



Staff Senate Monthly Meeting Minutes

October 15th, 2025

9 am – 11 am

SUB Alumni Legacy Lounge

I. Call to Order

- a. Called to order by Kayla Lee at 9:03 am.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. September 2025

- i. The minutes from the September 2025 meeting were reviewed, motioned, and seconded
- ii. Approved unanimously

III. Public Comment

IV. Speakers

a. Kayla Lee – Bounty of the Bridgers food pantry

- i. Discuss *Can the Griz 2025 food drive, new initiatives, and ways to get involved*
 - a. Reach out to Bounty of the Bridgers if you would like your department to participate
 - b. basicneeds@montana.edu to let them know you would like to participate

b. TRIO Student Support Services

i. First gen presentation

- a. firstgen@montana.edu
- b. First-generation college student: A student whose parents or guardians did not complete a 4-year college degree
- c. 18.4% of MSU undergraduate students are first gen
- d. 19.9% of the 2025 cohort identify as first-gen
- e. 6-year graduation rate of 29.1% (2019 cohort)
- f. All this data is self-reported
- g. National First-Generation College Celebration is coming up
 - a. Annually on November 8th
 - b. Featured on FirstGen Forward's website

h. First-Gen Forward Network at MSU

- a. Accepted into the network in 2023 with 75 other institutions
- b. Working team: Mackenzie Spence, Alisha Downs, and VP Steven Swinford
- c. There are three steps in the network journey and MSU is still in step one

i. Committee successes:

- a. First-scholars network
- b. Website

- c. First generation college celebration
 - d. First-generation student association
- j. Current efforts
 - a. Data sheets for staff and faculty
 - b. Progression in first-scholars network
 - c. Living Learning Community
 - d. Scholarship opportunities (only for in-state students)
 - e. First-generation student support center
- k. The First-Generation website has a glossary of college terms with links
 - a. Referred to as the hidden curriculum

c. *Mary Lachenbruch – Montana University System Executive Director of Insurance & Benefits*

- i. *Provide insight on benefits on the University System level*
 - a. Health insurance is what people first think of but there is also:
 - a. Life
 - b. Eye
 - c. Dental
 - b. Mary reports to Commissioner of Higher Education
 - c. 14 campus sites across the state
 - d. Do not bargain for benefits
 - a. There is an inter-unit benefits committee
 - e. Mary and Commissioner Christian are the fiduciary of the plan
 - f. Employee benefits are complex and challenging
 - g. Balancing decision making with State Legislation
 - h. Compared to the past, costs of prescription drugs and their insurance coverage have changed
 - i. There is a co-pay for specialty medications
 - j. MUS is a self-funded plan
 - a. Collecting all premiums and pooling them together and then using premiums to pay the bills
 - b. They carry the risk
 - k. A unique benefit is no co-pay for the first four visits to a mental health provider
 - l. Self-funding gives some flexibility in areas and none in other areas
 - m. Living situation in Gallatin Valley:
 - a. Actuaries prepare an analysis every few years
 - b. Compared our insurance to other insurance plans for other Gallatin County insurance plans
 - c. All employees for all benefit types are going to be completely covered in whole (this is just employee and not dependents)
 - n. MUS system offers two well checks a year
 - a. Tests have been added over the years, such as vitamin D
 - b. Another one added is for chronic kidney disease tests

- o. Long-term disability is a mandatory benefit
- p. Question answers:
 - a. If you have a question about a specific medication there is someone to reach out to
 - b. University has own fee schedule for reimbursements
 - c. Biggest impact for Delta Dental providers has been seen in the Gallatin Valley
 - d. Pharmacy contract is up on June 30th, so they are having weekly meetings about this
 - e. Anyone on a plan is subsidizing those with families
 - i. A single person helps pay the premiums for families
 - f. A benefit not enough people take advantage of is Well Baby
 - i. Waiving co-pays on prenatal visits
 - g. They will be revamping wellness benefits
 - h. People do not pay attention to beneficiaries for life insurance and make sure they are updated
 - i. Make sure to have a contingent as well as a primary
 - ii. Cannot send a check to a minor, need to have a trust set up for them
- d. *Jeannette Grey Gilbert – MSU Chief Human Resources Officer*
 - i. *Provide insight on benefits from the MSU perspective*
 - a. President's Compensation Advisory Council met last week and is talking about strategy
 - b. A website is being worked on for wellness benefits that employees will have access for free
 - c. Two programs that are underutilized are the supplemental retirement plans
 - a. Can put pretax money aside
 - d. Overall cost of healthcare continues to increase, so they are trying to set themselves up for best position possible
 - e. This year there was about a 10% increase

V. Previous Business

VI. New Business

VII. President's Meeting Update

VIII. MUSSA Information

- a. Kayte Kaminski is going to the November Board of Regents Meeting as a representative for Staff Senate

IX. Informational Items

X. Staff Senate Committee Updates

- a. *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*
- b. *Governance*
- c. *Professional Development*
- d. *Special Events & Recognition*

i. The Staff Costume Contest will be coming up, encourage staff to participate

- a. There will be prizes for groups and individuals

XI. External Committee Reports

- a. *Budget Council*
- b. *Campus Sustainability Advisory Council*
- c. *Classroom Committee*
- d. *Diversity Council*
- e. *Outreach and Engagement Council*
- f. *Parking Appeals*
- g. *Planning Council*
- h. *Public Arts & Artifacts Committee*
- i. *Research Council*
- j. *Space Management Committee*
- k. *University Facilities Planning Board (UFPB)*

XII. Adjourn

- a. Kayla Lee adjourned the meeting at 10:40 am

Next Meeting:

November 19th, 2025

9:00 am – 11:00 am

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