



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Minutes of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Thursday, May 25, 2017
Fitzpatrick Room, Murdock Hall 208**

The following Trustees were present:

Susan Gold, Chair
JD Chesloff, Vice Chair
John Barrett III
Mohan Boodram, via teleconference
Lisa Chamberlain
Buffy Lord
Denise Marshall
Rob Reilly
Kathy Therrien
Brianna O'Rourke, Student Trustee

Others present:

James F. Birge, President
Denise Richardello, Executive Vice President
Bernadette Alden, Director of Marketing & Communication
Cynthia Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Larry Behan, Vice President of Administration & Finance
Barbara Chaput, Director of Human Resources
Stephanie Collins, Student Trustee 2017-2018
Molly Fannon-Williams, Interim Vice President of Institutional Advancement
Bonnie Howland, Director of Student Accounts
Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs
Theresa O'Bryant, Associate Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator
Beth Petri, Director of Financial Aid
Gina Puc, Director of Admissions
David Langston and Carl Wolf, retired Faculty
Ginger Menard, Clerk

Complying with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30 and 15A, Section 9, and with a quorum present, the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met at 5:00 p.m. at Murdock Hall on May 25, 2017 with Board Chair Gold presiding.

Chair Gold called the meeting to order at 4:59 p.m. She introduced the new Student Trustee for 2017-2018, Stephanie Collins, and welcomed her to the Board.

Approval of Minutes: April 6, 2017 Board of Trustees meeting

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the April 6, 2017, meeting of the Board and all actions contained therein.

Report on the Minutes of the April 6, 2017 Enrollment Management Committee Meeting

Trustee Boodram reported on behalf of the committee. The committee received an update on Admissions numbers from Gina Puc. There has been an increase in accepts and a slight increase in applications from Berkshire County. Admissions also participated in many on-the-spot acceptance days at community colleges. The committee also received information in the change in the federal policy that will be utilizing “prior prior” year to evaluate financial aid packages.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the April 6, 2017, meeting of the Enrollment Management Committee and all actions contained therein.

Report on the Minutes of the April 6, 2017 Executive Committee Meeting

Chair Gold reported on behalf of the committee.

Trustees Chesloff and Trustee Lord will serve with Chair Gold on an ad hoc committee for the presidential evaluation. The group will meet again on June 5 and will be interviewing individuals from the campus and the community. The final evaluation is due to Commissioner Santiago by June 30.

The committee received an update on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) task force from President Birge. They reviewed the results of the Supportive and Inclusive Community survey. An Executive Summary of the survey will be produced and distributed to the campus community. Based on survey feedback the DEI will invite a participant from North Adams to serve on the task force as well. The Task Force will be also review the results and offer suggestions to address issues that have been identified.

As a result of the many campus conversations, the need for MCLA to hire a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) has emerged. Dr. Will Lewis, a consultant who has served as a CDO came to campus for two days met and with faculty, staff, and students. He will provide suggestions for the structure and responsibilities of the CDO position and will generate a report based on his visit which will be shared with the DEI Task Force.

Consultant Linda Campanella provided an update on the Strategic Planning process to-date. Task forces have been engaged for each of the eight goals to develop both short- and long-term strategies as well as metrics that align with DHE priorities. Initially there were seven goals but a goal specific to communication was added by the task force. Metrics must also be finalized to effectively evaluate goals.

The next step in the process is to present the plan to-date to the DHE Strategic Planning Committee on May 30.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the April 6, 2017, meeting of the Executive Committee and all actions contained therein.

Report on the Minutes of the April 27, 2017 Student Affairs Committee Meeting

Trustee Lord reported on behalf of the committee.

Senior Milena Casamassima spoke with the committee about her experiences on a service learning trip to Haiti over spring break. She shared that the trip was life-changing and she returned with a broader worldview. Although Milena is not from the Berkshires she will be staying in the area as she has secured employment here.

Celia Norcross discussed the goals of the Orientation and First Year Experience (FYE) programs which include First Days and the First Year seminars. She provided a brief overview of these programs. New this semester is the addition of common time twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, throughout the 14-week program. This will allow for all freshmen to participate at the same time in discussions and seminars which will enhance the feeling of being together as a cohort. New for orientation this year is that the parents and students will have separate schedules which will allow them the time to separately gather information and ask questions.

This summer DEI task force will work with President Birge on creating the scope of the work for a Chief Diversity Officer. A communication plan will be established to report on this work to the campus. Police Chief Wynn from Pittsfield will be invited to campus to provide additional training for MCLA public safety officers.

Two co-chairs have been identified to advance “Smoke Free MCLA 2018”— Brian Gallagher from Student Affairs, and Chris Hays from Human Resources. These are two important areas to involve as this is both a student affairs and workforce issue.

Finally, the committee received an update on the spring SGA election and student disqualifications. As a result, SGA has amended their bylaws and these changes will go into effect next year.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the April 27, 2017, meeting of the Student Affairs Committee and all actions contained therein.

