

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
University of Missouri-St. Louis
Faculty Senate
January 27, 2026**

Senate Chair Erika Gibb called the Faculty Senate meeting to order at 3:06 p.m. She asked for approval of the Senate minutes from the meeting on December 9, 2025. The minutes were approved as written.

Report of the Chairperson (Dr. Erika Gibb):

- Dr. Gibb welcomed our new Biology representative for the senate, Rebecca Polich.

- Dr. Gibb stated that as a co-sponsor, the Faculty Senate invites everyone to attend the Homecoming Chili Feed on Feb. 17 from 12:00-2:00. The event continues the tradition of the colleges competing for the best chili and winning the Golden Ladle. The ticket costs are \$8 for faculty/staff and \$6 for students. The proceeds are donated to the Triton Pantry.

Report of the Chancellor (Chancellor Kristin Sobolik):

- Chancellor Sobolik announced accolades:
 - UMSL is ranked number 11 nationally and number 1 in Missouri for online education
 - UMSL is ranked number 5 nationally and number 1 in Missouri for online education for Veterans
 - UMSL is ranked number 33 nationally and number 1 in Missouri for online MBA programs
 - UMSL is ranked number 47 nationally for online Business Programs

- Chancellor Sobolik announced the January recipients of the UMSL hero award – Lauren Pflug, Matt Henry and Vivek Singh. Chancellor Sobolik encouraged everyone to continue sending in nominations using this link: umsl.edu/chancellor/heroes

Intercampus Faculty Cabinet (IFC) Report (Dr. John Meriac):

Dr. Meriac reported that the IFC met on December 15, 2025 with the following agenda topics:

- Government Relations provided updates on state funding levels and expectations for the next fiscal year. The system is keeping an eye on some proposed bills that are relevant for 4-year public universities.

- Information Technology provided us with information on procurement of AI tools. Many AI tools have language that states the tool will "co-own" any uploaded content, and the system is carefully reviewing and creating policies to ensure that our IP is protected.

Dr. Meriac reported that the IFC met on January 26, 2026 with the following agenda topics:

- The system has an RFP for a replacement for MyVita. They are prioritizing essential features and ensuring that the replacement does not require unnecessary information to ensure that reporting is less time consuming and works for its intended purpose.
- Discussed the international travel policy, particularly regarding the Countries of Concern on the list. There are risks, including evidence of tampering of computers returning from some of these countries. The policy is in place to protect data, records, and systems that the university uses.

As a reminder, UMSL's IFC representatives can confidentially share faculty concerns to the UM System and suggest agenda items for discussion at future meetings, including meetings with administrators. Please send any questions or concerns to Dr. John Meriac (meriacj@umsl.edu), Dr. Susan Brownell (sbrownell@umsl.edu), or Dr. Erika Gibb (gibbe@umsl.edu).

Committee on Committees Report (Dr. Pamela Stuerke):

- *The Faculty Senate voted in favor of replacing Michael Gearhart for the remainder of Wendy Olivas' term on the Steering Committee.*
- *The Faculty Senate also voted to approve changes to the General Education Committee structure.*

Dr. Gibb asked if there was any other business. Hearing none, the meeting adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Meriac
Senate/Assembly Secretary

(Minutes written by Allison Belew, Faculty Senate/University Assembly Office)