

UMSL Retirees Association

Minutes of the December 4, 2019

Midyear General Membership Meeting

The UMSL Retirees Association General Membership Meeting took place at the organization's holiday luncheon on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at Glen Echo Country Club. Over 70 retirees and guests attended. The luncheon goal was to highlight and encourage committee activity. Committee chairs gave brief reports about their work. Chairs and co-chairs briefly described their activities for the 2019-2020 academic year. Dave Ganz, Dave Garin, and Helene Sherman reported on respective UMSL RA committee activity. Tom Schnell highlighted tentative plans for an upcoming visit to the Gateway Arch Museum on March 31, 2020. RA Treasurer Steve Spaner provided a written report of RA finances along with membership highlights. Spaner reported on over four hundred retirees listed in the RA Directory and now over 150 RA Lifetime Members.

After lunch, UMSL Provost and Interim Chancellor Kristin Sobolik described current University achievements and challenges. She announced that Joel Glassman had been honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award and the Higher Education Accreditation Commission fully accredited the University with no improvements being recommended. She reported that over 3,000 students will have graduated from UMSL in 2019 and over 80% of UMSL alumnus live and work in the St. Louis area. UMSL was identified as a Tier 1 institution for the sixth year in a row, noting rising graduation and retention rates. Research expenses increased by 65% in the past four years. UMSL was ranked in the Top 100 of American universities by "US News and World Report." Student grade point averages have increased and the freshman class entering in fall 2019 had the highest ACT scores on record. Enrollment decreased somewhat, as it has across the nation. Efforts to increase enrollment have included the university working with a firm on a strategic plan, focusing on money management issues.

Sobolik stressed how UMSL is concentrating on graduate programs and continuing to serve adult students. Ten new programs are currently being offered to students. The university budget is balanced for the third year in a row. With respect to major challenges, strategic investments are reportedly needed and currently being developed; including increasing diversity and inclusive scholarships, merit raises for employees and space consolidation plans to address campus deferred maintenance.

UMSL RA President Mike Murray thanked current board members for their service, including Past President Debbie Kettler, for organizing the Holiday Luncheon and Brenda Shannon-Simms for assisting Ericka Webb in registering and assisting the luncheon attendees. He thanked UMSL Human Resources Executive Director, Jim Hertel, for the continued support of his department. President-Elect, Clark Hickman, described the Retirement Association's staff/faculty awards program, suggesting members nominate retirees for this honor.



UMSL Retiree's Association Executive Assistant, Ericka Webb of Human Resources with RA President and UM Curators' Distinguished Professor Emeritus Mike Murray.

He also noted the organization's Facebook page and the importance of consulting it for information about RA activities.

Upcoming Events:

- **Monthly meetings**

- • **March 31** - Planning for an RA tour of the St. Louis Gateway Arch is currently underway and is scheduled to take place on March 31, 2020. Tom Schnell will be leading the effort to tour The Arch Museum.

UMSL Retirees Association Executive Assistant, Ericka