



# BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## R E P O R T

S E P T E M B E R 1 2 , 2 0 2 5

# DR. DEAN VAN GALEN

## PRESIDENT

### A GREAT SUMMER AND START TO THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

Summer was a busy time on the Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) campus. During Southern Kickoff sessions in June and July, we welcomed over 300 new students and their families, helping them to prepare for the fall semester. Special thanks go to the Student Success Center team and representatives from academic programs from across campus for providing support for our new Lions.

Over the past four months, we also welcomed more than 1,000 K-12 students to campus through a variety of camps, including Science to Jobs academies for middle and high school students and the Lifetime Sports Academy, now in its 29th year. These programs represent vital community outreach.

On the international front, over 100 MSSU students enjoyed study abroad experiences this summer ranging from the study of the history of medicine and anatomy in Italy, to delving into Olympic history and cultural influences on activity and diet in Germany, Austria, and France. These transformational experiences are made possible through the efforts of our faculty and staff.



### NEW UNIVERSITY LEADERS



Two individuals are in new leadership roles at MSSU. Since July 1, **Michelle Wood** has served as interim vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the Missouri Southern Foundation. Michelle, a 1992 alumna, brings a diverse background in education, nonprofit leadership, corporate work, a successful track record as a fundraising professional and advancement leader.

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Dr. Rebecca Shriver

As the result of a national search, **Dr. Rebecca Shriver** began her new role on August 1 as Missouri Southern's executive director of international education. Dr. Shriver earned a PhD in European History from Florida State University and, for the past seven years, has been an outstanding Missouri Southern faculty member and leader in international education. Dr. Shriver will work to broaden international education opportunities on campus, lead the themed semester activities, and play a key role in our global partnerships.

## RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING FACULTY



On August 21, we hosted an event at the Alumni Mansion to recognize the 13 faculty members approved for promotion and/or tenure in June by the Board of Governors. Several Board members were able to join the event as we celebrated a milestone in the careers of some of our outstanding faculty. The faculty members recognized have positively impacted the lives of hundreds of MSSU students!

## EXPANDED STATEWIDE MISSION

On July 9 at the Missouri State Capitol, Gov. Mike Kehoe signed Senate Bill 150 (SB150) and Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 (SCR3), expanding the university's statewide mission to include health and life sciences and immersive learning experiences. This builds on the university's original statewide mission of international education, established 30 years ago, and marks an important milestone in its history.

For a public university in Missouri, a statewide mission signifies recognition of a strategic focus on areas where the university demonstrates strong expertise, areas that are vital not only to the institution itself, but also to the region it serves and the state as a whole.

The signing of SB150 and SCR3 is a recognition—but more importantly, it is an opportunity to better define our future.



## LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR



### West Africa Semester

The university can look forward to an exciting year ahead that includes the West Africa themed semester, continued progress on the Lions Forward Campaign, expansion of academic programs including the addition of a second nursing cohort, and cheering on our over 400 student athletes. The campus will also see physical transformations with the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center scheduled for completion in Summer 2026, and major renovations of the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center and the Student Life Center also set to be completed by summer.

**Missouri Southern State University educates and graduates  
knowledgeable, responsible, successful global citizens.**



# DR. LISA TOMS

## PROVOST / VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



Academic Affairs welcomed 17 new faculty members during a new faculty orientation event on Aug. 12. The daylong event introduced new hires to multiple campus units that provide services to students and faculty. The following day, Aug. 13, faculty gathered for the annual All-Faculty Welcome Back event, where several faculty and academic departments were recognized for outstanding achievements.

Professor of History **Dr. Megan Bever** received the Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence for Spring 2025. Outstanding Teacher awards were presented to Professor of Psychology **Dr. Holly Hackett** and Professor of Biology **Dr. Donna Johnson**. Associate Professor of Biology **Dr. Victoria Rhodes** earned the Outstanding Advisor Award.

Research Excellence awards went to Dr. Bever and Professor of Kinesiology **Dr. Andrea Cullers**. Writing Excellence Awards were presented to Clinical Instructor of Nursing **Jessica Cooper** and Assistant Professor of Data Analytics **Dr. Shantanu Awasthi**.

