

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the  
University of Missouri-St. Louis  
University Assembly  
September 22, 2020 – 3 p.m.  
Zoom meeting**

Senate Chair Alice Hall called the Zoom meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Dr. Hall asked for approval of the minutes from the Assembly meeting on April 28, 2020 and the minutes from the Special Assembly meeting that was held on August 11, 2020. Both sets of minutes were approved as written.

**Report of the Chairperson (Dr. Alice Hall):**

- Dr. Hall welcomed everyone to the University Assembly meeting. She announced that a new senator has been elected in the Information Systems and Technology Department. Dr. Vivek Singh is the new senator for the Information Systems and Technology Department and will complete the remainder of Ms. Mimi Duncan's term due to her retirement at the end of the semester.
- Dr. Hall also welcomed the two adjunct representatives who were recently elected to serve on the University Assembly for the Fall semester. Ms. Melissa Ehmke is from the College of Nursing and Mr. Gary Flotron is from the College of Business Administration.
- Dr. Hall reported that chairs have now been elected for all of the 20 Senate/Assembly committees. She displayed a list of all of the newly-elected committee chairs.

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

- Chancellor Sobolik reported that this year UMSL received its highest score ever in *US News and World Report* for rankings of national public research universities.
- Chancellor Sobolik stated that with the highest ranking of any university in the St. Louis region, UMSL remained one of the "Top Performers on Social Mobility," which highlights how well universities have graduated students who receive federal Pell Grants.
- UMSL is one of the recipients for the prestigious 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award – a national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- UMSL was recently awarded two significant grants – the Department of Education's TRIO grant to support student success and an NSF ADVANCE grant that supports universities making organizational changes to improve gender equity in academic careers in the fields of science (including the social and behavioral sciences) technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Chancellor Sobolik commended faculty, staff, and students on their efforts with the fall re-opening. She stated that 60% of courses are on-line and 40% are blended courses. At the time of the meeting, she reported that UMSL had 31 active COVID cases for students and six cases for employees.

- Chancellor Sobolik explained the change in reporting structure at the UM System level and the implementation of the Council of Chancellors who are working on guidelines for UM System leadership. In July, the Board of Curators gave the Council of Chancellors 120 days to create the guidelines. The final report will be presented at the November Board of Curators meeting.

Chancellor Sobolik asked Provost Mora to update the University Assembly on the following Academic Affairs topics:

- Dr. Mora reported that the Academic Program Prioritization (APP) Committee was launched in August and is chaired by Dr. Amber Reinhart, Provost Faculty Fellow. The committee's charge is to revisit the process launched in 2017-18. The 2020-21 Academic Program Prioritization Committee will analyze academic programs previously recommended for further review and make recommendations to the Provost that may result in additional resource investments into programs aligned with the institution's strategic areas of growth, strength, and excellence as well as the potential elimination, suspension, or alteration of other programs. This process is part of a longer-term institutional strategy for excellence in planning, operations, and stewardship aligned with UMSL's strategic plan. The first draft of the APP report is expected by the end of the semester with next steps expected in January.
- Dr. Mora explained that the Faculty Extra Compensation Task Force was launched in September and is chaired by Dr. Theresa Coble. The committee's charge states: Complementing the strategies to achieve excellence in planning, operations, and stewardship outlined in UMSL's strategic plan, the 2020-21 Faculty Extra Compensation Task Force (ECT) will make data-driven recommendations to the Provost to increase the transparency, consistency, and equity of various forms of extra compensation for faculty across the institution. The first set of this Task Force's recommendations are expected in late October/mid-November.
- Dr. Mora also reported that the search for the Dean of the College of Business Administration has begun and is chaired by Dean Edward Munn Sanchez. After reviewing the initial applications, eight-twelve candidates will be chosen. The committee will conduct Zoom interviews with the semi-finalist candidates. Open forums will be held for the final candidates.
- Dr. Mora stated that Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, Dr. Alan Byrd, is leaving UMSL in October to accept another position. An interim will be named until a permanent replacement can be found.

Provost Mora addressed the questions from the University Assembly.

#### **Report of the Staff Association (Ms. Tiffany Izard Magee):**

Ms. Izard Magee reported that the Staff Association has been discussing the following goals this year:

- The importance of having a staff presence in the room during important discussions in order to have multiple lenses looking at problems and suggesting solutions.
- The members of the Staff Association are in constant discussions about staff retention. They have discussed how important it is for everyone to understand the role of staff and how much institutional knowledge is lost when a staff member leaves.

- Career pathways are needed to encourage staff retention.
- This year 70 staff members have service milestones. Due to UM System budget cuts, gift cards awarded for milestones have been eliminated. The Staff Association is looking at other ways to show appreciation for staff.
- An all-staff Zoom meeting has been scheduled for Oct. 21 at 12:30. Everyone is welcome.
- On a personal note, Ms. Izard Magee announced that she is expecting her first child and will be on maternity leave starting in November. She stated that Dr. Cassidy Thompson will be filling in for her in her role as Staff Association Chair while she is on leave.

University Assembly members congratulated Ms. Izard Magee and wished her well.

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

Mr. Methner reported that the SGA's biggest priority right now is focusing on students to make sure that students are successful. SGA has been answering students' questions and encouraging them to get involved in campus activities virtually. Mr. Methner stated that the SGA hosted a town hall meeting at the beginning of the semester to address student's questions and concerns. The SGA hopes to organize another meeting to update students and possibly look at best practices for students during this time. Mr. Methner believes that students are responding well. The SGA is also working on their Big Event which is a service event and will be virtual this year. They have asked students to consider causes that they are passionate about or areas they would like to improve around the community, state, or local level. They are teaming up with the Student Involvement Office to work on their areas of interest.

**Budget Update (Ms. Tanika Busch):**

Ms. Tanika Busch, Interim CFO, provided the University Assembly with a budget update. She explained that the decreasing state support, a drop in enrollment, and the effects of COVID-19 will create serious ongoing budgetary deficits without further action. Targeted reductions could be realized through the following:

- Athletics Program
- Extra Compensation Task Force
- Program Reprioritization
- Facilities Capital Spend Review
- Decrease in Footprint
- Justification Process for Positions (Faculty & Staff)

She reported that the focused areas of revenue increases are enrollment, research, and philanthropy. Ms. Busch addressed the questions and concerns of the Assembly. As more details become available regarding the budget, Ms. Busch will return to the University Assembly with additional information.

There being no other business, Dr. Hall adjourned the University Assembly meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erika Gibb  
Senate/Assembly Secretary

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