



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

March 7, 2025

Via MS Teams Audio/Video Conference

**MINUTES**

**Members in Attendance:** M. Boodram, J. Clarke-Mitchell, F. Keator, D. Marshall

**Staff in Attendance:** J. Birge – President, K. Kozak – Clerk

All attendees 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.

**Honorary Degree Recipients and Speaker** - President Birge presented a discussion of and asked for further recommendations on Honorary Degree candidates:

- a. Professor Kiese Laymon – Speaker, accepted
- b. Dennis Powell – NAACP Pittsfield, accepted
- c. Kathleen Warren – pediatric oncologist, she has a conflict so cannot attend
- d. Barbara Malkas – retiring North Adams Public Schools superintendent - discussed
- e. Mary Grant – former President - discussed

There was discussion of adding Dr. Grant based on her contributions to the growth of the college as well as Dr. Malkas based on her retirement and her contributions to local education and the College's partnership with NAPS. Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier may also be considered based on her service to the region.

The Committee instructed President Birge to reach out to Dr. Malkas and Dr. Grant to begin and to follow up with Rep. Farley-Bouvier if needed.

**Kleefeld Gift Update** – There was discussion of recent concerns of Trustee Barrett which in turn created concern on the part of the donor, and how President Birge and the Advancement team have worked to address any concerns. The Foundation has received the first check from the donor.

President Birge noted that he received a legal opinion from the Department of Higher Ed that a vote of the Trustees is not expected or required at this time but would be in order at a future date. The gift is to the Foundation and it is not imminent to provide services to the

College. There has been media coverage of the gift and we are preparing to respond. There was discussion that we will share the response with Trustees in advance of publication as a courtesy and to address any concerns. Further discussion that there is not an actual gift to the College at this time, so nothing to vote on. President Birge had also discussed the gift with the Mayor so that she was aware of the process prior to public announcement. There is also a campus advisory group working on how the building may impact campus life.

Mr. Keator noted that part of the consideration is that the gift does impact the college as well. It was noted that there was significant discussion at the Board retreat of this process and also information in the press, meetings with the delegation, an information session for neighbors, and an announcement at opening breakfast for public information as well. Mr. Keator offered to reach out to Rep. Barrett to further clarify any further concerns if needed. Ms. Marshall noted her confidence in the leadership of President Birge and Chair Boodram. President Birge thanked the Foundation for their work on this project.

**Trustee Self-Evaluation** - Chair Boodram would like to clarify the expectations of Board responsibilities and conduct. He will share last year's self-evaluation survey with the Board for individual feedback. There was discussion of onboarding new Trustees as well. There is a Trustee mentor for each new Trustee and Chair Boodram will ask them to reach out to their mentees about this process.

**Length of Committee Meetings** - Committee meetings are currently set to one hour and Chair Boodram noted that there needs to be space and time for discussion and questions. He asked to consider 90 minutes total for the meeting which allows for 60 minutes of presentation and then overflow for any discussion. Timekeeping practices were discussed as well as building time for questions into the agenda. It was determined to have an understanding that some meetings may go longer based on agenda, but to also ask presenters to be concise in their presentations.

**Other Business** - No other business was presented.

With no further business it was

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:25am

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kelli Kozak  
Clerk