



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of March 31, 2023
President's Offices, 87 Blackinton St
Audio/Video Conference

Members in Attendance:

Denise Marshall
Rob Reilly*
Taylor Hope*
Brenda Burdick *

**Denotes remote participation

Others in Attendance:

James F. Birge, President
Jeannette Smith, Vice President of Student Affairs
Kayla Hollins, Executive Director of Student Persistence
Patrick Connelly, Dean for Title IX, Equal Opportunity, and Student Wellness
Deborah Hebert, Interim Dean of Student Affairs

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 in-person and via audio/video-conference, the Student Affairs Committee meeting of March 31, 2023, with Committee Chair Marshall presiding was called to order at 8:41 a.m.

Introduction and Welcome of Dr. Deborah Hebert

VP Smith provided a brief introduction of Dr. Deborah Hebert, Interim Dean of Students. Dr. Hebert brings 30 years of higher education experience from various institutions across the United States. Her portfolio includes work with student conduct, Title 9, student affairs, and as dean. Dr. Hebert will chair the search for a permanent dean of student affairs.

Dr. Hebert noted that she had arrived in February and is residing on campus in a townhouse. This is her second interim position post retirement and is glad to be with MCLA.

First Year Experience

Dean Connelly and Executive Director Hollins presented the College's revised First Year Experience (FYE) program for new students.

This is the first year of a three-year plan that runs from acceptance through the end of spring semester. The first year will focus on support around students, with that support structure dismantled as students become comfortable, engrained in their community and major, and develop skills needed to see them successfully through the remaining years of their college career.

The FYE Committee consisted of about 20 campus members responsible for developing learning outcomes. Outcomes include:

- Sense of belonging.
- Cultivating habits of the mind.
- Embracing challenge and change
- Connections with community – resources on and off campus
- Investigating identity, values, and justice

Outcomes are addressed beginning with Accepted Student Day as the first step requires students to begin using the online orientation platform in Canvas. A virtual resource session is also planned to answer questions around academic and student life.

Lead academy and orientation are being moved to allow students an opportunity to engage during the summer months and begin to create a sense of belonging, and to prevent summer enrollment melt. In addition to providing information during the summer, student will have an opportunity to meet their roommates, tour the residence hall rooms and campus, and gather with all attendees in planned events.

Success Teams will be created to address concerns of students who do not feel a sense of belonging or connection with faculty and staff. The Team will consist of one to three peer mentors who are upper class students, a staff mentor, and a faculty success coach. The success coach staff member will meet at a regular frequency; weekly or biweekly depending upon the student's need, with conversations being student led and goal driven.

The addition of Success Teams to the existing programs such as TRIO, disability services, and academic advising, ensures that every MCLA student has at least one mentor.

LEAD Academy will continue to be offered to all incoming students and owned by current and returning upper class students with a focus on how we empower and provide students with leadership opportunities.

Orientation is the next piece of FYE and works with students on expectations, connections, and preparation for the coming semester.

At the start of the semester, all students are enrolled in the first-year seminar (FSEM) which runs for six weeks and works to maintain student engagement.

With regard to student commitment concerns during the summer months, ED Hollins highlighted activities other than academics that will be designed to engage students. These might include trips for local shopping, civic engagement programs, and gatherings in central locations on and off campus. Dean Connelly noted the importance of communications and engagement schedules. As well, individualized outreach will take place through summer orientation leaders and staff.

The effectiveness of the program and of the success coaches will be evaluated through students focus groups and surveys. The newly acquired student success management platform, NAVIGATE, will incorporate the use of technology in monitoring progress and success.

Trustee Hope stated her support for this approach. It should be beneficial to have a team and point people for students to ask questions, especially for those things students do not learn until they need to.

All students will be provided a paper planner with important dates and information, such as academic policies, code of conduct, important numbers and emails, and resources and offices on campus and how to reach them.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Hope provided a summary review of her recent visit in Boston with U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. Conversation at this session included talks about affordable textbooks, open education resources (OER), and aiding non-traditional students including ways to apply for state and federal financial aid.

Trustee Hope stated her belief that MCLA is on track with what the Student Advisory Committee has discussed as areas for improvement, noting in particular providing students with lists of classes offering affordable textbooks and OER.

While the meeting was very short, Trustee Hope felt it was worth her time to share her concerns with Secretary Cardona and others in attendance.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.