and their families. National research indicates that a growing number of high school students are uncertain about their intended major. This uncertainty often creates anxiety, leading some students to delay enrollment or opt out of college altogether.

Through Title III grant support, Missouri Southern has implemented a structured Meta Majors model that allows students to explore broad academic pathways before committing to a specific program. This approach reduces pressure at the point of entry and provides students with greater clarity regarding academic and career options available at MSSU.

To maximize impact, admissions counselors are being equipped with comprehensive training on the value and structure of Meta Majors, ensuring they can clearly articulate the benefits during recruitment conversations. The initiative does not conclude at admission; rather, it transitions intentionally into continued Meta Major advising through the Student Success Center. This coordinated partnership between the Office of Admissions and the Student Success Center ensures continuity of messaging, high-quality academic advising, and sustained student support.

By aligning recruitment strategy with structured exploratory advising, Missouri Southern is positioning itself to increase both enrollment growth and first-year retention for Fall 2026 and beyond.

DUAL CREDIT INITIATIVES

While the matriculation rate of dual credit students enrolling as first-time freshmen continues to improve, we are intentionally strengthening our recruitment strategy for this population to further increase conversion.

Key initiatives include expanded classroom visits and a refined communication plan featuring updated email and text message campaigns that clearly articulate the advantages of continuing at MSSU after high school graduation. Messaging is strategically focused on value, continuity, and academic momentum.

*You've already started.
Finish strong at*
MISSOURI SOUTHERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

- ✓ Simplified admissions process
- ✓ Small class sizes
- ✓ Supportive campus community
- ✓ Career focused from day one
- ✓ Global experience, hometown atmosphere
- ✓ Learning by doing




Fill out this short form and we'll complete the application for you!

Parent engagement is also a priority. New targeted mailers have been developed to highlight the financial, academic, and experiential benefits of completing a degree at Missouri Southern. These communications reinforce the return on investment and the advantages of maintaining academic progress within a familiar institution.

Additionally, we are deepening outreach to high school instructors who teach MSSU dual credit courses. We recognize that strong relationships with

these educators are essential to student continuation. Our efforts emphasize appreciation, partnership, and ongoing collaboration to ensure dual credit teachers feel valued and connected to the university.

Collectively, these initiatives are designed to strengthen dual credit conversion, enhance stakeholder engagement, and create a seamless pathway from high school coursework to full-time enrollment at MSSU.

REIMAGINING LION PRIDE VISIT DAYS



Lion Pride Visit Days serves as Missouri Southern's premier recruitment event for prospective students and their families. As the university advances its expanded statewide mission and celebrates the opening of the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center and the new Welcome Center, this signature experience must evolve accordingly.

The goal is to elevate Lion Pride Visit Days from a traditional campus tour event to a high-impact, mission-driven recruitment experience that highlights immersive learning, student engagement, and

academic opportunity. Therefore, in addition to our regular opening session welcome, admissions and financial aid presentations, our goal is to implement the following:

Strategic Enhancements for the Upcoming Year

1. Expanded Academic Breakout Sessions

Leverage Saturday programming to offer deeper, discipline-specific experiences. These sessions would move beyond general overviews and instead provide immersive academic tours, faculty interaction, and hands-on exposure to facilities—particularly in high-interest areas such as health and life sciences.

2. Comprehensive Student Resource Panel

Host a structured Q&A featuring key student support offices to demonstrate institutional alignment around student success. Potential participants include Student Activities, Student Success Center, Registrar, Residence Life, Bursar, and International Education. This panel reinforces that support systems are proactive, accessible, and integrated.

3. Student Engagement Showcase and Student Panel

Create a visible, high-energy student presence that allows prospective students to interact directly with campus leaders and organizations. This may include Greek Life, Campus Activities Board (CAB), Student Senate, and Registered Student Organizations (RSOs).

A complementary student panel would provide authentic peer perspectives on campus life, academic transition, and involvement.

4. Intentional Closing Experience

Conclude the day with a structured send-off that reinforces belonging and next steps. This would include a formal closing message, clear calls to action, distribution of a branded take-home gift bag, and a final opportunity for individual questions.

By strengthening academic immersion, showcasing student life, and formalizing the closing experience, Lion Pride Visit Days can more fully reflect Missouri Southern's mission expansion while driving increased yield and enrollment momentum.



ROB MALLORY

DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

NCAA CONVENTION RECAP

The 2026 NCAA Convention took place Jan. 13–16 in Washington, D.C., at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center. Division II members were scheduled to vote on a legislative proposal that would allow student-athletes to participate in five seasons of competition.

During the convention, the Division II Executive Board recommended referring the proposal back to the governance structure for further evaluation and consideration. The board cited feedback from the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and NCAA legal counsel in making its recommendation, which was approved by the membership. Current eligibility rules will remain in place, with the possibility of another proposal coming forward at the 2027 or 2028 convention.

The membership also approved using the NCAA Power Index as the sole metric for NCAA championship selections in team sports, effective for the 2026-27 academic year. Additionally, the membership voted to establish women's flag football as an emerging sport for women, including minimum contest requirements (12), maximum contest limits (24), and scholarship limits (10).

WINTER SPORTS RECAP



Both the men's and women's basketball teams have exceeded preseason MIAA expectations. The men were projected to finish 13th in the conference by both media and coaches, while the women were picked seventh by coaches and ninth by media.

The men earned the No. 7 seed in the MIAA tournament with a 10-9 conference record. Guards Gavyn Elkamil, Collin Ruffin and Jaden Taylor earned All-MIAA honorable mention honors.

The women finished 13-6 in conference play to earn the No. 4 seed in the MIAA tournament. Guard Grace Frazier and forward Ashlyn Alloway earned All-MIAA second-team honors, while guard Nariah Clay was named All-MIAA honorable mention.



The men's and women's track and field teams finished third and fifth, respectively, at the MIAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Pittsburg, Kansas. The Lions claimed five individual championships over the two-day event.

Gold medalists included Gabe Ford (men's weight throw), Dailynn VanDeren (women's shot put and weight throw), Ayden Walton (men's long jump) and Cedric Pearson (men's shot put).

Ten MSSU track and field student-athletes qualified for the NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field National Championship, which will be held March 13–14 in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

SOFTBALL OFF TO A FAST START



The softball team is off to one of the best starts in program history, with a 19-3 record at the time of this report. The Lions are ranked No. 8 nationally by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association.

Infielder Katie Gray broke both the career home run and runs-batted-in records, and head coach Hallie Blackney earned her 200th career victory earlier this season.

LION PRIDE GIVING CHALLENGE

The Athletic Department, in coordination with the Development Office and Missouri Southern Foundation, conducted its third annual Lion Pride Giving Challenge Feb. 23–March 2. Each athletic program set a goal and identified a priority or project to fund. Driven largely by social media, the campaign drew 324 donors who contributed \$83,012 to support student-athletes. The Lion Pride Giving Challenge has now raised more than \$300,000 from over 800 gifts across the first three campaigns.

