Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the
University of Missouri-St. Louis
University Assembly
September 21, 2021 – 3 p.m.
JCPenney Summit Lounge & Zoom meeting

Senate Chair Jon McGinnis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Dr. McGinnis asked for approval of the minutes from the Assembly meeting on April 27, 2021. The minutes were approved as written.

Report of the Chairperson (Dr. Jon McGinnis):

➢ Dr. McGinnis welcomed everyone to the first University Assembly meeting for 2021-2022. He announced some changes to the Senate/Assembly membership. Amber Candela has replaced James Shuls as the senator for the Educator Preparation and Leadership Department. Dr. McGinnis also introduced Gary Flotron and Michelle Ciurria who were recently elected as the two adjunct representatives for the Fall semester.

➢ Dr. McGinnis reported that the Faculty Senate will have its Five-Year Review in January. More information will be provided about the review in the months ahead. Faculty senators and committee chairs may be requested to participate in the preparation and discussions for the Senate review.

➢ Dr. McGinnis announced that the organizational meetings for all of the 20 Senate/Assembly standing committees have been completed and committee chairs were elected. He displayed the list of the newly elected committee chairs.

Report of the Chancellor (Dr. Kristin Sobolik):

➢ Chancellor Sobolik thanked everyone for attending the State of the University Address on Sept. 14 at the Touhill Performing Arts Center. A recording of the State of the University Address can be found at the following site: https://www.umsl.edu/services/spevents/sotu.html

➢ Chancellor Sobolik reported that enrollment is down by 9% in student credit hours. She stated that the campus is working hard to turn the enrollment around and she is optimistic about the future. However, this decrease in enrollment will affect UMSL’s budget and how investments are made in the future.

➢ As a COVID-19 update, Chancellor Sobolik stated that currently the campus has thirteen active student cases and two active staff cases. She reported that the University of Missouri Board of Curators voted to extend the current face covering requirements at UMSL and all other UM System universities through October 15. UMSL will also follow local public health mandates in alignment with St. Louis County.

➢ Chancellor Sobolik reported on UMSL’s rankings in US News & World Report. UMSL has increased 42 spots in the national rankings. UMSL has also increased as a public national institution and is ranked 118. Chancellor Sobolik said that UMSL’s goal is to be in the top 100. She also explained that for the third year in a row, UMSL is in the top 100
in the nation for social mobility which indicates how well UMSL graduates students with financial need. She congratulated everyone on a great job moving UMSL forward.

➢ Chancellor Sobolik announced that UMSL was named as one of the 101 recipients to receive the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award by *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. The award recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. UMSL is the only university in Missouri to be included in this year’s list of awardees. Chancellor Sobolik thanked everyone for their work with students and the positive results for the university.

➢ Chancellor Sobolik introduced Dr. Steven Berberich, the new Interim Provost, who just started at UMSL on September 1. She also introduced Dr. Jill Wood, the new Interim Executive Director of Human Resources who recently joined UMSL in July.

Chancellor Sobolik responded to various questions from the University Assembly.

**Report of the Staff Association (Ms. Olivia Mendez-Alm):**

➢ Ms. Mendez-Alm reported that many staff are back on campus and excited to be able to support colleagues and students.

➢ The Staff Association recently polled the staff council members and those they represent about the topics the Staff Association should focus on this academic year. The responses indicated three areas of focus: compensation (both monetary and other ways of compensation), staff appreciation, and staff retention. There is also a concern about the overall morale.

➢ Ms. Mendez-Alm explained that the Staff Association has been having conversations with the Chancellor and Human Resources. They are gathering data related to staff turnover and staff vacancies. She stated that many staff have taken on multiple roles during the pandemic and additional responsibilities due to layoffs and turnover. The Staff Association would like to ensure that staff are being appropriately recognized for their work.

➢ The Staff Association has been asked for feedback on two UM System level policies: digital accessibility policies and shared leave policies. The Staff Association meets again this week. Ms. Mendez-Alm will bring any additional information back at the next Assembly meeting.

Dr. McGinnis thanked Ms. Mendez-Alm for her report. He encouraged the attendees to nominate staff for the UMSL Hero’s Award. He also encouraged everyone to take the time to thank the staff for all that they do.

**Report of the Student Government Association (Mr. Joseph Methner):**

➢ Mr. Methner reported that the morale among students seems higher than last year. He stated that there was good attendance at the Student Involvement Expo in September.

➢ The Student Government Association (SGA) is currently short staffed with only three senators. The SGA is looking for more senators and is taking applications next week. A special election will be held in October to fill the open slots for student senators.

➢ The SGA held its first meeting a couple weeks ago in a blended format. They talked about their goals for the upcoming semester with student groups. One of the goals is to support events on campus. Mr. Methner reported that a concern came from graduate
students who would like to get more involved in campus activities. However, the graduate students stated that most campus events are held during the day when graduate students are not available to participate. Mr. Methner said that he will be working with graduate students to find events that can be inclusive for graduate students. Another topic that came up at the meeting was finding ways that students can show appreciation and support our faculty and staff this year.

➢ Mr. Methner reported that they are also preparing for the Big Event. The SGA will team up with student groups and the Office of Student Involvement. The Big Event will give students an opportunity to get involved and do something positive for the community.

Master Plan Update (Mr. Daryl Ives):
Mr. Daryl Ives, Executive Director of Facilities Management, provided an update on the Campus Master Plan. He explained that the guiding principles that went into the Master Plan are for the good of students, staff and faculty, as well as the neighborhood and community. The Plan is created to ensure that UMSL facilities are used to create a vibrant campus and to maximize UMSL’s regional strength. Mr. Ives explained that the process of the Master Plan goes through many phases such as discovery, analysis, etc. He reported that the Master Plan process has been very collaborative. They have received much feedback through workshops and surveys. Mr. Ives explained that Phase 1A is occurring now. It focuses on reducing UMSL’s footprint and consolidating the north and south campus buildings. The other part of the plan focuses on possibilities for the campus in the future. Mr. Ives presented a proposal for the future that displayed a north St. Louis County Business and Workforce District on the south campus. Mr. Ives addressed the questions of the University Assembly.

Dr. McGinnis thanked Mr. Ives for his presentation. He announced that the Assembly will head outside for a quick photo following this meeting. There being no other business, Dr. McGinnis adjourned the University Assembly meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Pickard
Senate/Assembly Secretary

(Minutes written by Loyola Harvey, Faculty Senate/University Assembly Office)