



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL MEETING**

Thursday May 24, 2018  
Murdock Hall, room 208  
5:00 p.m.

### **The following trustees were present:**

Susan Gold Chair  
Katherine Therian  
Lisa Chamberlain  
Denise Marshall  
Frederick Keator  
Robert Reilly  
JD Chesloff (Via telephone)  
Moohan Boodram (via telephone)  
Brenda Burdick (via teleconference)

### **In attendance:**

President James Birge  
Denise Richardello, Executive Vice President  
Bernadette Alden, Director of Marketing Communications  
Gina Puc, Director of Admissions  
Molly Williams, Vice President of Institutional Advancement  
Michael Birch, English/Communications  
Christopher MacDonald Dennis, Chief Diversity Officer  
Theresa O'Bryant, Title IX Coordinator  
Emily Williams, Soon to be Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Cindy Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs  
Larry Behan, Vice President of Administration and Finance

Chair Gold called the meeting to order at: 5:00 pm

### **Approval of Minutes: April 5, 2018 Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018, meeting of the Board and all actions contained therein.

Complying with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30 and 15A, Section 9, and with a quorum present, the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met at 5:00 p.m. at Murdock Hall on May 25, 2018 with Board Chair Gold presiding.



## **Report on the Minutes of the April 5, 2018 Executive Committee Meeting**

Chair Gold reported on behalf of the committee. The board received an update on the MSCA contract and 'work to rule'. The faculty union has been without a collective bargaining agreement since July 2017.

President Birge shared information on some issues that have delayed the successful completion of negotiations. The next bargaining session is scheduled for April 9. It is the hope of the Council of Presidents that an agreement can be reached on that date before having to take the next step of mediation. If the contract is settled before July, any increase would be retroactive to July 1, 2017.

The board received an update on the MSCBA and Fitness Center Updates. Staff of the MSCBA visited campus and discussed some other potential projects. They raised the issue of a new residence hall as the townhouses are out of date and need extensive renovation or replacement. Such a project would increase the College's long term debt by \$20-\$25 million dollars. The committee discussed support for new Fitness Center and Centennial Room renovations. The approximate budget for the Fitness Center/Centennial Room project is \$5 million of which we currently have \$4 million through bond funds and funding from Aramark.

President Birge offered that it might be worthwhile for MCLA to consider increasing its debt load as the College has capacity and currently has the lowest debt service ratio in the state university system. VP Behan is preparing an evaluation of how current projected projects will affect the debt ratio and operating costs.

The Presidential Evaluation memo was sent from Commissioner Santiago. Chair Gold asked the Executive Committee to assume responsibility for producing the evaluation. Last year's evaluation process included interviews with faculty, staff, and students. Interviews are not required annually so this will be at the discretion of the committee. President Birge will provide his goals as part of the process. Trustee Chamberlain requested another copy of the President's previous goals and 2017 evaluation. Based on the need for a quorum when meeting, the Executive Committee voted to establish a subcommittee to oversee the evaluation and produce the final document.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to establish a subcommittee for the purpose of producing the 2018 presidential evaluation. Committee members include Chair Susan Gold, Trustee Lisa Chamberlain, and Trustee Denise Marshall.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018, meeting of the Executive Committee and all actions contained therein.

## **Report on the Minutes of the April 5, 2018 Enrollment Management Committee Meeting**

The enrollment management committee received updated the fall 2018 Admissions and Financial Aid Cycle from Gina Puc, Director of Admissions and Elizabeth Petri, Director of Financial Aid. The discussion focused on the trends, opportunities, and challenges that both admissions and financial aid face; including the NY State Excelsior grant, MCLA New York enrollment has remained steady.



Dean Monica Joslin reported DGCE programming and enrollment updates.

MCLA has been engaging with an outside market research firm Simpson Scarborough. Bernadette Alden informed the board of the progress SimpScar has been making on the survey research they have done regarding internal, external, and high school student perceptions of MCLA in order to better aim our marketing efforts. Simpson Scarborough will be on campus at the Strategic Planning Retreat in May to give a full report to campus and the Board of Trustees.

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018, meeting of the Enrollment Management Committee and all actions contained therein.

### **Report on the Minutes of the May 3, 2018 Enrollment Management Committee Meeting**

The board received updates on the fall 2018 Admissions and Financial Aid Cycle from Gina Puc, Director of Admissions and Elizabeth Petri, Director of Financial Aid.

The numbers of Berkshire county students are strong and this may be related to the fact that this would be the first group impacted by college visits beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through Berkshire compact Transfer outreach will be increased over the summer especially as there are a number of regional college that have closed or are in financial distress.

Beth Petri reviewed current financial numbers and stats noting that the number of Pell-eligible students is currently lower. Award packages are still being sent out for new and returning students.

