



# Montana University System

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## Minutes Montana Board of Regents March 12, 2026

**Thursday, March 12, 2026**

Meeting convened at 8:31 am

Regents Present: Todd Buchanan, Chair, Loren Bough, Dean Folkvord, Heather Hoyer, Daniel Spoon, and Carter Jasper. Regent Jeff Southworth was excused. Ex officio members present included Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian and Superintendent Susie Hedalen. Ex officio member Governor Greg Gianforte was excused.

Comments by Chair Buchanan | 00:00:48

Chair Buchanan thanked everyone for their attendance and thanked Chancellor Reid and the UM Western staff for hosting the meeting. He said traveling to campuses for meetings is the best way to see how campuses engage with their communities. He noted the success of the block scheduling system and talked about the important role of rural campuses in Montana. Chair Buchanan welcomed new Regent Dr. Daniel Spoon, acknowledged the retirement of Chancellor Reid, and introduced mathematics professor Tyler Seacrest. He then gave brief agenda overview.

Welcome by Chancellor Reid | 00:09:43

Chancellor Reid welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked his staff for their hard work. Chancellor Reid shared UM Western's purpose and highlighted local businesses and the opportunities those businesses provide students. He discussed the block schedule, shared some campus construction and renovation projects, and highlighted improvements UM Western is making to the student experience. He provided updates on fundraising, research, upcoming events on campus, and the teacher residency program. He featured several students and their accomplishments at UM Western and concluded with an overview of the development of UM Western's next strategic plan.

Approval of Minutes | 00:25:32

- January 14, 2026, Meeting Minutes

With no corrections offered, the minutes were approved as distributed.

Commissioner's Report | 00:25:53

Commissioner Christian welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked Chancellor Reid and his staff for hosting the meeting. He congratulated Chancellor Reid on his upcoming retirement and thanked him for his years of dedication to UM Western. He welcomed Regent Spoon to the Board. Commissioner Christian provided an update on the UM presidential search, UM Western's chancellor search, and the Great Falls College dean search.



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- Resident Student Access | 00:35:37

Scott Lemmon, Director of Admission and Enrollment Strategy, gave a presentation on resident student access. He discussed current initiatives, timelines, and goals. Director Lemmon reported on current and upcoming marketing projects specifically geared towards Montana resident students. Discussion followed.

- AI Task Force Presentation and Recommendations | 00:47:35

Interim Deputy Commissioner of Academic, Research, and Student Affairs, Joe Thiel, discussed how AI tools can be a useful solution for some of the challenges that students and faculty encounter. He said the goal of the AI Task Force is to identify and provide tools for engagement with AI.

Interim Deputy Commissioner Thiel introduced co-chairs of the MUS AI Task Force, Hannah Tokerud, OCHE Associate Legal Counsel, and Zachary Rossmiller, Chief Information Officer at UM. Tokerud and Rossmiller summarized the task force's work and presented the task force's recommendations for system actions and campus essential practices. Discussion followed.

- Campus Reports | 01:19:02
- Introductions & Acknowledgements | 01:19:32

Provost Adrea Lawrence, UM, introduced the new Dean of W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, Libby Metcalf.

President Slinger, Miles Community College, introduced Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Dmitria Harding.

Budget, Administration and Audit Committee | 01:23:38

## **CONSENT | 01:24:42**

### **Staff Item:**

- a. Labor Agreement; OCHE/MUS ITEM 223-100-R0326 | Attachment #1

### **Facility Items:**

- b. Request for Authority to Replace Turf and Field Pads at Washington-Grizzly Stadium; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1008-R0326 | Attachment #1
- c. Request to Grant a Lease Renewal to the Missoula-Ravalli Transportation Management Association at Dornblaser Field for Vehicle Storage and Transportation Demand Management Facilities; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1009-R0326 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2
- d. Request for Authorization to Grant an Access Easement to the City of Bozeman; MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2005-R0326 | Attachment #1
- e. Request for Authorization to Execute Lab Space Lease with Rocky Vista University; MSU Billings ITEM 223-2701-R0326



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- f. Request for Authorization to Renovate Morgan Hall; MSU Northern ITEM 223-2801-R0326 | Attachment #1
- g. Request for Authorization to Execute the Refunding of the Series H 2021 Bonds; MSU Bozeman; ITEM 223-2006-R0326 | Attachment #1

## **ACTION** | 01:24:59

- a. Long-Range Building Program (LRBP) Request, 2029 Biennium; OCHE/MUS ITEM 223-101-R0326 | Attachment #1: Consolidated List | Attachment #2: Major Maintenance, UM | Attachment #3: Major Maintenance, MSU

Dan Stevenson, MUS Director of Facilities Planning, presented the major Repair and Capital Development Long Range Building Program Priorities that will be presented to the 70<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. He said that the Budget Committee had approved these lists.

