



President's Cabinet Minutes
April 16, 2026
11:00AM – 12:30PM

I. CALL TO ORDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Edward Brown opens the cabinet meeting.
- Motion to approve prior minutes.
 - Minutes approved

II. PRESIDENT'S UPDATE – Janine Davidson, President

- **Roadrunner Shoutout Awards**
 - Staff winner: Rebecca Dobbin- Director of Financial Business Operations, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. Nominated by Jeremy Castle. Recognized for leadership, process improvement, and strong support of faculty and students.
 - Student winner: Melanie Lopez Macareno- Peer Mentor, Immigration Services Program. Recognized for national representation, advocacy, and academic excellence
- **Additional recognitions**
 - Successful Roadrunners Who Soar event
 - Colorado Poet Laureate: MSU Denver alumnus Crisosto Apache
 - Spring commencement keynote: Steven Lees, who is the founder of Goodr Sunglasses
 - State budget recommendation came in better than expected (flat funding)
 - No major reductions are anticipated, though inflation creates some financial pressure. Colorado legislature prioritized higher education funding
 - MSU Denver remains in a stronger position compared to peers
 - Thanks to Kaycee and Kyle especially
 - The key priorities moving forward is to maintain alignment with student access and affordability, institutional mission and support for employees
 - Adrienne testified in favor of HB261317
 - Bill proposes combining the Dept. of Higher Ed, and Dept. of Workforce Education.
 - Testified in hopes that MSU Denver has representation and a seat at the table in implementation decisions
 - Kaycee Gerhart, Kyle Piccola and President Davidson traveled to Washington and participated in AASCU “on the hill” meetings
 - Focus on Pell Grant Funding:
 - Increased demand leading to large projected funding shortfalls
 - Congress likely to support short-term funding, but long-term sustainability is uncertain
 - Significant impact: ~8,000 MSU Denver students receive about 35 million in Pell support
 - Pell funding subject to gainful employment policy
 - Focus on post-graduation earnings and outcomes. There is a potential impact on financial aid eligibility for certain programs.
 - Data limitations remain a concern
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy position
 - A team-of-teams approach is being developed by Sam Jay and Larry Sampler across three focus areas

- Teaching and learning, student readiness, institutional operations
- How can MSU leverage AI in these areas, prepare students and staff to continue using it, and solve chronic problems that would otherwise require more hires?

III. PROVOST UPDATE – Matt Makley, Provost

- Thank you for the Castro Professorship team and One Book team
 - Mentioned speaker series event yesterday and the important work happening at MSU Denver.
- Budget
 - Academic affairs presented their budget to UPBAC last week.
 - Will present the budget to faculty senate next week
- Reconstituting the organization called AALT (Academic Affairs Leadership Team)
 - Group of over 100 faculty and staff given a forum to discuss university direction and priorities
- Shout-Outs for faculty excellence
 - Sarah Shepherd was featured in a 9-news article for Artemis II
 - Doctoral work in plasma physics has been used by NASA in their propulsion research
 - Alex Boodrookas has had his book published by Stanford
 - Work on Middle Eastern history is “Destined to become a classic in its field.”

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE – Meredith Jeffers, Ph.D., Executive Director of University Strategy

- Introduced Psych2Work student workers Emma and Selena.
- 2030 strategic plan overview for those unfamiliar
 - 5 pillars
- Where is MSU Denver?
 - Slightly ahead of schedule
 - Executive team has begun refining strategic goals and structure of working groups
 - Working groups use available metrics to ensure no left turns or “running away from the current problems”
- Guiding questions for the strategic plan and all working groups: *What must be true for a student to succeed at MSU Denver?*
 - They need to enroll at MSU
 - They need to stay at MSU
 - They need to finish at MSU
 - They need to succeed after MSU
- Metrics should help quantify these critical steps. They have been realigned to do so
 - We have seen record breaking outcomes in 2025
 - 2030 Enrollment goal is on track
 - Retention goal is spot on
 - Seeing an uptick in first-time enrollment and adult transfer students
- Pillar 3 got a makeover
 - Focus on campus community involvement, engagement, and leadership
 - Revitalize campus as it was pre-covid
 - Welcomed a representative from each working group
 - Encouraged shared governance bodies to establish a liaison to Pillar 3 working group
- Pillar 4 strategy got a refresh as well
- Pillar 5 will get refreshed
- Available resources on the SharePoint and Coda
- Questions