President Birge and Gina Puc explained the new enrollment management division realignment:

Kayla Hollins will assume the role of Associate Director of Freshman Admission. She will take on daily oversight and strategic planning for all aspects of first-year recruitment endeavors. Erinn Kennedy will assume the role of Associate Director of Transfer Admissions and will guide the transfer recruitment enterprise, working closely with community colleges and further developing articulation agreements. Jana Boyer will lead all operational and logistical aspects of the Office of Admission as the Associate Director of Enrollment Operations, with her work focusing on leveraging enrollment technologies to optimize MCLA's communications to prospective students.

Dean Joslin reported on the numbers projected for fall enrollment in the MBA, M.Ed., and degree completion programs as well as for the summer Leadership Academy. Outreach is continuing for all DGCE programs including outreach to employers.

Additional online courses are being added for the summer.

DGCE is working with the business department to create a 4 + 1 or 3 + 1 to allow MCLA students to complete their undergraduate degree and MBA in an accelerated program.

Dean Joslin also reviewed retention statistics for undergraduates and there was discussion on how better to engage and retain them.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the May 3, 2018, meeting of the Enrollment Management Committee all actions contained therein.



## **Report on the Minutes of the May 3, 2018 Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

The Student Affairs committee heard from Spencer Moser, on the Center for Service's food bank project and the possibility of setting up more locations around campus. Discussed roll out with students and how to identify those in need. Trustee Boodram suggested working with Financial Aid.

Students in the Center for Service received training on how to receive those coming in for food.

Laura Mooney provided updates on Athletics. Vision is 3-2-1: 3.0 GPA, compete for top 2 stops in conference, and work as one team.

Five key words for athletics as determined by students are Excellence, Pride, Respect, Family, and Character. Athletic teams are diverse with students from all over the country. 60% have reached 3.0 or higher with 50% over 3.5.

Full time coaches increase retention of student-athletes. All full-time coaches also have other responsibilities. Will be adding Men's Lacrosse next season.

Discussed issues with facilities and upcoming needs. Baseball field has biggest issue being at lowest point and without drainage. Field was only available for 2 games this year.

Would have to raise and turf field or look at shifting location.

Cathy Holbrook provided an update on the tobacco-free policy. Now at the implementation phase. Shared info on campus communication. Designated smoking areas are being eliminated. New signage is being prepared and some benches will be moved to new locations that were previously placed to create a smoking area.

Communication group has created a logo focused on clean air and created multi-media messaging to educate the campus community. A web page is being developed which will include resources to stop smoking. Goal is to offer support in all messaging, not pressure to quit.

A new summer initiative begins this year. Piloting a program where students taking 8 credits or more can have free housing. Will likely have around 20 students taking advantage of this program. Will also provide transport to North Adams, Williamstown, Pittsfield to take advantage of internship opportunities. Will monitor this summer and then evaluate for next years.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the May 3, 2018, meeting of the Student Affairs Committee all actions contained therein.

## **Report on the Minutes of the May 15, 2018 Academic Affairs Committee Meeting**

Vice President Brown invited Prof. Graziana Ramsden to present information on student scholarship and fellowship opportunities to the committee. Professor Ramsden shared a PowerPoint presentation with the committee and emphasized the importance of scholarships, study-abroad and fellowship opportunities to students and to MCLA.



The committee discussed ideas intended to encourage interest and participation in scholarships and study abroad. Trustee Chamberlain thanked Professor Ramsden for attending the meeting. She offered to continue discussions with Professor Ramsden and serve as the liaison to the Board on this topic.

President Birge explained to the committee that there was a delay in bringing forward Prof. Bolivar Rubin's application due to a process issue with the Committee on Promotions. Vice President Brown recommended, and he has accepted that recommendation, in favor of promotion in this case. Promotion does not require a vote by the Board of Trustees.

The following faculty member has been recommended to the President for promotion:

Associate Professor

- Mariana Bolivar Rubi

Dean Joslin shared that the proposal for a new major in *Communications* has been approved via internal governance. The next steps are to present the proposed major to the full Board on May 24, for the proposal to undergo an external review, for a letter of intent from the president to be submitted to the DHE Commissioner at least 30 days prior to submission of the full proposal to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education for approval.

The committee discussed the impact of this new major in terms of student interest and noted that the major is consistent with the focus of MCLA as a liberal arts institution.

The committee endorsed the program to bring forward to the full Board on May 24 for approval.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the new major of Bachelor of Arts in Communications to be brought before the Board on May 24.