- b. Request for Authorization to Plan and Design a New Art Building; MSU Billings ITEM 223-2702-R0326 | Attachment #1

Director Stevenson presented the request for authorization for MSU Billings to spend up to \$1.6M to plan and design a new Art Building. MSU Billings received legislative authority-only of \$1.3M from the 69th Legislative Session for a new Art Building. The University has successfully fundraised \$3.2M towards funding for the \$13.4M building. A new academic facility will improve the student learning environment by supporting more interdisciplinary collaboration between multiple academic departments and will improve access for students utilizing faculty and student support services.

Director Stevenson said MSU Billings will request future authority for construction once planning and design are substantially complete to provide estimated construction costs. The proposed work will be paid for with private funds.

- c. Request for Authorization to Complete Instructional Space Renovations; MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2004-R0326 | Attachment #1

Director Stevenson presented the request for MSU to spend up to \$4M to complete instructional space renovations. MSU received \$4M of legislative authority-only in House Bill 5 from the 69th Legislature to improve instructional spaces within multiple buildings on campus. The project will modernize approximately 10-15 classrooms and instructional lab spaces in up to six different academic buildings. The work will be paid for using project plant funds with student building fees. Discussion followed.

- d. Request for Authorization to Make Necessary Repairs, Renovations and ADA Improvements to the Plew Building; MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2003-R0326 | Attachment #1

Director Stevenson presented the request for MSU to spend up to \$2M on improvements to the Plew Building. The facility was constructed prior to ADA requirements and does not have ADA access or services that include compatible restrooms. The project will address ADA improvements, associated renovations and necessary repairs that will increase space utilization



rates and better align with current MSU space standards. The work will be paid from MSU's deferred maintenance reserves. Discussion followed.

## **INFORMATION | 01:43:28**

### a. Performance Funding Allocations, FY27

Tyler Trevor, Deputy Commissioner for Budget and Planning, introduced Margaret Wallace, Director of Budget and Administration, and Eric Meredith, Director of Institutional Analysis. He presented the metrics used to allocate funds to each campus. He said there are opportunities for campuses that fall short of targets to participate in system initiatives. He reviewed the performance funding dashboard and shared the FY 2027 Performance Funding Allocation summary. Discussion followed.

### b. Biennial Budget Development

Deputy Commissioner Trevor reminded the Board that the budget is in the development process for the next legislative session and he discussed the influencing factors and timeline of the budget development process. He reviewed present law adjustments.

### c. UM Western Capital Project Update

UM Western Director of Facilities, Grady Holt, presented an update on the long-range building projects at UM Western. UM Western Vice Chancellor, Tia Brown, presented the capital development projects at UM Western. Director Holt highlighted the outcomes of completed projects and renovations. Discussion followed.

## Remarks by Superintendent Hedalen | 02:15:08

Superintendent Hedalen updated the Board on OPI's participation in meetings and conferences around the state. She provided a Future Ready report and shared the importance of making sure students know about these opportunities. She said the teacher residency program has grown and thanked everyone for their collaboration. She reviewed OPI's Strategic Plan.

## Academic, Research and Student Affairs Committee and Action | 02:29:07

## **CONSENT | 02:29:59**

### **Emeriti Faculty:**

- a. Skelton; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1005-R0326
- b. Galipeau; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1006-R0326

### **Academic Items:**

- c. Academic Approval Items; OCHE ITEM 223-102-R0326 | Attachment #1



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## **ACTION | 02:30:28**

- a. Honorary Doctorate, UM Missoula ITEM 223-1010-R0326 | Attachment #1
- b. Honorary Doctorate, UM Missoula ITEM 223-1011-R0326 | Attachment #1

UM Provost Adrea Lawrence presented the request to award honorary doctorates to Joe Whittinghill and Debra Magpie Earling.

- c. Honorary Doctorate, MT Tech ITEM 223-1503-R0326 | Attachment #1
- d. Honorary Doctorate, MT Tech ITEM 223-1504-R0326 | Attachment #1

MT Tech Chancellor Johnny MacLean presented the request to award honorary doctorates to Ryan M. Lance and David J. Lesar.

- e. Honorary Doctorate, MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2001-R0326 | Attachment #1
- f. Honorary Doctorate, MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2002-R0326 | Attachment #1

MSU President Brock Tessman presented the request to award an honorary doctorate to Rolf and Jaynee Groseth and a posthumous honorary doctorate to Elizabeth McCoy.

- g. Request to Plan Proposals | OCHE Executive Summary | Supporting Documentation

MSU Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Dr. Alison Harmon, presented the request to plan proposal for the Montana Geospatial Insights and Solutions Institute and the request for authorization to establish the Applied Quantum Center. Discussion followed.

