

University Council Meeting 3/3/2026

Board of Governors meeting update

Very brief. See my notes from February's meeting. Pres. Williams noted that several on our Board are past the end date for their terms, but Governor Kehoe hasn't indicated if/when he will make new appointments.

R. Stewart – Great Colleges to Work For

survey went out on Saturday or Sunday 2/28 or 3/1. It is not spam – complete it and encourage others to do so.

7% of main campus and 9% of West Plains have

By early July, reports will be back from Great Colleges, with recognition in September (if applicable). We will also have access to the data.

HLC update: Provost Phillips + Dean Wahl

Site visit is March 30/31, shared thanks to the Oversight committee (including Senator Bohlen!)

Provost Phillips went over the assurance document and criteria. Some detail is in the slides. She encourages all to look at the university's mission and consider how the mission drives our operations. "This week is Public Affairs Week, so you all have the opportunity to go get you some... evidence"

Criteria – 1. Mission, 2. Integrity+Ethics, 3. Teaching+Learning, 4. Sustainability

There was a mock forum as prep for the site visit run by Dr. Kelly Wood and Senator Mary Bohlen – sample questions:

- "How do you see the mission playing out in your daily professional lives? What is the strongest evidence that you all know and are carrying out the mission?"
- "What are some policies that guide ethical behavior on campus?"
- "What does the university offer to develop and maintain employees' skills for effectively doing their job?"
- "How are promotional and informational materials reflective of Missouri State? What changes would you make and how would you go about recommending and making these changes?"

All are welcome at the forums on March 30 and 31. Notes – site visit is not a good time for comedy, site visit teams have been around campus for a long time, cabinet will not be in the general forums (so faculty, staff, and students feel free to share)

Schedules will be available at MissouriState.edu/HLC/SiteVisit2026

Egon Heidendal – Peer Groups Established (for Strategic Plan)

2 groups identified, benchmarks – those currently most similar to MO State in various data points - and aspirational peers – universities that may share one or two similar points, but in other ways are where we want to be. When using this, use benchmarks for comparing apples to apples, aspirational for goal-setting, etc.

Variables – similar Carnegie classification, urban or rural, student demographics, etc. The committee weighted these variables and ranked institutions.

Permission-based dashboards are available for both groups.

Note: we also have CUPA benchmark groups, athletics conference, recruiting competition, etc.

Peer Groups

Benchmark Peer Group	
UnitID	Institution Name
142115	Boise State University
201441	Bowling Green State University-Main Campus
157951	Western Kentucky University
145813	Illinois State University
173920	Minnesota State University-Mankato
136172	University of North Florida
200800	University of Akron Main Campus
220978	Middle Tennessee State University
170082	Grand Valley State University
185590	Montclair State University
209807	Portland State University
139931	Georgia Southern University
228431	Stephen F Austin State University
172699	Western Michigan University
106458	Arkansas State University

Aspirational Peer Group	
UnitID	Institution Name
216764	West Chester University of Pennsylvania
159647	Louisiana Tech University
217819	College of Charleston
219356	South Dakota State University
164076	Towson University
199218	University of North Carolina Wilmington
150136	Ball State University
197869	Appalachian State University
178420	University of Missouri-St Louis
237011	Western Washington University
232423	James Madison University
110556	California State University-Fresno
228459	Texas State University
156125	Wichita State University
486840	Kennesaw State University

West Plains update: Zora Mulligan

HLC probation meeting went well, with particularly impressive reports back on assessment. 2 continuing concerns (though criteria met) – strategic planning (underway) and finance/resource base and sustainability, particularly system and structures.

Meeting in Chicago later this spring, with results in June.

Good progress on strategic planning – identifying peers, workforce needs, and areas for further partnership with the main campus.

Similar budget and enrollment situation to main campus.

Q: What can we do to partner with West Plains? A: Take a systematic approach, rather than so many ideas. Look at WP as an important transfer partner. How can we do that at scale? How can we share resources and services?

Ombuds update: Jamie Birch

Began in early November. Intention moving forward is to do Quarterly updates (this data is from the small window in November – December 2025).

Most common issue is supervisor issues, student had issue with grades, other(s) had coworker issue. Communication issues seem to be the biggest thing – ombuds office can do good work in navigating these concerns.

The Booking system is locked on the President's Office as the meeting place. These are updated and changed, but they're working on improving the scheduling and to find some private spaces. The Library study rooms are the most common spot so far.

Usage is picking up in the spring, but there is still a lack of knowledge that the office exists. Continue to spread the word - <https://www.missouristate.edu/president/ombuds/>

Budget Update – VP Morris + Cindy Schull

Lots of visuals in the slides (revenue sources, operating appropriations, enrollment + mix, etc., investment income, MOSERS contributions, etc.). Note – full-time headcount has been decreasing since 2017, the way out is all hands on deck, enrollment is not projected to be a fix for fall this year.

If anyone has any information on what other universities are doing w/ tuition or fee increases this year, share it w/ MM or CS or anyone on Executive Budget Committee.

Budget-wise, “What’s done is done for FY’26”

When budget templates roll out this week, they will reflect the shortfalls and changes in expenses.

Executive Budget Committee is meeting w/ representatives from cabinet, deans, faculty from each College, and Staff Senate (only the chair).

Any questions, feel free to contact me – philbridges@missouristate.edu