Trustee Chamberlain and Vice President Brown reviewed the Faculty Emeritus, a policy that was approved by the Board last year. The Committee was provided with a summary of those who were nominated or self-nominated to be voted on and forwarded to the full Board.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the slate of nominees for Faculty Emeritus

Trustee Chamberlain invited faculty emeritus nominees to the reception after the board adjournment.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the May 15, 2018, meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee all actions contained therein.

### **Report on the Minutes of the May 15, 2018 Fiscal Affairs Committee Meeting**

Vice President Behan reviewed the 3rd quarter report. The report provides a summary of income and expense by object code. Report should reflect the nine month period ending March 31, 2018. Notes are included to address positive or negative variances. The variances are due to timing issues, as well as student attrition.



Vice President Behan explained that there is a positive variance resulting from payroll and fringe savings due to vacant employee positions. He is projecting at this time that there will not be a need to transfer funds from the reserve to realize a FY18 balanced budget. It was suggested that a 4th Quarter Forecast column be added to the report.

Bonnie Howland reported that current receivables at the close of the spring 2018 semester were approximately \$16,000 compared to a \$44,000 balance this time last year. Receivables for the spring resulted from defaults on payment plan arrangements.

Each year the college reviews any outstanding debt to submit to the committee to be written-off. These accounts were billed extensively while the student was enrolled, have been referred to a collection agency, have been referred to the State Intercept Program and have been deemed uncollectable. This program allows for collection of outstanding debt from any state refunds or lottery winnings over \$600. Bonnie also noted that this outstanding debt remains connected to the student's record so they can be identified if requesting a transcript or grades. The amount recommended for write-off for FY2018 is \$7,440.67.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To accept the recommendation to write off the amount of \$7,440.67 related to these specific accounts.

Vice President Behan presented a draft budget for FY 2019. The budget is based on a forecast of 25 fewer undergraduate students, 18 fewer in housing, and 12 fewer graduate students. The revenue budgeted includes an increase to mandatory student fees of 4.3% (\$424 per year increase to the Campus Support Fee). The budget also includes the collective bargaining increase of 2% for the second year of funding. President Birge added that this is a comparative fee increase to other state universities. The average increase amongst the state universities is \$506 per year (5.1%).

VP Behan noted that we have been lean with our budgeting. The budget is based on a conservative estimate of student enrollment and a continued savings in unfilled positions. It was explained that the budget includes the fee increase of \$424 per year, but would be revisited if the state appropriation was increased.

Trustee Keator asked for clarification on the voting process as the state budget has not come in. VP Behan and President Birge explained if it does not come in at the projected numbers an executive committee meeting would be called to make the decision in the absence of the board. If the budget comes in after July 1 then January tuition and fees would be adjusted.

Keator asked why downtown Pittsfield offices are closing/changing. President Birge relayed that the subcontract is up in August, they are exploring alternative space in downtown Pittsfield.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To accept the recommendation to approve the preliminary budget for FY 19

President Birge presented that in support of the college's strategic planning process, he would like to request \$260,500 from reserve funds to be used for strategic planning priorities, i.e. marketing and website design, TRIO consultant, diversity and inclusion dialog training for faculty, and enhancement to the math and writing centers. These funds will be used for FY19 strategic planning priorities.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was



Trustee Chamberlain asked for confirmation these are operational in nature and that the website would not be until after Simpson Scarborough finished their work. President Birge explained that any website work would be done during the process with Simpson Scarborough and may not be completed until after the wrap. Keator asked why the money was needed this fiscal year if work wouldn't be done until next year. Birge explained the research SimpScar is doing will be complete in December with roll out in the spring, so we can get a head start since we will have the data.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To recommend that the college use \$260,500 from reserve funds for strategic planning priorities.

President Birge presented that there is need for \$3M bonds for athletic facilities and improvements to the student center. The President stated that rather than requesting the \$3M for all of the improvements, he would request \$1M bond to complete the Campus Center/pool project. There is already \$3.6M in hand or pledged to date and the project overall is a \$4.6M expense. The \$1M bond would result in \$80,000/yr in debt service beginning in FY20 when the first payment is due.

If approved the debt service coverage would be 1.8%, compared to other schools at 4.5-5%. This would not significantly raise our debt. Trustee Barrett inquired why would be taking the money now if we don't need it until January. Barrett questioned that the interest MCLA would pay on a loan like that is an unnecessary amount, inquired about the coupon rate. If this issue was tabled until September it could delay portions of the project and affect the timeline. We could front load until September, so it would slow down but not prohibit.

This issue was tabled until the end of the meeting so VP Behan could gather the information on the interest over the terms of the loan. Keator made note that we would be paying interest on the current value, there would be no future inflation as Barrett is concerned. Behan came back, the final interest number is \$78,415 over twenty years. Keator asked for confirmation there were no other bonds in the horizon, confirmed. After this information was presented,

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To recommend that the college go forward with the \$1M bond for the campus center improvement project.