UM Vice Provost, John DeBoer, presented the request to plan proposal for a Rural Practice Juris Doctorate, a Masters of Indian Law and Policy, the Montana Climate Office, and an integrated Aquatic and Terrestrial Concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology.

MT Tech Provost, Tim Elgren and Professor Bob Morris presented the request for authorization to establish a PhD in Energy Engineering and Science, a Master's in Nuclear Energy, and an AAS degree option in Construction Technology.

## **INFORMATION | 03:06:09**

### **Academic Review Items:**

- a. Academic Approval Items
- b. Degree Approval Tracking
- c. Academic Program Review Framework

Interim Deputy Commissioner Thiel reviewed three academic review items. Discussion followed.

### **Strategic Priority Items:**

- d. AIMA



Angela McLean, Director of American Indian/Minority Achievement and K-12 Partnerships, reviewed the AIMA Council's advisory mandate regarding American Indian student success. She briefed the Board on the unique partnership between the MUS and the seven independent Tribal colleges located on Montana's reservations.

Data shared during the presentation indicated that MUS enrollment and retention rates for American Indian students currently exceed national averages. Director McLean said these results reflect a high level of system engagement but emphasized that the Council is committed to surpassing these benchmarks. She noted that the System will not rest on current achievements; rather, it is utilizing this momentum to take student success initiatives to the next level. Key upcoming actions include the implementation of Tuition Waiver changes and the integration of Indian Education for All into the Canvas platform to further accelerate growth. Discussion followed.

#### e. Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce

Crystine Miller, Director of Student Affairs, Kerry Davant, Executive Director of HR, and Betsy Asserson, MSU Associate Vice President of Student Wellness, presented a systemwide Mental Health & Wellbeing Action Plan, developed over the past year through data gathering, campus stakeholder input, and task force planning, with a spring 2026 launch.

They reported that Healthy Minds Study data revealed significant mental health and wellbeing needs for students and faculty across the system. The plan presented three core goals including: integrating mental health into campus culture using a public health approach to foster campus-wide mental health and wellbeing; promoting student success through evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention practices; and enhancing employee wellbeing by amplifying access to supports and services. Near-term implementation steps include launching the action plan with a task force, hosting a systemwide mental health summit in Fall 2026, rolling out a public health education campaign, and procuring systemwide suicide prevention training for all MUS students, faculty, and staff. Discussion followed.

#### f. MUS Centers and Institutes Overview

Interim Deputy Commissioner Thiel reviewed the purpose behind research centers and institutes.

MSU Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Dr. Alison Harmon, and UM Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship, Scott Whittenburg, shared a presentation highlighting the wide-reaching benefits of research centers.

Interim Deputy Commissioner Thiel explained the difference between centers and institutes.

Dr. Harmon reported on the research centers and institutes at MSU and shared the tracking of startup and spin out companies and how they contribute to research expenditures.

Vice President Whittenburg discussed research centers and institutes at UM, highlighting a few current research projects, startup and spin out companies, and the impact on research expenditures.



Deputy Commissioner Thiel shared how research centers and institutes are funded. Discussion followed.

Two Year and Community College Committee | 04:52:28

## **INFORMATION** | 04:53:12

### a. Single Admissions File | Attachment #1

Angela DeWolf King, Director of Transfer and Special Projects, presented proposed changes to MUS Policy 301.5.4, the Single Admissions File. Director King said that the three main changes to the policy included: 1) migration of the document to an online format; 2) removal of the fee for students; and 3) clarity of what information would be shared through the file. The proposed changes are expected to be included on the May agenda as an action item.

### b. Credit for Prior Learning Update

Chase Stahl, CTE Data Specialist, and Jacque Treaster, Director of Dual Enrollment and Career & Technical Education provided the Credit for Prior Learning update. Stahl said roughly 21% of the overall undergraduate student population since 2016 has Credit-for-Prior-Learning (CPL) credits, with about 90% of CPL credits coming from International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced Placement (AP). For in-state recent HS graduates, about 18% of the incoming class has AP or IB credits for the 2024-25 academic year, compared to 31% for out-of-state students. He said that less than 20% of veteran students have CPL credits from their military trainings indicated on their Joint Services Transcript. Institutions across the MUS are working to bring greater consistency to non-AP/IB CPL credits. Stahl said OCHE is working with the common course numbering faculty committees to incorporate system-wide equivalencies for CPL with military experiences and common industry-recognized credentials.