Report on the Minutes of the May 3, 2017 Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

Trustee Chamberlain reported on behalf of the committee.

As a follow up to the committee's request to get to know faculty who will be applying for tenure in the near future, three faculty members attended the meeting and shared information on their areas of expertise and their work with the students: Prof. Amber Engelson, Prof. Justin Golub, and Prof. Diane Scott. As a follow up to these presentations Trustee Chamberlain shared that Professor Scott, Arts Management, will be meeting with the Halle Chamberlain of the Chamberlain Group, a graduate of the first MCLA arts management class, to discuss the expanding field of arts management and its broad benefits and applications.

The committee reviewed the faculty emeritus policy and the list of former faculty nominated for that designation. A motion was passed to approve the slate and advance it at today's Board meeting. Trustee Chamberlain noted that a few of the retired faculty are at today's meeting and will attend the post-meeting reception.

Trustee Chesloff asked for clarification on the benefits of this designation. Dean Joslin responded that it provides a point of connection and includes library privileges and continued use of their College email address. Trustee Reilly added that it is a distinct honor for faculty and also benefits the College as many retired professors continue to publish and present in their fields of expertise.

In addition to the interest of the Board in getting to better know the faculty and their work the Trustees requested a tour of the Feigenbaum Center of Science & Innovation as many have not toured the facility since it opened in 2013.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the slate of nominees with the designation as Faculty Emeritus or Emerita.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the May 3, 2017, meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee and all actions contained therein.

Report on the Minutes of the May 16, 2017 Fiscal Affairs Committee Meeting

Trustee Marshall reported on behalf of the committee noting that there are four action items to present at the end of her report.

The committee reviewed the 3rd quarter report which provides a summary of all funds by object class with notes included to address positive or negative variances. The projected year end deficit is down to \$15,346.00. This number should decrease following the 4th quarter actuals. Based on estimates, the College will likely not need to draw from reserves as originally anticipated. It was reiterated that MCLA is committed to having funds available to provide core academic college.

The committee then reviewed the student accounts receivable report. Outstanding balances have continued to decrease and are down to 22K from 46K on May 1. A small amount, \$7,291.83 has been recommended for write-off as all avenues of collection have been exhausted.

The draft budget for FY 2018 was reviewed. The budget is presented as a draft as the state budget is not yet final and enrollment is still being finalized. The draft budget is based on the assumption of revenue remaining flat. Senator Hinds has put forth an earmark for the Berkshire Cultural Resources Council/Gallery 51 in the amount of \$75K which is also not included in the current budget.

Trustee Marshall noted that the original draft budget had included a 3% fee increase. This number was removed from the draft and the committee discussed a proposed fee range to bring before the board.

The committee reviewed a change to the procurement card policy and the Board Chair will now be reviewing and signing off on the President's credit card statements rather than the chair of the Fiscal Affairs Committee.

The first action item is for a motion to approve the write-off uncollectible funds related to specific accounts that have gone through an exhaustive collection process.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED To accept the recommendation to write off the amount of \$7,291.83 related to these specific accounts.

The next action item for the Board was to approve a proposed range for fee increases pending the outcome of the final budget. Trustee Barrett requested that the College remain committed to keep any fee increase as low as possible. It was restated that the draft budget, as presented to the Board, does not currently contain any student fee increase.

In addition, a typo was noted in the minutes from the May 16 in which fees were mistakenly referred to as funds.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED To accept the recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the College increase the campus support fee for the 2017-2018 academic year in a range from \$0-\$500, contingent on the outcome of the state budget process for FY 2018.

A motion to vote on the draft budget was brought forth pending discussion. Trustee Marshall noted that though the draft budget was based on full staffing but there will likely be some savings through open positions and date of fulfillment. Trustee Barrett questioned whether the Board should be voting on a deficit budget and suggested drafting the budget based on the proposed Senate budget rather than House 1 on which it is currently based.

The Board discussed a number of issues including the potential Gallery 51 earmark, unfilled positions, and the pension liability line. Debate ensued over the pros and cons of advancing a budget showing a deficit or including an allocation from reserves to advance it as balanced. Following a robust discussion, the draft budget being submitted to the full Board will not include a transfer from reserves. If a draw from reserves is needed the Board will vote on that at a later date.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED To accept the recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the College proceed with the preliminary budget, contingent on the outcome of the state budget process, and to approve the accessing of reserves with the condition that any such funds will be repaid.

The vote was 9-1 in favor of the motion.

The final motion put forward was to accept the updated procurement card policy.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED To accept the change in the Procurement Card Policy to have all travel related expenses estimated and approved by the cardholder's supervisor in advance of the trip.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Trustee Marshall reported on behalf of the committee. The ad hoc Committee included Trustees Boodram, Chamberlain, and Marshall. They met on May 22 regarding nominees for the positions of Board Chair and Vice Chair for 2017-2018.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the nominations of Susan Gold as Chair and JD Chesloff as Vice Chair for a term of one year.

