



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2026

Members Present: J. Clarke-Mitchell (Chair), A. Bayer, T. Bernard, B. Lord, B. Burdick

MCLA Staff present: J. Mendel, J. Smith, L. Mooney, J. Dydowicz, A. Hildabrand, J. Carter

Student Representatives / Presenters

Natalie Rowan, Aja Noelle Mercer, Mike Lynch, Kyle Cardoza

As allowed by executive order of the Governor of Massachusetts, in compliance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30 and Chapter 15A, Section 9, and with a quorum present, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met on April 2, 2026.

Chair Clarke-Mitchell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The agenda was adjusted to allow student presenters to present first due to class schedules. Committee and student introductions followed.

Student Presentations

Belize Service and Study Trip

Students Mike Lynch, Aja Noelle Mercer, and Natalie Rowan presented on their recent Belize travel course. Highlights included a service project in Monkey Bay installing railings at a local school, cultural activities such as a canoe trip and drum circle, and a homestay experience with local families. Students participated in Mayan cooking and pottery classes, engaged with local schoolchildren, and emphasized the immersive, technology-free nature of the experience.

The group also spent time on Tobacco Caye, where students participated in structured educational snorkeling experiences, including a night snorkel. Presenters described the trip as academically enriching and personally transformative, noting that full funding was critical to student participation.

Men's Soccer Team Trip – Scotland and England

Students Adam and Kyle presented on the men's soccer team's international trip, facilitated by Laura Mooney. The itinerary included cultural and athletic experiences in Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow, London, and Birmingham. Activities included stadium tours, attendance at professional matches, and a competitive match against Pro-Direct FC.

Students reported positive interactions with local communities, strong team cohesion, and valuable exposure to international soccer culture. Ms. Mooney noted that the trip proceeded smoothly and shared preliminary plans for a future team trip to Spain in March 2029.

Committee Discussion

Chair Clarke-Mitchell encouraged exploring strategies to better market student travel experiences in order to reduce future fundraising needs.

Dining Services Update (Aramark)

Jerel Dydowicz (Aramark) provided an update on dining services initiatives, including student engagement pop-ups, collaboration with athletic teams, and the revitalization of the campus food committee. A new smoothie station was launched following spring break, and SNAP benefits are now accepted at the POD. A total of 245 meal swipes have been donated, primarily supporting commuter students.

Additional updates included website improvements, preliminary discussions regarding meal plan changes for 2027–2028, staffing increases through competitive wage adjustments and agency partnerships, and enhanced student engagement efforts through chef-led events. Chef bios and branded spice blends will be featured on the Aramark website. The food committee operates under the name “Food Fighters.”

Committee members noted improvements in food quality, personalized service experiences, and Aramark's efforts to support neurodivergent students through the provision of quiet dining spaces. A suggestion was made to sell the campus spice blend during Commencement Weekend and allow purchases using meal swipes to support food-insecure students.

Other Business

- Trustee Bernard inquired about student presentations at the Undergraduate Research Conference; an update is forthcoming.
- Trustee Bernard also asked about SGA election results, which will be provided in the future.
- Vice President Smith acknowledged Dr. April Wright and reviewed the preparation process for student trustee training.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Clarke-Mitchell at 9:47 a.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Marissa Parker

Student Affairs Administrative Assistant