

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the  
University of Missouri-St. Louis  
University Assembly  
September 20, 2022 – 3:00 p.m.  
202 JCPenney & Zoom option**

Senate Chair Jon McGinnis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Dr. McGinnis welcomed everyone attending in person and by Zoom to the first University Assembly meeting of 2022-2023. He asked for approval of the minutes from the Assembly meeting on April 26, 2022. The minutes were approved as written.

**Report of the Chairperson (Dr. Jon McGinnis):**

- Dr. McGinnis announced that there were a couple of changes to the University Assembly membership. He explained that Dr. Alice Hall was promoted to Associate Provost of Faculty Affairs as of July 1. Because Dr. Hall had one more year on her term as an at-large representative for the College of Arts and Sciences, a replacement was needed to fill that position. Dr. McGinnis reported that the Senate Operating Rules state that if an at-large senator resigns, the person with the next highest vote count from the most recent at-large election should fill that position. The person who received the next highest vote was Mr. Jim Craig. He has agreed to serve the last year of Dr. Hall's term. Dr. McGinnis also welcomed Mr. Gary Flotron who was returning to the Assembly as the adjunct representative.
- Dr. McGinnis reported that all of the chairs have now been elected for the 20 Senate/Assembly standing committees. He displayed a list of each of the newly-elected chairs.

**Report of the Chancellor (Dr. Kristin Sobolik):**

- Chancellor Sobolik reported that UMSL has risen to No. 107 among all public universities in the nation according to the *US News & World Report* 2023 "Best Colleges" ranking.
- *US News & World Report* ranks UMSL No. 75 in the nation among the "Top Performers on Social Mobility." The 2023 ranking highlights how well universities advance social mobility by enrolling and graduating large proportions of students who receive Pell Grants.
- UMSL earned the 2022 Higher Education Excellence Award (HEED) which is a national honor recognizing universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. UMSL is one of 103 universities across the nation – and the only university in Missouri – to be recognized with the distinction this year.
- UMSL was recognized in the *Military Times* for the "Best for Vets Colleges."
- *Washington Monthly* ranks UMSL as one of America's "Best Colleges for Student Voting" proving UMSL students are actively engaged in issues that matter in St. Louis and across the country.
- Chancellor Sobolik reminded the Assembly of UMSL's leadership team. A new member of the Chancellor's Cabinet is Ms. Lisa Capone who is the new Vice Chancellor for Advancement.
- Chancellor Sobolik displayed the list of the current deans. She welcomed Dr. Keshia Elder as the new dean of the College of Optometry and Dr. Frank Grady as the interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Chancellor Sobolik celebrated those that have received the UMSL Hero Award this year. She encouraged everyone to submit more nominations for this award.

- Chancellor Sobolik provided an enrollment update. Enrollments for first-time-to-college students has increased by 67%. The number of transfer students has also increased by 17%. She reported that enrollment is down for this Fall semester and we need to continue to work on retaining our students through to graduation.
- Chancellor Sobolik reported that UMSL is working on workforce integration to open up educational opportunities with corporations in the region and across the nation. UMSL has had recent successes with Amazon, Verizon, Nestle, Coca-Cola and others, in addition to the partnerships UMSL already has with Boeing and Edward Jones.
- Chancellor Sobolik announced a new branding for UMSL called “More is what moves us.” This branding will be used on billboards, advertising, and on the UMSL website. She praised the enrollment strategy team and the marketing/communication team for their work on this new branding.

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

- Ms. Mendez-Alm reported that the leadership of the Staff Association has changed. She will continue in her role as Chair of the Staff Association. Ms. Britne Bacca-Haupt is now the Vice Chair, and Mr. Austin Culbertson is the Secretary/Treasurer. She reported that UMSL is also well represented on the Intercampus Staff Advisory Council (ISAC) which is the staff council for all four UM System campuses. Mr. Culbertson is the ISAC Chair and Ms. Mendez-Alm is the Vice Chair of ISAC.
- Ms. Mendez-Alm stated that last year one of the topics the Staff Association focused on was staff morale. The Staff Association worked with Human Resources on various initiatives. One of the biggest initiatives was a series of listening sessions where staff could share their concerns. One of the topics that came up was community building which will be one of the topics that the Staff Association will focus on this year. Discussions will address ways that staff can re-connect with colleagues on a more personal level in order to build job satisfaction and to feel a connection to the university.
- Ms. Mendez-Alm reported that the biggest issue currently for staff is a substantial change in the way that staff accrue leave. At their September 7, 2022 meeting, the Board of Curators approved a significant change to the staff leave program that will begin in January 2024. Currently staff accrue vacation days, sick days and personal days each year. The recently-approved change will reduce the amount of leave and combine it into one category called Paid Time Off (PTO). A new modern option of the plan will be the addition of paid parental and caregiver leave, as well as short-term disability leave. Although UM System hopes this new plan will appeal to new hires, Ms. Mendez-Alm stated that there are many concerns from current employees who feel that their loyalty and longevity is not being respected. Ms. Mendez-Alm reported that the Staff Association will continue to advocate on behalf of the staff so that they feel respected and valued. She said that there are more details to come about this plan. She encouraged faculty and staff to learn more about this change at the following link:  
<https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/hr/modernizing-leave>

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

- Ms. Stark reported that the Student Government Association (SGA) has retained eight student senators this year. The SGA office has moved and is now located on the third floor of the MSC in the Student Involvement Office.

