



My College. Right from the Start.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, February 2, 2012
Sullivan Lounge, MCLA Amsler Campus Center**

The following Trustees were present:

Stephen Crowe, Chair
Tyler Fairbank, Vice Chair
Jane Allen
James Clemmer
Joelle Collins
William Dudley
Shirley Edgerton
Susan Gold
Richard Lamb
Dr. Eugene Leibowitz
Jaynelle Bellemore, Student Trustee

Others present:

Mary Grant, President
Joseph Charon, Director of Public Safety
Thomas Bernard, Clerk

Approximately 70 attendees comprising MCLA students; members of the College faculty, staff, and administration; city residents; and members of the local media.

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 5:31 p.m. in the Sullivan Lounge on February 2, 2012, with Board Chair Crowe presiding.

Approval of the Minutes of the December 15, 2011, Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the December 15, 2011, meeting of the Board and all actions contained therein.

Approval of the Minutes of the January 17, 2012, Meeting of the Executive Committee

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the January 17, 2012, meeting of the Executive Committee and all actions contained therein.

Discussion and Board Action Regarding Arming MCLA Campus Police Officers

Chair Crowe delivered a detailed report on the information presented to the committee and other board members present at the January 17th Executive Committee meeting.

Nine Trustees were present at the meeting.

The committee members and other Trustees in attendance had an in-depth discussion of the background, process, and other considerations related to the question of whether to issue MCLA Campus Police Officers firearms as part of their standard equipment.

The committee meeting followed updates to the Board at their September and October meetings, as well as at meetings of Board committees during the fall.

Prior to the December Meeting of the Board, the MCLA Student Government Association (SGA) conducted a student referendum on support for arming MCLA Campus Police Officers.

In light of the student referendum, and to allow time for careful deliberation of all information and opinion related to arming MCLA Campus Police Officers, the Board agreed at their December meeting that the Executive Committee would review the arming of MCLA Campus Police Officers at its January meeting, and that the Board would hold a meeting of the Board in early February for the purposes of discussion and Board action related to the arming of MCLA Campus Police Officers.

Prior to the January 17th Executive Committee meeting, Board members had the opportunity to review a draft document that outlined the background and considerations related to arming MCLA Campus Police Officers. The final draft of this document is included in the Board's materials for this meeting. As part of this background material, Trustees also reviewed video from two campus panel discussions held in November.

Chair Crowe directed that a copy of the background document provided at the February 2 meeting of the Board, and the video from the November panel discussions, be incorporated into the minutes of the February 2 meeting.

At the January 17th Executive Committee meeting, MCLA Public Safety Director Joseph Charon outlined the campus process related to this issue, and noted that there has been a collective, community process of input and discussion over the course of more than 40 meetings and briefings held since April 2011.

The committee discussed the legal powers, duties and responsibilities of sworn police officers as compared to non-sworn officers. MCLA's sworn special state police officers are empowered and expected to enforce laws, and also have the authority and duty to use appropriate levels of force in carrying out their duties.

The Committee was informed that the MCLA Faculty Association and the campus chapter of the Association of Professional Administrators surveyed their members, and was provided with the results of these surveys. It was noted that at the time of the surveys neither group elected to adopt a formal position.

Subsequent to the survey, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Association stated that they strongly opposed the arming of MCLA Campus Police Officers.

The committee also heard that following the student referendum, the Student Senate of SGA voted to endorse the results of the vote, and to officially oppose the arming of campus police.

The union representing classified staff (which includes Campus Police Officers) did not conduct a survey, but has been part of the campus input process.

During the Executive Committee meeting, Director Charon outlined the background and training of MCLA's Campus Police Officers. Key points include:

- All officers have attended and continue to attend certified law enforcement academies
- All officers go through an annual review conducted by the Massachusetts State Police to ensure they have met mandated certification and training standards
- Two officers serve or have served in the military; one officer worked for the Central Intelligence Agency
- Five officers currently serve as officers with municipal police departments in addition to their MCLA service
- All officers are eligible to hold a Massachusetts license to carry firearms; six officers are currently licensed
- Individual officers hold between 5 and 50 qualifications and certifications in numerous law enforcement areas
- One holds a Master's degree in Criminal Justice
- Four hold Bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice
- Two hold Associate's degrees in Criminal Justice
- One has completed substantial coursework toward a bachelor's degree

- One is a high school graduate with 15 years experience as a sworn and warranted police officer

The committee discussed the importance of the fact that MCLA maintains a sworn and warranted team of Campus Police Officers, and the significant differences in training, duties, and responsibilities between sworn and warranted officers and security guards. It was noted that the level of training and professionalism of MCLA's officers, and their background and experience in community policing makes them highly valued by municipal police departments, which frequently recruit MCLA officers to municipal forces.

