



**Minutes of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
Thursday, August 6, 2015  
Murdock 218**

**The following Trustees were present:**

Tyler Fairbank, Chair  
Mohan Boodram, via teleconference  
Lisa Chamberlain, via teleconference  
JD Chesloff  
Shirley Edgerton  
Susan Gold  
Buffy Lord  
Denise Marshall  
Nicholas Hernigle, Student Trustee

**The following Trustee was absent:**

Will Dudley, Vice Chair

**Others present:**

Cynthia Brown, Interim President  
Denise Richardello, Executive Vice President  
Bernadette Alden, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Jim Clemmer  
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs  
Jim Lavulis, WAMC Radio  
David Mead-Fox, Korn Ferry  
Gina Puc, Director of Admission  
James Stakenas, Vice President of Administration & Finance  
Ginger Menard, Clerk

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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 9:00 a.m. at Murdock Hall on August 6, 2015 with Board Chair Fairbank presiding.

Chair Fairbank called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

### **President's Report**

Interim President Brown provided a campus update. She introduced the newest member of the executive staff, Dr. Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs.

State Auditors are on site this week for a campus-wide review of documents. Administration & Finance is working with them to provide all requested information.

Bowman Hall's renovation continues to be on time and will be ready for fall classes and the Co-Gen project remains on schedule as well.

The state budget is still in motion and the Governor has recent filed his supplemental budget. Advocacy for the funding of collective bargaining continues.

At the Strategic Planning retreat in May the issue of retention and establishing a campus wide retention plan was discussed. As part of this effort, the First Year Experience (FYE) program, required for all incoming freshmen, will have an additional class hour each week focusing on college transition and engagement.

Resident Advisors (RA's) will arrive on Sunday for training followed by Orientation Leaders. Laura Mooney, Director of Athletics, has instituted new athlete check-in days which include programming such as orientation, wellness, and compliance requirements for incoming students and athletes.

Lt. Dan Colonna will serve as MCLA's interim Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police following Joe Charon's retirement this month. A search is underway for new director.

Interim President Brown shared a letter from a parent commending various departments including Admission, Financial Aid, and Athletics, and sharing how helpful and informative the entire staff has been throughout the enrollment process. Interim President Brown thanked the entire staff for creating a welcoming and supportive community.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Chair Fairbank shared that Interim President Brown will be stepping down as interim president due to her interest in pursuing the full time presidency. Board of Higher Education guidelines state that interim presidents are not eligible to be considered for the full time position so Dr. Brown will resume her role as Vice President of Academic Affairs as of August 14. Dr. Brown offered her gratitude to her colleagues over the past 8 months and appreciates the opportunity to become a candidate for the position.

Because of this shift in leadership, the Board must appoint another interim president for the duration of the search. Upon review of various options and in consultation with trusted advisors and members of the Board, Chair Fairbank recommended that Jim Clemmer assume the role of interim president.

Mr. Clemmer is an alumnus of the College and has served on the Board since 2008. Most recently he has served as Vice Chair and has served on the Fiscal Affairs Committee throughout his tenure including three years as chair. He has an extensive and impressive track record of leading and managing large complex organizations. Given these circumstances, and based on careful assessment of this situation, Chair Fairbank shared his belief that there is no one better to lead MCLA through the balance of this leadership transition. As it is the Board's responsibility for overseeing the search process and ensuring that the best possible pool of candidates is cultivated and put forth for consideration, this transition will maintain the integrity of the search process and allow Dr. Brown to compete for the position.

Additionally, in accordance with regulations, Mr. Clemmer must resign his seat as the alumni representative on the Board in order to serve as interim president. Mr. Clemmer has sent a letter of resignation to Governor Baker effective as of Wednesday, August 5.

The leadership transition will be effective August 14, 2015 pending final approval by Commissioner Santiago as noted in the BHE guidelines regarding the selection of an interim president. Chair Fairbank extended his gratitude to Mr. Clemmer for his willingness to assume this position.

Trustee Chesloff thanked Dr. Brown for her leadership and expressed his excitement with this proposal. Stability is the key issue and Mr. Clemmer will bring that stability through this next phase. He is a strong leader and listener and is passionate about the college.

Trustee Lord feels fortunate that Mr. Clemmer has the skill set, the time available, and the love of the institution. His broad experience includes not only business, but also his active involvement with MCLA as an alum and Trustee. She echoed that this will allow for a seamless transition and provide support for the senior team. She extended her thanks to Dr. Brown as well.

Trustee Marshall served on the Fiscal Affairs Committee with Mr. Clemmer when he was Chair of that committee and saw firsthand his commitment and thoughtful leadership in that important role.

Trustee Edgerton thanked Dr. Brown as well for her commitment and great work and the Board is appreciative of all that she has done. She is also very pleased that Mr. Clemmer is willing to accept this role.

Trustee Gold thanked Dr. Brown and is pleased that the timing has worked out so that Mr. Clemmer can step into this position.

Student Trustee Hernigle thanked Dr. Brown on behalf of the students for her leadership as interim president. Her impact on campus was appreciated and he looks forward to having Mr. Clemmer in this role.

Trustee Boodram echoed all that had been expressed. He remarked on the wonderful job done by Dr. Brown and, having served with Mr. Clemmer on the Enrollment Management Committee, he has seen his passion for student success and access.

Trustee Chamberlain also shared that Mr. Clemmer's reputation from his former position is one of a great collaborator and she feels he will be terrific for the College.

Mr. Clemmer thanked Dr. Brown for providing stable leadership over the past months. He graciously accepts the responsibility as he has a strong passion for MCLA and public higher education. He has been blessed by the many opportunities made possible because of the education he received at MCLA and is pleased to give back to the institution in this way. He will be an active listener and gather of information in order to provide cohesive leadership and successfully steward the College through this transition. He is committed to ensuring that the College continues to provide quality education for the students and continues to function at a high level.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the appointment of James C. Clemmer as interim president.

Chair Fairbank will advance Mr. Clemmer's name to Commissioner Santiago in accordance with the BHE guidelines.

Additionally, as an immediate past board member, Mr. Clemmer is not eligible to receive compensation. However, previous to this knowledge of this restriction, Mr. Clemmer had requested that any compensation normally paid to an interim president be directed toward financial aid. Chair Fairbank recommends that this request be honored and which must be approved by a vote of the board. The Board agreed and thanked Mr. Clemmer for his generosity and strong commitment to accessibility.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve redirection of funds from the interim president's salary to financial aid

### **Presidential Search Update**

Trustee Gold shared that the presidential search is underway. The Presidential Leadership profile has been redesigned and updated to include the most current facts and statistics. The search firm of Korn/Ferry has been engaged and the College will be working with Senior Client Partner, David Mead-Fox. The timeline is to have search completed by the holiday.

David Mead-Fox extended his thanks to the Board for entrusting him with this work. He noted the importance of continuity and is pleased to see that MCLA has that in place and he looks forward to advancing this search.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 a.m.