



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

October 24, 2019

Murdock Hall, Room 208

### **The following Trustees were present:**

Denise Marshall, Chair  
John Barrett III  
Brenda Burdick

Mohan Boodram  
JD Chesloff  
Susan Gold

Frederick Keator  
Jacob Vitali

### **The following Trustees were absent:**

Karen Kowalczyk

Robert Reilly

Kathleen Therrien

### **MCLA staff in attendance:**

President James Birge  
Lawrence Behan, Vice President of Finance and Administration  
Barbara Chaput, Vice President of Human Resources  
Catherine Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk  
Christopher MacDonald-Dennis  
Gina Puc, Dean of Enrollment Management and Community Relations  
Adrienne Wootters, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Robert Ziomek, Vice President of Institutional Advancement  
Daniel Colonno, Chief, MCLA Campus Police  
Laura Mooney, Athletics Director

### **Guests in attendance:**

David Dilulis, O'Connor & Drew

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 5:30 p.m. at Murdock Hall on October 24, 2019 with Board Chair Marshall presiding.

### **Approval of Minutes: September 19, 2019 Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the September 13, 2019 meeting of the Board.

### **Executive Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of October 24, 2019**

Chair Marshall reported on the activity of the meeting of the Executive Committee of October 24, 2019. Trustees discussed potential candidates for 2020 commencement speaker and honorary degree recipients. Speaker suggestions include Shawn Harper, Lt. Governor Karen Polito, Niraj Shah, Megan Rapinoe, and Fawn Weaver. President Birge was directed to select a speaker for 2020 commencement. Honorary degree recipient names will be reviewed again at the December 12 board of trustees meeting.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** to accept the minutes of the October 24, 2019 meeting of the Executive Committee.

### **Fiscal Affairs Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of October 21, 2019**

Trustee Gold reported on the activity of the meeting of the Fiscal Affairs Committee of October 21, 2019 at which the annual audit was presented.

David DiIulis of O'Connor & Drew provided the Trustees with a report on the FY 2019 audit. He stated the firm's independence with respect to the College within the meaning of the pronouncements of the Independence Standards Board, GASB, and under Rule 101 of the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct.

The resulting unqualified opinion of the College's financial statements shows that there are no Material Weaknesses or Significant Deficiencies identified within the report. There were no findings in either the accounting practices or internal control procedures.

Mr. DiIulis reviewed a prepared document on required communications with the committee that outlined the auditors' responsibilities as well as accounting policies and the various steps taken during the audit.

Mr. DiIulis then reviewed the Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) as well as the Audited Financial Statements and Footnotes for the year ending June 30, 2019. He noted that there were no disagreements with management.

Mr. DiIulis discussed the upcoming GASB pronouncement, GASB Statement 87, which is related to operating leases and noted that the material provided included a footnote on this item. Trustees discussed the impact of Statement 87 on future financial reporting.

Mr. DiIulis reviewed the financial reports provided noting the operating loss on a GAAP basis of \$3.4mm with a depreciation of \$3.8mm

Trustees discussed financial aid and scholarship funding, and the financial need of the college's student demographics.

In response to a request to clarify the college's loss, Mr. DiIulis explained depreciation and its impact on profit and loss.

Trustee Gold requested a motion to accept the FY 2019 audited financial statements as presented. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** To accept the FY 2019 audited financial statements as presented.

The Committee discussed enrollment and financial aid as it related to net assets reported in the financial statements. Additional data on enrollment and financial aid for the past five years will be provided by management.

Committee members questioned the possibility for Trustees to meet with the auditing firm without management or public participation. Public meeting laws and practices at other public institutions were discussed. No conclusion or decision was reached, and no meeting with the audit firm was held or will be scheduled.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the October 21, 2019 meeting of the Fiscal Affairs Committee and all actions contained therein.

### **Enrollment Management Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of October 24, 2019**

Trustee Boodram presented the report of the Enrollment Management Committee of October 24, 2019.

The Committee reviewed brand launch and marketing efforts, and new website development work. NACAC and DOJ actions, and the potential impact on MCLA enrollment and admissions were discussed. Management will monitor trends and react appropriately.

NEBHE allowed discounting New England students to the NEBHE rate with positive results, and will allow the same practice for fall 2020 recruiting to take advantage of a wider group of academic disciplines.

The Committee reviewed data on the financial aid leveraging models and admissions recruitment. RNL models, retention and factors impacting retention were also presented to the Committee.

Title 3 initiatives and funding for programs addressing retention weaknesses were reviewed.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the September 19, 2019 meeting of the Enrollment Management Committee and all actions contained therein.

### **Student Affairs Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of October 7, 2019**

Trustee Keator presented the report of the Student Affairs Committee meeting of October 7, 2019.

Chief Colonna provided an overview and reviewed the statistics of MCLA's Annual Security and Fire Safety Report (Clery Report). This federally mandated report includes safety and crime statistics for campus areas, as well as off-campus areas for which the College is responsible, i.e. Gallery 51 and the Advancement Office. This year's report includes statistics from 2016, 2017, and 2018. Overall report data show that MCLA is a very safe campus and is reflective of the College's commitment to keep the MCLA campus community safe. The full report is available at the College's website on the Public Safety landing page.

The Day of Dialogue is scheduled for November 7 featuring Dr. Tracey Benson as keynote speaker.

The Committee heard updates on the student survey and actions taken to address survey results, and on the college's food insecurity programs.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the October 7, 2019 meeting of the Student Affairs Committee and all actions contained therein.

### **Academic Affairs Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of October 8, 2019**

Trustee Burdick presented the report of the Academic Affairs Committee meeting of October 8, 2019.