The Department of Psychology was recognized with the Outstanding Six-Year Program Review Award, and the Department of Social Science received the Three-Year Program Review Award. Additionally, 30 faculty members received years-of-service awards, representing more than 330 combined years of service.

### COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE



**DesiRay Laidler**, an art education student, will host a solo exhibition at the Urban Art Gallery in downtown Joplin from Sept. 4 to Sept. 30.

**Kiran Patton**, a history and anthropology student, was accepted into the 2025 Kansas Archeology Training Program Field School. He earned a scholarship to spend a week in June at the Mount Aeolia Ruins in Lecompton, Kansas. He worked with Professor of Anthropology Dr. Jill Greer to enhance the experience into an experiential learning opportunity.

**Amy Carr**, a history major, served as an intern at Crowder College all summer, working to install the Smithsonian's Voices and Votes exhibit. Carr researched and created supplemental exhibits in Neosho and Newton County that link to the national exhibit. The exhibit ran until Sept. 8.

Dr. Bever and Assistant Professor of History **Dr. Will Mountz** accompanied students to the Association of Missouri Interpreters (AMI) annual meeting held on Sept. 7 and 8 in Springfield, Missouri. Students attended immersive sessions focused on professional development in public interpretation.

Two students, **Miriah Million** and Amy Carr, presented research on the Joplin Tornado Project during the conference. Carr was also awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from AMI in recognition of her extensive interpretive work.



Meanwhile, MSSU's **Social Work** Program is partnering with the university's Counseling Center to develop a group therapy room in Billingsly Student Center Room 356. The project, part of the Lion Fee Immersive Learning initiative, will provide senior social work students with hands-on experience co-leading psychoeducation groups.

The peer support groups will focus on topics such as stress management and social connection skills. Open to students of all majors, the initiative aims to address common college stressors and support student retention.

Enrollment for the **Missouri Southern Career and Academic Pathways (MOSO CAPS)** program has increased to 83 students for the 2025-2026 academic year, up 20% from last year's total of 69 students. The current enrollment includes 70 new students and 13 returning for a second year. This marks significant growth compared to just 43 students in 2022-2023.



The program boasts partnerships with over 190 industry leaders and facilitated 314 student placements during the fall semester. Enrollment by strand includes 53 students in Health Sciences, 14 in Business, and 16 in Human Services.

MSSU's **Honors Program** was recognized with the Highest Engagement Award at the 2025 Suitable Pathways to Student Development conference. This marks the fourth consecutive year the program has received this honor. Over the past two years, the program has achieved a 100% student engagement rate, positively impacting student retention and campus vitality.

## COLLEGE OF HEALTH, LIFE SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION

An interdisciplinary research collaboration is underway between the Departments of **Biology**, **Environmental Health and Safety**, and **Kinesiology**, sponsored by Assistant Professor of Kinesiology **Dr. Rawsam Alasmari**. The project involves seven students from the **MSSU-KCU Early Acceptance Program (MKEAP)** program working on a novel research initiative using the PENDL—a swing-like device used in various exercise and therapeutic modalities.

As a result of this innovative work, one student has received a prestigious research grant from the Central States American College of Sports Medicine (CSACSM). Only two undergraduate-level grants were awarded, with **Eisha Alam**, a MKEAP biomedical sciences junior, named as one of the recipients.

Meanwhile, the Department of **Allied Health** is proud to report strong licensure exam pass rates for its May 2025 graduates:

- **Radiologic Technology:** 100% first-time pass rate
- **Dental Hygiene:** 100% first-time pass rate
- **Respiratory Therapy:** 75% first-time pass rate
- **EMT Spring 2025:** 85% overall pass rate for those who have completed testing
- **Paramedic Class of 2025:** 100% first-time pass rate

In addition, the May 2025 nursing cohort achieved a 100% first-time pass rate for the third consecutive year.

On Aug. 15, 24 students participated in the MKEAP Green Coat Ceremony. The 2025 cohort consisted of 20 premed students and four predental students.