### c. University of Montana Western Career Exploration Spotlight

Ryann Gibson, UM Western Dual Enrollment & Workforce Program Manager, reported on the components and outcome goals of the Career Exploration program. She shared details about the Future Now Expo geared towards high school sophomores in Beaverhead County and the surrounding areas. She gave a mobile lab update and shared the opportunities it will provide to students. Discussion followed.

Public Comment | 05:26:50

Johnny MacLean, MT Tech Chancellor, honored Chancellor Reid and congratulated him on his retirement.



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Committee Reports & Action | 05:30:36

- Budget, Administration and Audit Committee

## **CONSENT | 05:30:47**

### **Staff Item:**

- a. Labor Agreement; OCHE/MUS ITEM 223-100-R0326 | Attachment #1

### **Facility Items:**

- b. Request for Authority to Replace Turf and Field Pads at Washington-Grizzly Stadium; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1008-R0326 | Attachment #1
- c. Request to Grant a Lease Renewal to the Missoula-Ravalli Transportation Management Association at Dornblaser Field for Vehicle Storage and Transportation Demand Management Facilities; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1009-R0326 | Attachment #1 | Attachment #2
- d. Request for Authorization to Grant an Access Easement to the City of Bozeman; MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2005-R0326 | Attachment #1
- e. Request for Authorization to Execute Lab Space Lease with Rocky Vista University; MSU Billings ITEM 223-2701-R0326
- f. Request for Authorization to Renovate Morgan Hall; MSU Northern ITEM 223-2801-R0326 | Attachment #1
- g. Request for Authorization to Execute the Refunding of the Series H 2021 Bonds; MSU Bozeman; ITEM 223-2006-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of consent items a.- g. was made by Regent Jasper; motion passed (6-0).

## **ACTION | 05:31:14**

- a. Long-Range Building Program (LRBP) Request, 2029 Biennium; OCHE/MUS ITEM 223-101-R0326 | Attachment #1: Consolidated List | Attachment #2: Major Maintenance, UM | Attachment #3: Major Maintenance, MSU

A motion for approval of action item a. ITEM 223-101-R0326 was made by Regent Bough; motion passed (6-0).

- b. Request for Authorization to Plan and Design a New Art Building; MSU Billings ITEM 223-2702-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item b. ITEM 223-2702-R0326 was made by Regent Hoyer; motion passed (6-0).

- c. Request for Authorization to Complete Instructional Space Renovations; MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2004-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item c. ITEM 223-2004-R0326 was made by Regent Jasper; motion passed (6-0).



- d. Request for Authorization to Make Necessary Repairs, Renovations and ADA Improvements to the Plew Building; MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2003-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item d. ITEM 223-2003-R0326 was made by Regent Hoyer; motion passed (6-0).

Academic, Research and Student Affairs | 05:33:02

## **CONSENT | 05:33:02**

### **Emeriti Faculty:**

- a. Skelton; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1005-R0326
- b. Galipeau; UM Missoula ITEM 223-1006-R0326

### **Academic Items:**

- c. Academic Approval Items; OCHE ITEM 223-102-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of consent items a.- c. was made by Regent Hoyer; motion passed (6-0).

## **ACTION | 05:33:36**

- a. Honorary Doctorate, UM Missoula ITEM 223-1010-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item a. ITEM 223-1010-R0326 was made by Regent Jasper; motion passed (6-0).

- b. Honorary Doctorate, UM Missoula ITEM 223-1011-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item b. ITEM 223-1011-R0326 was made by Regent Folkvord; motion passed (6-0).

- c. Honorary Doctorate, MT Tech ITEM 223-1503-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item c. ITEM 223-1503-R0326 was made by Regent Hoyer; motion passed (6-0).

- d. Honorary Doctorate, MT Tech ITEM 223-1504-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item d. ITEM 223-1504-R0326 was made by Regent Jasper; motion passed (6-0).

- e. Honorary Doctorate, MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2001-R0326 | Attachment #1



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A motion for approval of action item e. ITEM 223-2001-R0326 was made by Regent Folkvord; motion passed (6-0).

f. Honorary Doctorate, MSU Bozeman ITEM 223-2002-R0326 | Attachment #1

A motion for approval of action item f. ITEM 223-2002-R0326 was made by Regent Hoyer; motion passed (6-0).

g. Request to Plan Proposals | OCHE Executive Summary | Supporting Documentation

A motion for approval of action item g. Request to Plan Proposals was made by Regent Folkvord; motion passed (6-0).

Appeal | 05:36:18

Chair Buchanan explained the process related to appeals. He called for a motion to hear the appeals. No motion was made to hear the appeals, and therefore the Commissioner’s decisions were upheld.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 pm

Approved by the Board of Regents on

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Date

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Date

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Clayton T. Christian
Commissioner of Higher Education
and Secretary to the Board of Regents

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Todd Buchanan
Chair, Board of Regents