The committee was introduced to faculty tenure candidates in attendance at the meeting:

- Dr. David Cupery, Ph.D. - Department of History and Political Science
- Dr. Hannah Noel, Ph.D. - English and Communications Department
- Dr. Ruby Vega, Ph.D. - Psychology Department, Faculty Development Fellow
- Dr. Kebra Ward, Ph.D. - Physics Department

Updates were provided on the core curriculum redesign, Title 3 initiatives, and the plans for a radiology concentration within the health sciences major.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the October 7, 2019 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee and all actions contained therein.

### **MCLA Foundation Board Representative Report of Meeting of October 3, 2019**

Chair Marshall presented the report of the MCLA Foundation Board meeting of October 3, 2019.

The Foundation held its annual corporate meeting on October 3, 2019. There was a strong turnout for the meeting, which included a panel discussion about student debt and the announcement of the Make a Difference Fund. This fund is being created by Judith Wilkinson who is a private donor with interest in helping MCLA students reduce their debt.

The Foundation Board elected six new Corporators:

- Mike Avis '92
- Tara Barboza MBA '12
- Kimberly Boyden-Briones '89
- Dean Daigle
- Jodi Joseph '10
- Chrystina "Xtina" Geagan Parks;

and four new Directors:

- Mike Avis '92
- Tara Barboza MBA '12
- Timothy Cherubini
- Frances Jones-Sneed

The Board voted to fund a feasibility study for a campaign to support the Connector project, which President Birge will present further on during his report at this meeting.

The Board established the MCLA 125th Elevating Lives Fund, which will be used for scholarships and other educational pursuits for students. The goal is \$250,000 to be raised by June 30, 2020: \$125,000 in special gifts fundraising and \$125,000 net proceeds from the major 125th event to be held April 25th.

Two small lots near the Zavattaro Athletic Complex on West Shaft Road were donated to MCLA Foundation, and a third lot that will connect them all is in the process of being purchased.

The Foundation is also in the process of purchasing 8 Montana and 60 Porter Streets from Elder Realty Trust. The Montana Street property will provide 14 new parking spaces. The Porter Street property has the potential of being developed into additional administrative office space. Both projects will play a role in the Connector project.

The Foundation's Property Committee is currently searching for a property that would be good for a President's House.

The Foundation received a bequest of \$485,303 from Alma Benedetti '37 to establish an endowed chair of art or education. As of September 30, the Benedetti Fund helped the endowment reach a value of \$13,578,503.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Chair Marshall began the Chairperson's Report and encouraged Trustees to attend the annual Statewide Trustees Conference scheduled for October 31, 2019. She also noted that the state is considering instituting fiscal literacy training for trustees and provided a summary of the provision.

Commissioner Santiago completed his evaluation of President Birge and issued his evaluation letter to Chair Marshall. A copy of the letter was provided to Trustees. The President's salary increase was approved and will be applied retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year.

### **President's Report**

President Birge provided an overview the college's planned proposal for DCAMM funding. The project, labeled The Connector Project, will address equity issues around accessibility of many of the campus's facilities. Renovations of Mark Hopkins and Eldridge Hall are part of the proposal as is the building of an addition between the two to create a connector. This building will house an elevator allowing access to all floors of Hopkins and Eldridge. As well, space will be allocated and redesigned to accommodate a career development center to include an office for MassHire, and a state of the art health sciences suite. The exterior includes additional green space and greater accessibility to the quad.

President Birge discussed the DHE performance measures and provided the link to the data site.

Two appropriation requests for additional funding, one for campus safety equipment and one for radiologic science equipment, were reviewed and a status update was provided. A decision on both is awaited.

President Birge next discussed the Feigenbaum grant noting that, at its peak, the grant will generate \$200k per year for the college. The funds will be used for scholarships, a visiting scholar, and a faculty fellow.

President Birge reviewed additional donations made to the college. A financial gift from the Jorge family will be used to create a visiting lecturer position in the education department. The funds from the estate of Alma Benedetti will create an endowed chair for education and art.

The Trustee Membership Manual created by Lisa Lescarbeau will be available on-line and a hard copy will be available for each trustee at the December meeting.

## **Staff Updates**

### **Human Resources**

Ms. Chaput provided an overview of MCLA's Human Resources department and related activities. She provided an overview of the new Massachusetts paid family and medical leave act, the institution of TIMESHEETX for student timekeeping, and training being conducted for search committee members. She discussed the upcoming Title IX training sponsored by the Council of Presidents and reviewed upcoming faculty and staff events managed out of the Human Resources Department.

### **Athletics**

Ms. Mooney presented an overview of the school's athletics programs including student athlete enrollment data, retention, the men's lacrosse program, and faculty athletic mentors. She provided an update on renovations taking place in the athletics areas including locker room upgrades, a new turf scoreboard, and new fitness center progress. Ms. Mooney reviewed the needs of the athletics program and associated costs for turf field drainage at the Zavattaro Complex.

Ms. Mooney next presented additional sports programs being considered including men's ice hockey and volleyball, and women's bowling, field hockey, golf, ice hockey and rugby. She highlighted the factors contributing to decisions around new programs.

### **Executive Session**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, and by a roll call vote of the Board, it was

**VOTED:** to move to Executive Session to discuss legal matters as meeting in open session could have a detrimental effect on the process.

Following the discussion and upon motion duly made and seconded, and by a roll call vote of the Board, it was

**VOTED:** to end the executive session.

With no other business being brought before the meeting, upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm.

All were invited to the Smith House for a reception.