Additionally, the **Lion Co-op Center for Nutrition Security** was awarded \$2,000 from the Corley Foundation to fund "Break Bags." These bags of non-perishable food items will be placed in strategic locations on campus for students that are in need of food during times that the Lion Co-op and cafeteria are closed. MSSU was also awarded a \$42,000 grant from the Region M. Waste Management District to enhance its campus recycling program. The initiative aims to improve accessibility, efficiency, and participation among students, faculty, and staff.

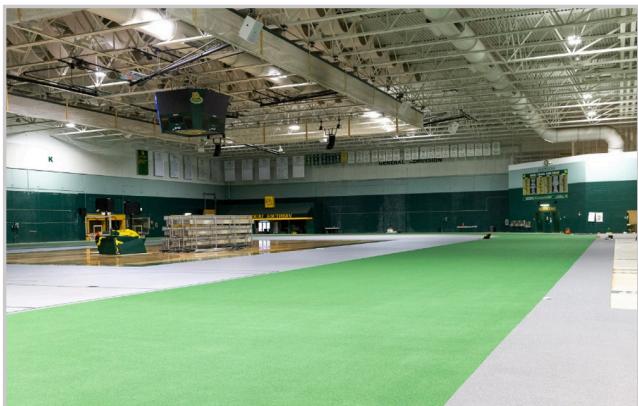


# LINDA EIS

## CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

### AUDIT FISCAL YEAR 2025

The fiscal year 2025 audit is proceeding according to schedule. Auditors have completed on-site fieldwork for finance and compliance, including student financial aid and federal grants. The annual federal compliance supplement has not yet been released; this document provides guidance for reviewing federal programs. The review for financial aid was conducted using the previous year's compliance supplement, as most criteria are expected to remain unchanged. Over the next two months, schedules, the report narrative, footnotes and financial statements will be prepared. We remain on track to present the audit at the November Board of Governors meeting.



### LEGGETT & PLATT ATHLETIC CENTER

All bleachers have been removed from the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center. The new indoor track highlighting the competition surface is installed, with striping recently completed. Installation of new bleachers will begin in the coming weeks, with completion anticipated by mid-January 2026.



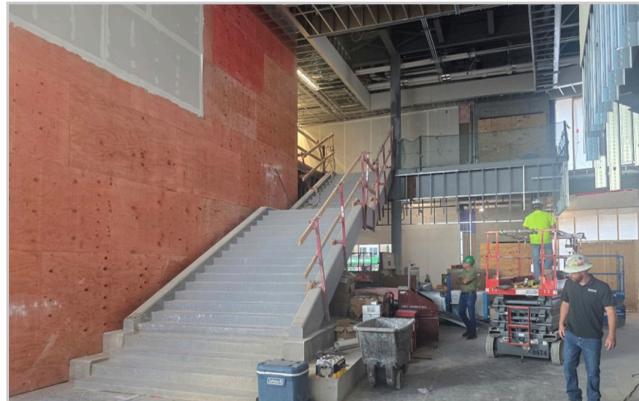
### DIANNE MAYES STUDENT LIFE CENTER LOWER-LEVEL

Significant upgrades to the Dianne Mayes Student Life Center are planned, based on current discussions with architects and student input. Enhancements include new flooring, ceilings, lighting, paint, furniture, and entertainment options such as pool tables, ping pong, video games, and an upgraded movie room.

## ROY BLUNT HEALTH SCIENCE INNOVATION CENTER

The Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center remains on budget and on schedule, with exterior work progressing rapidly. Construction of the exterior retaining wall is currently underway. Although the building will soon appear nearly complete from the outside, significant interior work is ongoing. Crews are actively working on ceilings, walls, some painting and flooring.

The transformation from architectural renderings to physical structure continues to take shape. Below are images of the grand staircase, shown both in its original design and in its current stage of construction.



## GEORGE A. SPIVA LIBRARY

The George A. Spiva Library has undergone significant renovations including new flooring, furnishings, paint and improved testing and study rooms. The facility reopened on September 2.

