



**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of October 16, 2024
87 Blackinton St, North Adams, MA
MS Teams
Audio/Video Conference**

Members in Attendance

Mohan Boodram, Chair, Jean Clarke-Mitchell, Frederick Keator, Denise Marshall

Others in Attendance

James Birge, President,
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk,
Joseph DaSilva, VP of Administration and Finance

All Trustees participated remotely.

As allowed by executive order of the Governor of Massachusetts, in compliance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30 and 15A, Section 9, and with a quorum present via audio/video-conference, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees with Chair Boodram presiding was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

Chair Boodram commented on recent meetings of committees of the board of trustees, noting that two of the three meetings scheduled last week had to be cancelled due a lac of quorum present. He expressed concern for the work that faculty and staff members had committed to each committee, the necessary work of the committee, and the optics of having to cancel meetings. He reminded Trustees that the minutes of the committees are a valuable and necessary to tool that allows Trustees to fulfill their obligations as members of the board.

Chair Boodram provided information regarding meeting attendance as required by the State noting that Trustees who miss four or more meetings would be in danger of a vacant seat being declared and the Chair being required to submit a letter of dismissal to the Governor.

Chair Boodram intends to discuss this topic with all Trustees as the October 24, 2024, meeting.

Chair Boodram also reminded Committee members of the importance of responding to the meeting invite to ensure a quorum will be present at the meeting. He suggested that it may be does not prove a quorum will be present.

Equal Opportunity Plan

President Birge reviewed the actions taken under presidential authority with regard to the College's EO plan in the absence of a summer meeting of the Board of Trustees. The approval of the plan was done in consultation with Chair Boodram to meet the federal deadline for having a plan in place by August 1, 2024.

The EO plan was provided to Trustees in advance of this meeting and the October 24, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting to allow adequate time for review given the document's size.

This EO plan was developed and written by Title IX officers across the MA State University System. Changes to the plan are primarily around Title IX complaints and how victims and alleged perpetrators are treated in the process. While the changes are substantial, the process remains manageable.

Trustee Keator inquired to how the plan addresses biological males participating in female sports. President Birge stated that this has not been addressed by the NCAA who has not established a position on this subject. The plan will be updated once the NCAA establishes a ruling. President Birge also stated that the College's athletic director is attuned to this matter and is prepared to address this on a case by case basis, though it has not been a concern to date.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, with no further discussion, following a roll call vote it was unanimously:

VOTED: to advance the College's EO Plan as presented to the full board for their consideration of ratification.

VP DaSilva presented the FY24 student account write-offs in the amount of \$25,136.19. This item is presented annually for board approval in June, however, due to an oversight at that meeting, no action was taken.

VP DaSilva responded to questions regarding the dates on the account with some being older than five years. These accounts may have had activity in collection with the student with a likely second default on the account. These accounts remain active for collection in the State's intercept system, as well, if a student attempts to re-enroll, the balance remains due to the College

Upon motion duly made and second, with no further discussion, upon roll call vote, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to recommend approval by the Board of Trustees to write-off student accounts receivable totaling \$25,136.19, as presented.

Chair Boodram presented the President's performance goals for FY25. The document was provided for review in advance of this meeting.

President Birge provided a brief overview of the seven items in his goals. He highlighted the addition of the dashboard indicators goal, noting that this item had been a past goal, but was sidelined during the pandemic.

Trustee Marshall asked for clarification on measuring success goal, most specifically the strategic plan. The measures should be drawn from the College's final strategic plan that is in draft format for the board's review. Chair Boodram expressed that the deliverable for this item specifically would be the College's final strategic plan document.

Trustee Keator inquired as to ways the President's community engagement could be measured. President Birge commented on the perception in contrast to his community involvement as he currently serves on four local organization boards, attends community events, and is present for campus events such as public lectures. Chair Boodram and President Birge will discuss ways that measuring involvement can be done.

President Birge opened the discussion of new trustee appointments noting the number of current seats in hold-over status and upcoming vacancies. For each vacant seat, the President is asked to submit the names and CVs of two potential appointees. This cycle, the President will submit 10 names. These names are reviewed by PENC (Public Education Nominating Council). Trustees are asked to consider the need for expertise that will enhance the board in areas such as finance and technology, and to ensure equity in representation. Names for consideration were requested to be sent to President Birge.

President Birge discussed the honorary degree recipient selection and requested names for consideration to be sent to him and Chair Boodram. As well, the commencement speaker selection process has begun, and Trustees should offer suggestions in the same manner as HD recipients. The speaker selection, while in the President's purview, will be made with input from the Trustees.

Trustee Marshall asked to revisit the discussion of community engagement of the President and stressed the need to talk about engagement as an item of concern for all. She noted, for instance, the difficulty seen in attendance at meetings and events for this board of trustees. The overarching discussion should be about how to engage the community in ways that promotes a desire to attend and participate.

With no other business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 a.m.