### **Report on the Minutes of the May 15, 2018 Nominating Committee Meeting**

Trustee Therrien reported on the nominating committee. A vote was presented on the slate of officers to bring to the Board for the 2018-2019 academic year.

For Chair of the MCLA Board of Trustees: Denise Marshall  
For Vice-Chair of the MCLA Board of Trustees: JD Chesloff

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To pass the recommendation for chair and vice-chair of the board.



## **Chairperson's Report**

As in years past, Trustee Gold began with the motion for the continuation of Presidential Authority for the summer. This is an annual action taken at this time of year as the Board heads into recess for the summer.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED**                      To pass the Presidential Authority for the summer.

The committee membership information from 2017-2018 was shared and will be updated by incoming Chair Marshall, as was done in the past.

Commissioner Santiago has requested that Presidential Evaluations be submitted by June 30 this year. Trustee's Chamberlain, Chesloff, Gold, Marshall, and Boodram, are serving as the ad hoc committee for the presidential evaluation. President Birge has submitted a self-evaluation to the committee.

We will meet the Commissioner's deadline and submit the evaluation by June 30.

The 2018-2019 full Board meeting dates were shared. Once the committee meeting dates are set by the respective chair they will be distributed.

In closing, Trustee Gold took a moment to recognize and thank the entire staff and faculty for putting together another successful commencement ceremony on May 12. A special thank you to Denise Richardello, who will be retiring after 40 years. Thank you for your dedication and all you've done for MCLA. VP Cindy Brown will be leaving as well, and was thanked for her 9 years of service to MCLA. MCLA is grateful and wishes her well.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the chair of the Board of Trustees and Trustee Gold is glad to be staying on. It's been an honor and she thanks MCLA for the opportunity.

## **President's Report**

President Birge began his report continuing to thank Denise Richardello and Cindy brown for their service to MCLA. With leadership change comes opportunity, first is that MCLA conducted a search for the VPAA position. With 80 applications, a committee of faculty, staff, and students narrowed down to ten finalists, conducted interviews with 4 finalists. Ultimately, Dr. Emily Williams was chosen as our new Vice President of Academic Affairs, she was in attendance and thanked President Birge. Williams has a great background in higher ed and currently works at a COPLAC institution and is familiar with the mission.

Robert Zoimek will be MCLA's new Vice President of Institutional Advancement. He is an alumni from the Class of '99 recruited, for which he was recruited by Denise Richardello and he is grate for the opportunity to work with her.

Gina Puc will be the Dean of Enrollment Management, she has put together a great team in an increasingly difficulty recruit climate. She co-chaired the Strategic Planning process and has been motivational to staff. Puc will be responsible for admissions, marketing, overseeing financial aid, and all duties as assigned.





Ginger Menard has left MCLA for a great opportunity as the Chief Operating Officer at the Chamberlain Group in Great Barrington. We are doing our best in her absence, with the exception of a few hiccups. Thank you, Jackie Kelly for stepping up in her absence. Recruitment for the Executive Assistant position has started. We are hoping to make an offer in June with July start date. We will share information once we have it.

President Birge recently received an email from a parent, Michelle Freeman, full of thanks and appreciation to MCLA faculty and staff. Her son walked across the commencement stage this year. Trustee Reilly made note, that as he has walked across campus he sees peoples change in attitude, campus seems much happier, with people always smiling. He offered his thanks to President Birge for this.

Birge discussed the faculty work-to-rule. Although it has been difficult, our faculty have supported their teacher's state wide while still supporting our students. They gave up great opportunities such as lectures, but they have been nothing but respectful and he thanked them for their patience.

The Davis Education Foundation have contact MCLA and will be visiting campus in June.

In regards to summer authority, all state university and the Board of Higher Education does this, even for Commissioner Santiago, to make sure there is no hesitation when the board is not actively meeting. Birge reiterated he would not be making any rouge decisions, he will still consult with the chair of the board or board leadership.

President Birge shared that he will be away from June 8-14, July 2-6, and July 30-August 3. There will still be people on campus in the President's Office.

President Birge offered his thanks to Chair Gold for all the work that she has done during her term, this will be her last meeting serving as chair. He presented her an engraved gavel and flowers from the board. Trustee Marshall also offered her thanks. Susan thanked the entire board and wished incoming Chair Marshall and Vice-Chair Chesloff luck in the New Year.

Finally, Birge also offered this thanks to Interim Vice President of Intuitional Advancement, Molly F. Williams, as this will also be her last meeting.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded it was

**VOTED** to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 pm, all were invited back to Smith House for a reception.