## FACILITIES PLAN ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Resources have been committed over the last several years to projects across campus. It is important to recognize that there remain important facility needs and opportunities. Facilitated by the Facilities Plan Advisory Task Force; a plan will be developed to outline projects and initiatives that may need to be made during a three-year period. The task force will identify priority projects of \$250,000 or more that could realistically be initiated or completed in the next three years. They will also explore specific opportunities for reducing the active campus footprint and increasing energy efficiency.

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## 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
- Linda Eis (ex-officio/PC liaison)

## FLOWPATH FACILITY MANAGEMENT

The new Facility Services work order request system, FlowPath, launched July 1, 2025. In the first two months, over 1,100 requests were submitted. Key features include assignment and tracking of requests, streamlined process and prompt continuous communication throughout the life of each request.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending August 31, 2025.



# MICHELLE WOOD

## INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

### LIONS FORWARD CAMPAIGN



As of the end of August 2025, the Lions Forward fundraising campaign raised a current total of \$40,017,756 of our \$42.7 million goal. This represents 94% of the campaign's overall goal being received with one year and 10 months remaining in the timeline.

#### Progress by Campaign Priority:

##### Enhancing Student Experience:

- Goal - \$15,000,000
- Raised - \$19,999,723
- 133% of Goal

##### Fostering Academic Excellence:

- Goal - \$8,000,000
- Raised – \$7,011,846
- 88% of Goal

##### Building the Campus of the Future:

- Goal - \$8,500,000
- Raised - \$7,089,525
- 83% of Goal

##### Undesignated Commitments:

- Raised - \$5,916,662

To date, 57% of total campaign dollars raised have come from cash, stock, and pledges, while the remaining 43% represents estate gift commitments. We have 11 commitments of \$1 million plus, 300 commitments of \$25,000 plus, 3,056 individual campaign donors, and 508 major gift solicitations.

### TELEVISION ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

The first of three television spots premiered on July 28 and will air for approximately one month. This ad spotlights the Lions Forward campaign, illustrating Missouri Southern's transformative impact on students and the broader Four State region. This effort advances Strategy 1B:1 of the Missouri Southern Foundation's strategic plan: "Maximize earned and paid media to promote the Foundation's activities, achievements, and impact."

## MISSION STATEMENT CELEBRATION



As MSSU celebrated the historic milestone of expanding its statewide mission, the event also recognized the unwavering support of legislators, community members, faculty and staff whose dedication made this achievement possible. Remarks were delivered by President Van Galen, Senator Jill Carter, Representative Cathy Jo Loy, and Commissioner Ben Boggs, followed by the unveiling of commemorative plaques and framed documents. Guests received special-edition challenge coins and explored interactive exhibits highlighting the university's three mission pillars.

## WILLCOXON INNOVATION IN HEALTH SCIENCES SUMMIT



Planning is well underway for the 2026 Willcoxon Innovation in Health Sciences Summit, which will take place on March 27, 2026. We are honored to feature Dr. Mary Joy Garcia-Dia as our keynote speaker. Dr. Garcia-Dia is a nationally recognized leader in healthcare informatics, nursing education, and health equity. She currently serves as program director of nursing informatics at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and is a faculty member at New York University. Her distinguished leadership with the Philippine Nurses Association of America and Kalusugan Coalition, Inc. reflects her unwavering dedication to addressing healthcare disparities, particularly within the Filipino-American community. Dr. Garcia-Dia's research spans global health, mobile technology, and structural empowerment, and she is widely recognized for her advocacy, scholarship, and innovative community wellness initiatives.

## 100 YEARS OF MISSION HILLS



The 100 Years of Mission Hills Committee has met monthly to plan a series of activities celebrating the 100th anniversary of the building of the Mission Hills Mansion. This important piece of MSSU history will be celebrated by hosting the National Preservation Symposium on May 14, 2026, a special event on October 9, 2026, and several tours and other learning opportunities throughout the calendar year.

