



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of November 3, 2022
87 Blackinton St, North Adams
Audio/Video Conference

Members in Attendance

Mohan Boodram, Chair
Brenda Burdick, Chair of the Board of Trustees*
Kathleen Therrien*

Others in Attendance

James Birge, President
Gina Puc, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk
Jana Boyer, Director of Enrollment Operations

*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 Enrollment Management Committee of the Board of Trustees of November 2, 2022, with Committee Chair Boodram presiding was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

Realignment for Student Success and Persistence

VP Puc began the presentation with a review of Title III funds the College was awarded in 2016. The \$2.2M was paid out over five years and was used to strengthen MCLA by increasing student persistence rates, particularly for students of color and low-income students. She provided a list of Title 3 initiatives including Chatbot, Timesheet X, Center for Teaching and Learning, Success Coaching, and Math Drop-in Center.

VP Puc reviewed the pandemic's impacts on student success citing information from the Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights. These include challenges nearly all students have had to their mental health and well-being, identity-based harassment and violence, and new barriers for many postsecondary students.

The Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) reports that 40% of students in grades K-12 have been chronically absent. Chronically absent is defined as missing 20% of instructional days, and the College is seeing this impact on campus.

VP Puc reviewed the College's retention rates noting that overall retention, pre-pandemic, was in the low to mid 70%, was 63% in fall of 2020, and is 68.3% for fall of 2021.

She reviewed strengths and weaknesses in the College's retention efforts. Athletes, students with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher, those who receive early action, and Massachusetts residents retain at higher rates. Female students, students of color, students who are Pell eligible, and those with a high school GPA below 3.0 retain at lower rates. VP Puc noted that this is the first time in eight years that female students are retaining at lower rates than male students.

The Academic Advising and Support Center has centralized to the first floor of Mark Hopkins Hall. Services available in the center include Academic Advising and Support, Disability Resources, and TRiO.

VP Puc presented the Faculty Advising Fellows program and team consisting of Drs. Antonio Templanza, Paul Nnodim, Mariah Hepworth and Whitney Gecker. These professors hold office hours through the Office of Academic Advising and Support, working with up to 30 advisees each. They monitor student progress with routine check-ins, scheduling meetings, proactive outreach, and communications related to academics and other areas of concern. These faculty also collaborate with other offices on campus to assist their advisees.

The Strategic Enrollment Management Council has been restructured and tasked with aligning retention efforts across divisions and offices with a focus on barriers to student success and persistence. SEM operates from an equity perspective and is focused currently on new student onboarding.

The College has engaged a new student success management platform, EAB Navigate. The platform will streamline tasks across nearly all offices on campus, and includes components such as advising dashboards, workflow solutions, integrated analytics, student empowerment tools. EAB Navigate will crosswalk with other student information and degree completion services software. Implementation will be accomplished in phases beginning in February 2023.

Admissions Events – Outreach and Schedules

Director Boyer provided an update for the Office of Admission. Recent staff restructures have allowed the division to have a counselor dedicated to systems and outreach who is based in the office during travel season. This staff member was able to complete review of early action applications ahead of traditional schedules allowing the Division to notify students electronically of acceptance seven weeks earlier than past notifications. Paper notifications will be issued by December 15, 2022. The first student deposit was received this week from a women's hockey player.

The communication plans have been shifted to ensure communication is maintained with early action students to ensure these students remain engaged throughout the process.

Recruitment strategies for AY22/23 include daily tours, Saturday tours, in-person and virtual open houses, in-person and virtual athletic preview days, group tours, and virtual tours.

Trustees discussed ways to maintain student engagement using social media, paper mailings, and text and video messaging.

VP Puc discussed the recent request for pricing (RFP) issued for a new customer relationship management (CRM) software application.

Trustees discussed ways to replicate programs that work in retaining athletes. VP Puc provided an overview of efforts to create cohort scheduling for non-athlete students. This model would place students in multiple classes together through their first year, and would include assignment of a faculty advisor for the cohort.

With regard to student to student support, it was noted that pre-pandemic the College had an active peer advising model. As we return to somewhat more traditionally activity, this is being pursued by the Executive Director of Academic Advising and Support Services. As well, there are student tutors in the writing and math drop-in centers. Residential changes include themed floors to create student living/learning communities.

Trustees further discuss social media outlets as a means of communicating with students.

VP Puc announced that the Executive Director of Enrollment Management has accepted our offer of employment and will join the College in January 2023. The Registrar's position has also been filled and the candidate will begin in early December.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.