- Ms. Stark was pleased to report that the SGA will host the Campus Safe Walk once again after a two-year break due to COVID. The event will be held on Oct. 25. She explained that the Campus Safe Walk is the event where teams of students and other volunteers walk through designated areas of the campus to make a list of safety issues such as insufficient lighting, accessibility issues, or other safety concerns. A report is created and submitted to administrators so that the safety issues can be addressed. Ms. Stark said that the SGA is also working on other student engagement activities planned throughout the semester. The SGA hopes to schedule some Town Hall meetings to address any student concerns.
- Ms. Stark presented a resolution regarding Election Day Attendance Policy that was introduced by the Intercampus Student Council from all four UM System campuses. The resolution asks that faculty members avoid scheduling high-stake exams or presentations on Election Day. It also asks that faculty give students the opportunity to vote and serve as poll workers by implementing asynchronous coursework or a lenient attendance policy on Election Day. The University Assembly showed their support by voting to endorse the resolution.

#### **New Student Engagement Software (Ms. Michaela Wells & Dr. Jessica Long-Pease)**

Dr. Long-Pease announced that new software for student engagement has been chosen to replace MyEngage. Ms. Michaela Wells presented details regarding the new software called Triton Connect. Some of the features of Triton Connect include tracking attendance, communicating with students, and having the ability to create forms, surveys or polls. It can also be used to view upcoming events. Triton Connect can be downloaded as an app on cell phones. For additional Triton Connect information and questions, contact Ms. Michaela Wells at [mswells@umsl.edu](mailto:mswells@umsl.edu)

#### **Athletics Report (Dr. Joseph Pickard & Ms. Lindsay Pickering):**

The Assembly received an Athletics update from Faculty Athletics Representative Dr. Joe Pickard and Ms. Lindsay Pickering. Dr. Pickard asked that faculty provide students participating in university-sanctioned activities with reasonable accommodations for classes, exams, and quizzes that are missed because of these university-sanctioned activities. If faculty have any questions or concerns about student athletes, please contact Dr. Pickard or Ms. Pickering. Dr. Pickard encouraged everyone to attend upcoming games and matches.

#### **Budget Update:**

Ms. Tanika Busch, CFO, reported that the campus closed the FY22 budget with a 3.7% net operating margin. The FY23 budget submitted was approved by the Board of Curators and showed as a balanced budget that will need to be refined throughout the year with current enrollment, actual compensation, etc. The Finance & Administration Office has engaged subject matter experts for the drivers for the 5-year financial plan process that will be presented to the Budget and Planning Committee at a future meeting for recommendations. It was indicated that UMSL leadership is committed to both merit and market increases each year of the plan. Ms. Busch encouraged the attendees to attend future Budget and Planning Committee Zoom meetings that are tentatively scheduled on the following dates:

- Oct. 31 at 1:00
- Dec. 6 at 11:00
- Feb. 2 at 3:00
- Mar. 16 at 2:30
- Apr. 13 at 3:00

### **Master Plan Update:**

Mr. Matt Prsha, Interim Executive Director of Facilities Management, reminded the attendees that the Campus Master Plan was completed in 2021 with the following goals:

- Rightsize the campus by reducing the square footage and making smart use of existing space
- Reduce building operating costs and overall deferred maintenance
- Create environments where students can study, learn, and collaborate with peers
- Address campus infrastructure and accessibility needs
- Unify campus
- Improve quality of campus buildings with sustainable design principles
- UMSL Facilities will emphasize partnering with diverse suppliers in the UMSL Anchor Mission Footprint.

Mr. Prsha presented the details of the following projects that are planned over the next four years:

- Relocating College of Optometry offices to Patient Care Center 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and Provincial House
- Moving Fine Arts and Music to the Arts & Administration Building
- Social Sciences & Business (SSB) Building Modernization & Expansion
- Relocating College of Education from South Campus to Quad area on North Campus
- Renovation of Thomas Jefferson and Mercantile Library
- Renovating the JCPenney building into a Welcome/Alumni Center
- Renovation to provide a hub for Accelerate

Mr. Prsha reported that the buildings that will eventually be demolished are:

- Marillac Hall
- Music Building
- Education Administration Building
- Sassin Building
- Post Office
- South Campus Classroom Building.

Mr. Prsha addressed the questions of the University Assembly.

There being no other business, Dr. McGinnis asked that the University Assembly walk outside for a quick photo and adjourned the University Assembly meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sanjiv Bhatia

Senate/Assembly Secretary

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