## ROY BLUNT HEALTH SCIENCE INNOVATION CENTER NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

Effective August 2, 2025

FLOOR	SPACE	AMOUNT	SELECTED BY
<b>Welcome Center: Level 1</b>	Welcome Center	\$ 2,500,000	
	Main Atrium	\$ 1,500,000	
	Welcome Center Lobby	\$ 1,000,000	Committed
	Admissions Suite	\$ 250,000	Committed
	Admissions Lounge	\$ 125,000	Committed
	Tour Kick-Off Room	\$ 100,000	Committed
	Admissions Dean Office	\$ 75,000	
<b>HSIC: Level 1</b>	Skills Laboratory	\$ 750,000	Committed
<b>HSIC: Level 1</b>	Research Laboratory	\$ 250,000	
	Simulation Classroom	\$ 250,000	Committed
	EMS / Telehealth Room	\$ 150,000	Committed
	In-Home Care Room	\$ 150,000	Committed
	Café	\$ 100,000	Committed
	Multi-Purpose Room	\$ 75,000	Committed
	Skills Lab Storage	\$ 50,000	Committed
	Research Lab Storage	\$ 50,000	
<b>HSIC: Level 2</b>	Simulation Hospital	\$ 2,000,000	
	Conference Room (1 of 2)	\$ 1,000,000	Committed
	Conference Room (2 of 2)	\$ 1,000,000	Committed
	Pre-Function Lounge	\$ 500,000	Committed
	CT Scanner Suite	\$ 500,000	
	VR Classroom	\$ 350,000	Committed
	Multi-Function Room	\$ 250,000	Committed
	ER / Trauma Suite	\$ 250,000	
	Operating Room Suite	\$ 250,000	
	Labor and Delivery Suite	\$ 250,000	
	Team Lounge (1 of 2)	\$ 200,000	Committed
	Team Lounge (2 of 2)	\$ 200,000	
	X-Ray Suite (1 of 2)	\$ 100,000	Committed
	X-Ray Suite (2 of 2)	\$ 100,000	Committed
	Critical Care Suite	\$ 100,000	Committed
	Acute Care Suite	\$ 100,000	
	NICU / PICU Suite	\$ 100,000	Committed
	Debrief Room (1 of 3)	\$ 50,000	
	Debrief Room (2 of 3)	\$ 50,000	
	Debrief Room (3 of 3)	\$ 50,000	
	P/R Suite	\$ 50,000	
<b>HSIC: Level 3</b>	Cadaver Laboratory	\$ 500,000	
	Dissection Laboratory	\$ 150,000	
	Prosection Laboratory	\$ 150,000	
	Roof Deck	\$ 150,000	
	A & P Laboratory (1 of 2)	\$ 100,000	Committed
	A & P Laboratory (2 of 2)	\$ 100,000	
	A & P Classroom	\$ 100,000	Committed
	A & P Model Study Room	\$ 100,000	
	Collaboration Space	\$ 100,000	
	A & P Research Laboratory	\$ 75,000	
	Ultrasound Suite	\$ 75,000	

# DR. SHELLIE HEWITT

## ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT



### FALL 2025 ENROLLMENT

Census data will be available next week; however, we expect to see an increase in new transfer and overall graduate student enrollment. At this time, the overall date-to-date headcount is relatively flat and the overall date-to-date credit hours are slightly less than what we had this time last year.



### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

During orientation week, we welcomed over 50 new international students to campus. At present, we have 149 international students enrolled at MSSU. Many of the new international students who arrived this past spring semester have continued to enroll this fall. We are excited to see them succeed in their studies and become immersed in our campus community.



### REGISTRAR UPDATE

The Office of the Registrar is building a new transcript articulation process using artificial intelligence technology that will provide faculty with quicker access to transfer coursework when advising and enrolling students. Additionally, in collaboration with the Information Technology Department, the Registrar's office is developing a new process for course waitlists that will aid in a streamlined enrollment procedure for our most sought after courses.



## UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AND MARKETING UPDATE

This summer, the University Relations and Marketing Department advanced several strategic initiatives, including a comprehensive update to the university's brand guide with a new correlating brand policy to ensure consistency and alignment across all communications. The "Joplin Heart" campaign launched during August, celebrating the spirit and sense of belonging of the local community with the establishment of the MSSU Heart Joplin mural on campus. August also marked a high-output period with 622 completed marketing and communication tasks, reflecting a robust focus on content creation and media development. As we transition into the campaign development season, efforts are now concentrated on enrollment marketing, academic promotion, and long-range strategic planning to support institutional growth.



