

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the
University of Missouri-St. Louis
University Assembly
February 21, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.
Zoom meeting**

Senate Chair Jon McGinnis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Dr. McGinnis welcomed everyone. He asked for approval of the minutes from the Assembly meeting on Nov. 15, 2022. The minutes were approved as written.

Report of the Chairperson (Dr. Jon McGinnis):

- Dr. McGinnis reported that the administrator evaluation surveys will be distributed in early March. He asked that faculty and staff complete the surveys. He reminded them that all responses are anonymous.
- The Budget and Planning Committee is scheduled to meet on March 16 by Zoom. Those interested in attending can contact the Senate Office for the Zoom link.
- Dr. McGinnis invited everyone to attend the Homecoming Chili Feed on Thursday, Feb. 23 from 11:30 – 1:30 in the MSC Century Rooms.
- The deadline for submitting nominations for the Chancellor's Awards for Excellence has been extended to Mar 5, 2023. Dr. McGinnis encouraged everyone to consider submitting a nomination.
- Dr. McGinnis stated that the Office of Student Involvement has asked him to announce that they are conducting a service project for the month of February. In partnership with the Triton Pantry, they are asking for donations of food items, prepackaged meals, snack items and hygiene products. Donations are greatly appreciated and can be dropped off in the Office of Student Involvement in 366 MSC till the end of February.

Report of the Chancellor (Provost Steve Berberich):

While Chancellor Sobolik was out of town, Provost Berberich presented the following information.

- The recipients of the UMSL Hero Award for the month of February were announced. The recipients are Melissa Daniel, Amanda O'Neill, and Harry Harris.
- UMSL has been recognized as the recipient of St. Louis American Foundation's 2023 Corporate Diversity Award.
- Chancellor Sobolik was featured on St. Louis Post Dispatch's Winning STL which is a video interview series with local business and community leaders.
- UMSL is the official higher education partner and official university partner with St. Louis CITY SC. Provost Berberich stated that this partnership will enhance UMSL's Sport Management Program with internship opportunities. St. Louis CITY SC is also a presenting partner with UMSL's esports club and team that will launch this fall.
- Provost Berberich was pleased to report that UMSL is a presenting partner of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for its 2023/2024 season. There will be 24 shows at the Touhill Performing Arts Center.
- Provost Berberich announced that Reda Amer has been named as the new director of UMSL's Geospatial Collaborative. UMSL mathematics alumna Jessie Bleile will be serving as the new geospatial professor of practice.

- Dr. Sandra Langeslag from the Psychological Sciences Department was featured on NBC's *TODAY* Show which aired nationally on Feb. 13. Ms. Jenna Bush Hager interviewed Dr. Langeslag about her research.

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

Ms. Mendez-Alm provided an update on the PTO modernization plan which will affect the leave program for staff. She reported that Ms. Marsha Fischer from UM System will be presenting more detailed information about the leave program in March. The changes to the leave program will be implemented on January 1, 2024. UMSL's HR Director Jill Wood explained that the sick leave balances that staff have accrued as of December 31, 2023 will freeze and may be used at a future date. She explained that vacation balances will be protected, but UM System is still working on the details of rollover or payout options.

Ms. Mendez-Alm also reported that the Staff Association has scheduled an all-staff meeting for UMSL staff on March 9. She thanked the attendees for any opportunity for staff and faculty to work together.

Report of the Student Government Association (Ms. Sydney Stark):

- Ms. Stark reported that this semester there are six active student senators that are advocating for students.
- The Student Government Association (SGA) hosted a town hall meeting at the end of November. They also participated in a focus group for the campus so that students could share their general experiences and express their concerns. Some of their suggestions were to improve food options, provide more efficient bus shuttle routes, and increase student wellness and support resources such as counseling.
- Ms. Stark reported that about 200 students have filled out a survey and given feedback on ways to enhance the student experience.
- Ms. Stark stated that SGA is honored to have a student serving as a member of the committee that will be evaluating the nominations for the Remington Williams award. The award was created to honor a former student who unfortunately passed away last summer.
- SGA elections are coming up the first two weeks of April. The SGA inauguration is scheduled for May 5.
- Ms. Stark reported that students have been expressing extreme concern over the closing of Mansion Hills Apartments. She stated that the students feel that they have not been given adequate resources to assist them in finding alternate housing in a reasonable time and at affordable prices. The options are not feasible for all students. Because of this, some students claim that they will be unable to continue their education. Students are extremely frustrated. Ms. Stark stated that some students feel that the campus' Master Plan is taking a higher priority than the students' education.

Faculty Athletics Representative Report (Dr. Joe Pickard):

Dr. Pickard provided a brief overview of the Athletics Department. He invited faculty to contact him or Ms. Alex Miner, Assistant Athletics Director for Academics, if there are any concerns with student athletes. Dr. Pickard reported that 183 student athletes achieved a 3.25 or higher in the fall semester and that 92 student athletes had all As. He mentioned that faculty are asked to provide students participating in university-sanctioned activities with reasonable accommodations for classes, exams, and quizzes that are missed because of these university-sanctioned activities.

Update on Campus Construction Projects (Mr. Blake Sutter):

Mr. Blake Sutter, Facilities Project Manager, updated the University Assembly on the campus construction projects. The renovation projects include the following:

- Arts Administration Building (AAB)
- JCPenney – Welcome/Alumni Center
- Patient Care Center
- Provincial House
- Social Sciences & Business Building (SSB)
- TJ and Mercantile Library
- Various infrastructure improvements

The demolition of the Sassin Building and the old Post Office will be completed by June 2023. The Tower is scheduled for demolition in 2024. A monthly update of the status of the campus construction projects can be found at the Transform UMSL [website](#).

Other business:

Some of the faculty members circled back to the topic of the Mansion Hills Apartments closing which was discussed earlier in the meeting. They expressed their concerns on behalf of the students and wanted to ensure that students were getting the assistance they needed to find alternate housing. Provost Berberich responded that the Housing teams will continue to work with students to come up with some solutions.

Dr. McGinnis asked if there was any other business for the University Assembly. Hearing none, Dr. McGinnis adjourned the University Assembly meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sanjiv Bhatia
Senate/Assembly Secretary

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