- Andrea Smith: Where can people find the information, you flag? - Strategic Plan SharePoint Site

V. ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS – Stacy Dvergsdal, AVP for Administration & Chief HR Officer and Charles Kibort, Executive Director of HR Operations

- Shout out for John Masserini and the Psych2Work program
 - 5 students joined HR department for a day
- Overview of Engagement Survey value to university efforts
- Results, excluding student employees and affiliate faculty
- Overall engagement favorable result is 71.4%, up from an even 70% last year
 - Slight change, but more significant variation under the surface
 - Survey included 33 qualitative questions
 - “I Trust Senior Leadership” up 7.6%
 - “I Feel Valued as an Employee” up 7.5%
 - No metrics decreased in rating by more than 2.4%
- Overall, the results are positive, regarding, retention, recognition and DEI
- Feelings about SLT, job satisfaction, feeling valued have become more positive
- Next steps
 - Individual branches will receive their scores tomorrow
 - Branches should take action to address any concerns shown by their results
 - Plan for the whole year, not just a one-time meeting
- Questions
 - Provost Makley: Is it relatively normal for Higher ed institutions to rank lower when it comes to satisfaction with pay? Charles –Yes, higher ed does tend to score lower in those metrics
 - Barbara:
 - How is the overall engagement score calculated? Charles – All questions on the survey rolled together, except questions regarding direct supervisors and leadership.
 - President Davidson commented that we should never be afraid of the data. Even if they don’t provide exact answers, data raises important questions.

VI. POLICY INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION, Brenden Kendall, Professor of Communication Studies, Chair of Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee

- Academic Program Approval and Discontinuation Policy, TBD
 - The policy was published in 2017 and revised in 2019
 - Proposed large revision this year was unanimously supported by the academic policies committee, and supported by the faculty senate
- The newest 2026 revision proposed removing the requirement for BOT approval of new MINOR programs and concentrations in major programs
 - Hope is this policy change will allow BOT more bandwidth to review MAJORS and more consequential programs
 - Rationalization includes the fact that MINORS are usually pared down versions of MAJORS which will still undergo the same review process
- Questions
 - Edward: The provost would have the final say? Brenden: Yes, the provost is the final arbiter.
 - Will Simpkins: What's the usual system for Colorado institutions of higher ed? Brenden: Not sure at this time. Can research that further.
 - Christine: Students used to need a minor to graduate, it's that no longer the case? Brenden: Students are no longer required/expected to complete a minor.
 - President Davidson: Who becomes the approval authority if a department wants to change their policy to require a MAJOR be accompanied by a specific MINOR? Brendan: In cases where changes are made to the MAJOR program, the full BOT including the provost must

approve the change.

- To institute a required MINOR is, in effect, to make a change to a MAJOR program
- Edward recommended that this policy advance through the office of the provost and then submit to the President for approval. BOT will then make a final vote.

VII. SHARED GOVERNANCE UPDATES

- **TSAC - Sky Childress**
 - Last day of student voting
- **Staff Senate – Barbara Fricks-Romero**
 - Finished with budget conversation.
 - 15% reserved of their budget in FY26
 - Proposing an appropriate budget cut for 2027 “in solidarity with the campus climate”
- **Council of Chairs – Lisa Badanes**
 - May 6th at 3:30 mini retreat in the hospitality area for COC
- **Faculty Senate – Dr. Liz Goodnick**
 - Mona Mocanasu congrats on election to second term as faculty trustee
 - Elections for Faculty Senate President, VP, and Secretary will take place on May 6th

VIII. GENERAL UPDATES

- **Dr. Will Simpkins – Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs**
- Early Enrollment Update: We are up 3.1% in full time enrollment equivalent to 36 individual students. new student enrollment is up to 37.31%
- Student Code of Conduct Review Update: public comment on the first review was March 1-March 20
- Student Housing Update: 493 days until moving student to the summit house!
 - Seeking tow new hires for operations team
 - MSU housing webpage will go live in May
- Blowing past record student voting.
 - 751 votes

IX. HOUSEKEEPING– Edward Brown

- Apr 21. President Davidson will Co moderate a panel on Iran and what's next event
- May 5. Howdy rowdy BBQ
- Commencement in the Coliseum on May 15th
- Roadrunners rise June 4th
- Final thank you for the students