## TRIO PROGRAMS

Two of MSSU's TRIO programs, Upward Bound and Talent Search continue to receive federal funding that provides high school students with the opportunity to learn about college access and helps them prepare for post-secondary education. The Upward Bound program recently welcomed Lauri Mead as the new director. Lauri has a background in K-12 education and is a retired principal from Carl Junction. We are delighted to have her as part of the team.

## STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT COUNCIL

The Strategic Enrollment Council (SEC) is busy working on many of the goals identified in the university's strategic enrollment plan. Several of the current initiatives being addressed include correlating an increase of website page views per visitor to web pages associated with aligned marketing strategies, establishing a marketing and recruitment plan for residence life to fill the residence halls, and seeking partnerships with agencies and universities in other countries for specific academic programs to increase international student enrollment.

Furthermore, the SEC is looking at course modality, increased persistence of first-time students on probation after their first semester and reducing the number of students with outstanding bills and holds that prevent enrollment. In addition to working on the strategic enrollment plan, the SEC discusses timely enrollment topics and concerns to provide recommendations to leadership for increasing enrollment and retention.

# ROB MALLORY

## DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

### MSSU ATHLETICS LAUNCHES MOSO NIL EXCHANGE

On July 23, the MSSU Athletic Department announced the launch of the MOSO Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) Exchange, a marketplace designed to connect businesses, donors, and other interested parties with student-athletes for NIL opportunities. The exchange is free to use, and after registering, the platform provides businesses and individuals with the ability to communicate, negotiate agreements, and fulfill NIL payments to student-athletes.

The MOSO NIL Exchange is a partnership with Teamworks Influencer and provides student-athletes with access to industry-leading brand building tools and educational resources. All activity conducted in the exchange is then automatically disclosed to the MSSU compliance office.

### ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT STAFF UPDATES

The summer brought several staff changes to the athletic department.



Cori Reid

**Cori Reid** has been promoted to deputy athletic director. Reid oversees a variety of administrative functions in the department, including facilities, policy development, business operations, home events, and human resources. She originally joined the department in 2012 before serving as the athletic director at Neosho High School for five years. She returned to MSSU in 2019 as an assistant athletic director for facilities and events and was promoted to associate athletic director for internal operations in 2021. She also served as the interim athletic director from March 2021 through June 2021.



Ryan Cline

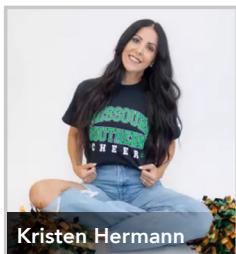
**Ryan Cline** returned to MSSU as assistant athletic director for external engagement after a brief stint at another institution. A 2023 MSSU graduate and former baseball student-athlete, Cline served as director of event and ticket operations during the 2023-24 academic year. In his new role, he is focused on corporate partnerships, revenue generation, and community engagement.



Eric Mueller

**Eric Mueller** recently joined the department as assistant athletic director for athletic communications. He comes to MSSU from the University of Missouri, where he served as the strategic communications assistant. Prior to that, he spent more than five years at Southeast Missouri State University in a variety of communication roles. He is a 2013 graduate of the University of Minnesota.

**John Moore** was hired as the new director of athletic event operations. Most recently, John was the athletic director at Neosho Junior High School. He spent nearly 30 years coaching, teaching, and administration in the Mt. Vernon, Lamar, and Neosho school districts.



**Kristen Hermann** is the new head spirit squad coach, coaching both the cheerleading and dance teams. Kristen previously served as the varsity cheer coach for Joplin schools for 14 years.

## 86 STUDENT-ATHLETES EARN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The Division II Athletic Directors Association announced that 86 MSSU student-athletes earned their academic achievement award. In order to qualify for this honor, a student-athlete must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher, have attended a minimum of two years (four semesters) of full-time collegiate enrollment, and have been an active member of an intercollegiate athletic team during the most recent academic year.

This is the largest number of Missouri Southern student-athletes to earn this honor in the 18-year history of the program. Every sport had at least one honoree, with **women's cross country/track and field** leading the way with 20.