Chairperson's report

Chair Gold began her report with the motion for the Continuation of Presidential Authority for the summer. This is an annual action taken at this time of year as the Board heads into recess for the summer.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To continue the President's authority to make such appointments and decisions that are necessary for the normal operation of the College during periods when the Board does not conduct regularly scheduled meetings.

As outlined in the Board By-laws the Board Chair is tasked with appointing all chairpersons and members of the Board Committees. The following chairs have agreed to continue to serve for 2017-2018:

Lisa Chamberlain, Academic Affairs
Denise Marshall, Fiscal Affairs
Buffy Lord, Students Affairs
Mohan Boodram, Enrollment Management

Trustee Reilly will be joining the Student Affairs committee along with our Student Trustee, Stephanie Collins. Trustee Barrett will move to the Fiscal Affairs committee and Trustee Therrien will move to Academic Affairs.

Chair Gold then provided an update on the Presidential Evaluation process. Commissioner Santiago has requested that all Presidential Evaluations be submitted by June 30 this year. Chair Gold, along with Trustees Buffy Lord and JD Chesloff, are serving as the ad hoc committee for the evaluation. President Birge has submitted a self-evaluation based on the goals he shared with the Board at the meeting on September 15, 2016.

In an email earlier this week Ginger shared the dates for the 2017-2018 Board meetings as well as the Executive Committee meetings. She will be in touch with the Committee Chairs next week to finalize those meetings for next year.

Chair Gold recognized and thanked the entire staff and faculty for putting together two amazing campus events this semester – President Birge's inauguration on April 21 and Commencement on May 13. Inauguration week was filled with activities highlighting our staff and faculty including the first Innovation and Entrepreneurship Challenge – of which Trustee Chesloff was a

judge – and the 15th annual Undergraduate Research Conference. Though unable to attend Commencement due to a conflict with a family wedding, Chair Gold heard from many people that it was a wonderful day and of the graciousness of Congressman Lewis and his inspiring words to our students.

Finally, as mentioned at the start of the meeting, today is the final Board meeting for Student Trustee, Brianne O'Rourke. Chair Gold noted that Brianne has been an engaged and thoughtful member of the Board whom everyone has enjoyed working with and getting to know you this past year. She will be missed.

Student Trustee Brianne O'Rourke offered her thanks to the Board for all of the time and effort they put into their work as trustees and how she appreciated seeing them at the end of year events and awards ceremonies.

President's Report

President Birge also thanked Brianne O'Rourke and noted the importance of having a student voice on the Board.

He offered his thanks to everyone for their work and participation in Commencement. It was a day of such great energy and really helps people understand why we do what we do. It was a stellar moment for MCLA.

On Tuesday, May 30 President Birge will travel to Boston along with Monica Joslin and Gina Puc for a second touchpoint meeting with the Board of Higher Education regarding the Strategic Planning process. Over the summer Executive staff and others will be focused on prioritizing tactics that were identified and applying metrics on how to measure the goals that have been set as well as how best to roll out the plan.

A proposal has been sent to the Mellon Foundation for funding focused on the Humanities. President Birge has worked with Cindy Brown and faculty on a number of ideas including the creation of a Berkshire Humanities Council, a cultural asset map for the Berkshires, and opportunities for additional professional development for local and national faculty. At their request a planning grant has been submitted which could provide funding up to 50k to begin this process followed by an application for a direct grant within the year.

President Birge then provided an update on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) task force. A meeting was held yesterday to discuss the report from Dr. Will Lewis and how to operationalize the plan to hire a CDO along with other campus needs necessary to prepare for this work. A smaller group from the DEI will provide input in crafting the CDO job description.

President Birge also met with a newly formed Faculty and Staff of Color Senate with a focus on how to create safe space for faculty/staff/students of color and how the College can provide

support. President Birge noted the importance in hearing from others about what else the institution can do to support inclusion.

An update on the pool project was given. Renderings of the new space should be received in early June. The College has the resources for this project from the MSCBA bond bill from FY15 along with funds from renewed contract with Aramark. There will also be opportunities for donor gifts and sponsorships. SGA approved the plans for this project earlier this year.

Additionally, there is a list of needed renovations for FPA theater spaces that include new seating and backstage renovations. President Birge will be working with Advancement to identify potential funding for these projects.

Professors Frances Jones-Sneed and Ely Janis are planning another civil rights trip for spring 2018 and the College will be looking for possible funding sources as more funding will provide increased opportunity for student participation.

President Birge shared that he and Lisa attended a successful alumni gathering in Plymouth last week. He was struck by the number of alums who left the area and now want to return to the Berkshires. This brought to mind a program he had heard about on NPR a while ago about local banks with distressed properties on its books helping to pay off student loans if they purchased one of these properties and agreed to live there for 5 years. Further investigation is needed about how to make a similar program viable but he would like to meet with the Berkshire Housing Authority and others to see if what, if any, program could be set up to serve the needs of alums wishing to stay in or return to the Berkshires.

Finally, he has shared his summer schedule with Chair Gold and submitted his requested vacation time.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m.