At the meeting, an informal poll of Trustees indicated support for arming Campus Police Officers.

The Student Trustee expressed opposition to arming Campus Police Officers, reflecting the official position adopted by the Student Government Association following a student referendum held in December.

Chair Crowe then offered the following motion.

MOTION: To authorize the President of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to arm MCLA Campus Police Officers with firearms as part of their standard duty equipment within the following parameters: all Campus Police Officers must first be properly trained and certified in the use of duty firearms and the duties, responsibilities, and policies under which they will be so armed.

Chair Crowe then invited discussion on the motion by members of the Board of Trustees.

Trustee Clemmer noted that he takes his role as a Trustee and as an alumnus of the College seriously. He noted that it is important to balance excellence in academics with a safe environment for students. In the face of unpredictable circumstances, he supported arming Campus Police Officers in order to provide safety to the campus community.

Trustee Allen spoke from her perspective as a former school principal. She stated that in this role, she put the safety of her students as her top priority. She noted that the board cares deeply about the safety of MCLA students. She indicated her support for arming Campus Police Officers.

Trustee Edgerton noted that she also takes her role as a trustee and an alumna of the College seriously. She stated that she is not necessarily in favor of firearms, but noted that in light of violent incidents at other college campuses, the College has an obligation to be proactive in assuring the safety of students and community members. In the event of a violent incident leading to loss of life, she noted that the Board would not want to tell parents the College was not prepared, and supported arming Campus Police Officers from this point of view.

Trustee Fairbank spoke to the serious responsibility of serving as a Trustee of the College, and the fact that Trustees are appointed to make good decisions on behalf of the institution over the long term. He noted that at the beginning of the discussion about arming, he assumed MCLA Campus Police Officers were armed. He explained that the Board went through a “thorough and thoughtful process of listening and learning” and that he brought no preconceived notions to the process. He commended the students for their engagement in the process and acknowledged Director Charon’s professionalism during what he termed “a phenomenal process to go through.” Trustee Fairbank noted that the safety of the MCLA community rests with trained police officers rather than security guards. In light of the Board’s obligation to preserve the mission, safety, and security of the College, he “very strongly support[ed]” arming MCLA Campus Police Officers.

Trustee Bellemore thanked Director Charon and President Grant for leading the process. In a prepared statement, she noted that “SGA put forth and fully supported a referendum producing an outcome of 455 votes...a little over two-thirds of these votes, or 308 students, voted against the arming of public safety. It is my duty and honor to stand by the requests of the students and advocate that the Campus Police are not armed.” She further noted that “no matter what the result may be the student body would appreciate being part of the moving forward process.”

Trustee Collins expressed her admiration for the community policing model that underlies MCLA’s public safety operations. She indicated that she has confidence this commitment and connection will be sustained going forward. She noted that she has faith the process of arming will be undertaken with the utmost clarity, and expressed her support for arming MCLA Campus Police Officers.

Trustee Lamb supported arming MCLA Campus Police Officers. He expressed his confidence in MCLA Campus Police in responding to a critical incident, and expressed his respect and support for continued input from students and faculty moving forward.

He offered the following amendment to the original motion made by Chair Crowe:

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To amend the motion before the Board to include the following language: The Board expects the training and certification process to be complete, and arming of MCLA Campus Police Officers implemented, no less than six months, but no more than one year, from the date this motion is adopted. Within one year of implementation, the Board will require the President to provide a review of this matter to the Board.

The amendment passed unanimously.

Trustee Dudley stated that he came into the discussions of arming MCLA Campus Police officers uncertain about the need to do so. He contrasted MCLA’s sworn and warranted Campus Police Officers with security guards at other institutions and noted that the high level of training and preparation of MCLA’s Campus Police force provided a compelling argument in favor of arming MCLA Campus Police Officers.

