



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of March 26, 2019
87 Blackinton Street

Members in Attendance:

Brenda Burdick, Chair
Mohan Boodram (telephone)
Frederick Keator
Eva Weeks, Student Trustee

Others in Attendance

James F. Birge, President
Denise Marshall, Board Chair
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs
Gina Puc, Dean of Enrollment Management and Community Relations
Emily Sawtell, Student
Riley Elliott, Student

Chair Burdick called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Impact of Student Involvement

Students Riley Elliott and Emily Sawtell talked about their experiences at MCLA from freshman arrival to now, and provided their thoughts on what their plans are after graduation.

Ms. Elliot related her experience as a transfer student with an associate's degree entering MCLA in her junior year to complete a bachelor's degree in psychology. She explained that she had selected MCLA for its small size, personal experiences and her level of comfort in this type of environment. After graduation, Ms. Elliot stated her interest in attending graduate school and the timing of that plan.

Ms. Elliot further related her experience as a peer leader noting that Ms. Sawtell had provided a meaningful experience upon arrival and encouraged Ms. Elliott to become a peer leader. She enjoyed being an advisor and being able to provide guidance, similar to what she had received, to other students on campus.

Ms. Sawtell related her experience having arrived at MCLA as a freshman. She worked in Student Affairs through the work study program and was happy to have had the opportunity to earn money while she was a student. She stated that she did not become fully involved in campus life until her sophomore year, when Celia Norcross encouraged her to become a peer advisor and engaged her in other campus activities. Ms. Sawtell is a Senior Peer Advisor this year.

Ms. Sawtell highlighted the many valuable skills she acquired as a peer advisor including communications and relationship development. She has become friends with freshman and introduced them to research in the science center, where Ms. Sawtell was able to begin research in her sophomore year. She feels this research has been helpful in applying to grad schools and for employment.

With regard to why she chose MCLA, Ms. Sawtell stated that she had not known about MCLA before completing the common app. She met Kayla Hollins at a high school admissions event and discussed her desire for a smaller school. She toured campus without a tour guide and selected MCLA after that.

Ms. Sawtell is now interviewing with grad schools and for employment.

Both students further responded to questions from Trustees regarding their MCLA experience

Assessing Student Experiences and Satisfaction

Ms. Holbrook reviewed initiatives underway to assess student experiences and satisfaction with the goal of improving retention.

In March, an external consultant was retained to audit the campus police and RPS, comparing both to national standards. Reviews included missions, stated outcomes, and the existence of data for measuring outcomes. Interviews were conducted with campus staff including President Birge. Once complete, the report will be reviewed with the two departments and individuals interviewed. In addition, recommendations will be reviewed and plans to address these recommendations will be discussed.

A student satisfaction survey has been launched to gather aggregate data and determine what is working, what is not and what is important to students. Once results are available, work will begin to address concerns raised.

Division Updates

VP Holbrook provided updates on the Food Security Sustainability planning including the matching-fund challenge issued by a trustee. A \$3,000 grant has been secured to study how to make this program more sustainable long term. Additional changes to enhance food security efforts include the expansion of dinner hours on certain days, the addition of food scales to the food pantry, pop-up food pantries around campus, and the creation of a work study position in the food pantry. As well, dining services were engaged to discuss access to food that would have been disposed of at the end of the day.

An update was provided on the tobacco free campus policy as the grant has reached closure and funds have been expended. There have been no reported violations of the policy and smoking cessation efforts will continue.

VP Holbrook reviewed progress in the Associate Dean search.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:29a.m.