



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**March 29, 2023**

**87 Blackinton St, North Adams**

**MS Teams Audio/Video**

**Committee members in attendance:**

Frederick Keator, Committee Chair\*  
Brenda Burdick, Board Chair\*  
Jean Clarke-Mitchell\*

**Absent:**

Robert Reilly

**Others present:**

James F. Birge, President  
Richard Glejzer, Vice President, Academic Affairs  
Carolyn Dehner, Dean of Academic Affairs  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk

\*Denotes remote participation

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 Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of March 29, 2023, with Committee Chair Keator presiding was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

**Faculty Evaluation**

Dean Dehner presented an overview of the faculty evaluation process. Evaluation provides opportunities for faculty to improve prior to applying for tenure in year six with the College. The evaluation process begins in a faculty member's second year and happens every year until tenure is reached.

Evaluation consists of four categories: teaching, advising of students, continuing scholarship, and professional activities (service to the college). As well there is an optional fifth category: course release to serve as a department chair or other programs.

The first step in the evaluation process for faculty in years two, four and six of service, is to create a portfolio of their work. This is a narrative piece with supporting evidence. Once complete, the portfolio goes through an evaluation process consisting of:

- Peer Evaluation – This is the first review by a committee comprised of three faculty members, two from the faculty member’s home department and one that is selected by the faculty being evaluated. The Peer Evaluation Committee (PEC) conducts classroom observations, reviews the completed portfolio, and writes a letter of recommendation. There is then a 10-day response period.
- Department Chair Evaluation – The faculty member’s home department chair then evaluates the faculty member using the same criteria as the PEC and writes a letter of recommendation at the completion of their evaluation.
- Dean of Academic Affairs Evaluation – The Dean reviews the faculty member’s portfolio and writes their recommendation using consideration of the prior evaluators.
- The Vice President of Academic Affairs and President, respectively, then conduct their evaluations using the same process as the Dean of AA. The final step is the President’s recommendation to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board, followed by the full board of trustees.

Faculty apply for tenure in their sixth year of service to the College. The Committee on tenure is comprised of two faculty members who are chosen at the union meeting in May of that academic year, and a third faculty member who is selected by the faculty being evaluated for tenure.

In response to where the process is posted for trustees, Dean Dehner noted that the full process is detailed in the Massachusetts State College Association member contract and in the faculty handbook. The handbook is being revised and will be shared with trustees once complete.

Committee members discussed the number of faculty who are available for tenure and promotion compared to prior years, as well as how many fail to make it through the tenure process. VP Glejzer stated that during his time, there was a faculty member who chose to leave who would have been up for tenure this year. Another left prior tenure in part because the process revealed concerns with their progress to reach tenure. A factor complicating when tenure can be applied for is faculty who arrive with credit making them eligible to proceed quicker to tenure than some faculty.

As this process is driven by the contract, there is little room to adjust the process outside of contract negotiations. The division can look at what happens on our campus and work on ways to assist faculty successfully through the evaluation process. One area before the bargaining teams is reconsidering student evaluations system wide.

In response to questions regarding impacts of the pandemic on evaluations, Dean Dehner stated that some adjustments were made such as the elimination of student evaluations during two

semesters of the pandemic, and the change in modality from in-person to online being considered toward faculty member's service.

President Birge noted that during the pandemic it was also negotiated to allow faculty to add a year to the clock and push their tenure track back a step.

In response to questions regarding mentoring, specifically faculty of color and female faculty, VP Glejzer provided an overview of the existing mentor system. Department chairs serve as a primary mentor for tenure track faculty. In larger departments, an additional member of faculty in the department will also serve in conjunction with the chair to mentor faculty in the process. Faculty forum provides an opportunity to connect and work with peers, and the Union representative is also available to provide assistance. Discussions have been had on ways to improve the mentoring system.

### **Faculty Searches**

VP Glejzer provided an overview of the current faculty search process which is governed by faculty contract. A search committee is created for positions and excludes the Chair of the hiring department. Committee members review applicant documents and select who to interview in the first phase. Typically, this first step leads to three candidates visiting campus for in-person interviews. The Committee's selection recommendation is made to the department Chair, then to the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and finally to the President for final hiring decision.

Academic Affairs has completed two tenure-track faculty searches this academic year:

- Dr. Javuz Ceylon (PhD, University of North Texas), Chemistry
- Dr. Samuel Bruun (PhD, University of Kentucky), Psychology

### **Faculty Reappointments**

The following faculty have been recommended for reappointment by their PECs, their department chairs, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the President.

#### Reappointment to Second Year of Service

- Omotara Adeeko (Economics)
- Carter Carter (Psychology)
- Mariah Hepworth (History)
- Eunice Uhm (Art History/Museum Studies)

#### Reappointment to Third Year of Service

- Andrew Best (Biology)

Reappointment to Fourth Year of Service

- Thomas Burton (Physics)
- Whitney Gecker (Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work)
- Antonio Templanza (English & Communications)
- Julie Walsh (Biology)

Reappointment to Fifth Year of Service

- Kate Flower (Library)
- Clio Sterns (Education)

Reappointment to Sixth Year of Service

- Caren Beilin (English & Communications)
- Sara Steele (Psychology)

**Faculty Tenure and Promotions**

VP Glejzer then began presentation of faculty tenure candidates. One professor applied for tenure, five applied for tenure with promotion to associate professor, five applied for promotion to full professor, and one applied for promotion to senior librarian. All candidates have demonstrated excellence in the classroom, as advisors, in their scholarship and creative work, and in service to the MCLA community. Accordingly, each has strong, positive recommendations from their PECs, their department chairs, the Committee on Tenure (where applicable), the Committee on Promotions (where applicable), the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the President.

The committee then reviewed the list of faculty for tenure and promotions. The President recommends the following faculty for:

Tenure

- Dr. Lisa Arrastia (Education)

Tenure with Promotion to Associate Professor

- Dr. Margaret Clark (Education)
- Dr. George Hamaoui (Biology)
- Dr. Mohamad Junaid (Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work)
- Dr. Victoria Papa (English and Communications)
- Dr. Michaela Petrovich (Fine and Performing Arts)

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

**VOTED:** to recommend reappointment with tenure to Dr. Lisa Arrastia, and tenure and promotion to associate professor to Drs. Clark, Hamaoui, Junaid, Papa and Petrovich, as presented.

*The following faculty are recommended for Promotion to Full Professor:*

- Dr. Amber Engelson (English and Communications)
- Dr. Zachary Finch (English and Communications)
- Dr. Justin Golub (Biology)
- Dr. Rita Nnodim (Interdisciplinary Studies)
- Dr. Jenna Sciuto (English and Communications)

*The following librarian is recommended for Promotion to Senior Librarian:*

- Ms. Pamela Contakos

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

**VOTED:** to recommend reappointment and promotion to full professor to Drs. Engelson, Finch, Golub, Nnodim and Sciuto, and promotion to senior librarian to Ms. Contakos, as presented

## **Other Business**

VP Glejzer noted the Department of Higher Education's approval of the College's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. President Birge stated that as of this time 18 applications have been received for enrollment in this new program.

Administration continues to monitor social media and news since announcing the program. Other health systems have contacted the College with interest in supporting the program and accepted students.

While hiring faculty for Nursing may be challenging, the Director of Nursing has already been contacted by individuals interested in joining the College as faculty.

In response to a question regarding student residential space, it was stated that the College has capacity in existing residence halls.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 a.m.