Trustee Crowe stated that he came into the discussions of arming MCLA Campus Police officers neutral on the subject, but assuming that MCLA Campus Police Officers already were armed. He listened carefully to the opinions expressed on both sides of the issue, and was particularly interested in the video from the two campus panel discussions held in November. He was impressed by the process and the thorough deliberation. He thanked the Board, the president, and Director Charon.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To authorize the President of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to arm MCLA Campus Police Officers with firearms as part of their standard duty equipment within the following parameters: all Campus Police Officers must first be properly trained and certified in the use of duty firearms and the duties, responsibilities, and policies under which they will be so armed. The Board expects the training and certification process to be complete, and arming of MCLA Campus Police Officers implemented, no less than six months, but no more than one year, from the date this motion is adopted. Within one year of implementation, the Board will require the President to provide a review of this matter to the Board.

The vote was 10-1 in favor of the motion. Trustee Bellemore cast the opposing vote.

Following the vote, Chair Crowe invited Public Safety Director Joseph Charon to offer comments. He read the following statement:

MCLA faculty, staff, students and guests, I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who weighed in on the issue before the Board. The issue of whether to arm Campus Police is both complex and dynamic. I have observed over the past ten months that community members certainly have varied positions based on a variety of factors. Ideally, a college community promotes an environment where community members are free to inquire and express their opinions; a community that engages and encourages an open exchange of ideas and seeks input from all who wish to participate. All too often, human beings cannot stand with varied opinion while simultaneously maintaining a civil discourse. Throughout the community engagement process, in a variety of venues, community members have debated the topic before the Board today in a manner that speaks volumes about our community's ability to treat each other respectfully. With all this being said... I stand yet again as a proud member of our MCLA community.

President Grant, as the Director of Public Safety, and on behalf of all of the staff in the MCLA Campus Police Department, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to you for your vision, leadership, and support around all aspects of institutional safety and security and specifically, the department's continued pursuit for excellence.

To the Board of Trustees, I have attended various executive committee meetings and full board meetings in an effort to present information and discuss the issues of arming MCLA Campus Police Officers. I have bear witness to the careful, critical, objective approach each of you undertook while we all sought to provide remedy to a challenging, dynamic and complex issue. Just like the campus community, I know each you also had varied positions at varying times. Today's decision is evidence of your commitment, individually and collectively, to ensure the best interests and current and future standing of MCLA is at the foundation of even the toughest of decisions you are asked to make. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity I have been given to work alongside of, and on behalf of, such a committed group of professionals.

And so one chapter closes, and a new one begins for the MCLA Department of Public Safety – Campus Police. I went straight to our website for my next comments.

“The Department of Public Safety - Campus Police is a progressive department staffed with dedicated men and women committed to serving the MCLA educational community with pride and professionalism. Our "Core Values" program promotes "LEADERSHIP by example" by instilling in each and every Campus Police Officer and employee, the desire to protect, serve, and exemplify these character traits as a community standard for all to follow: Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Duty, Ethics, Respect, Service, Honor, Integrity and Professionalism.

It is our belief in, and commitment to, adhering to these core values that allow us to form close partnerships with all of our community members. It is a bond based on community confidence and trust in our department's ability to be responsive in all times of need.”

These words are perhaps more relevant now, than ever. I stand before all of you this evening offering my personal commitment and my professional commitment to ensure I, and all the members of the Campus Police Department, keep your trust and confidence in the highest regard in our service to you.

Thank you.

Chair Crowe then invited President Grant to offer comments.

The president noted that the question of arming MCLA campus police officers was complex. She noted that the vote taken by the board was informed by a process that began in 2008, if not sooner.

President Grant thanked the Board, and all members of the MCLA community who participated in conversations about arming MCLA Campus Police Officers. She stressed that the outcome of the Board's vote did not mean all voices and perspectives were not carefully considered. In particular, the president noted that as the implementation process proceeds, discussion and engagement will continue to ensure we sustain the sense of community that is a hallmark of the MCLA experience.

President Grant thanked the Board for their efforts. She also thanked Director Charon. She noted that there is much work to be done as this decision is implemented. She asked that the community continue to offer their wisdom, effort, and support going forward.

Trustee Crowe thanked all in attendance for their interest and involvement in a complex and challenging process.

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 6:04 p.m.