



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

December 11, 2024

**87 Blackinton St, North Adams
MS Teams Audio/Video**

Committee members in attendance:

Frederick Keator, Committee Chair*
Yvonne Spicer*
Brenda Burdick*
Mohan Boodram*

Absent:

James Birge, President

Others present:

James Birge, President
Richard Glejzer, Provost and Vice President, 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 December 11, 2024, with Committee Chair Keator presiding was called to order at 8:31 a.m.

In reference to last meeting of the committee that was cancelled, the faculty applying for tenure will present. The Peer Institutions conversation will be held at a future meeting.

Accreditation and Program Reviews

Provost Glejzer provided a review of the recent NECHE 10 year accreditation visit as well as the JCERT Nursing program visit. NECHE singled out the success in assessment and program reviews of MCLA. There was some initial skepticism about a nursing program at a liberal arts college, however by the end the team was pleased with how the liberal arts supported and rounded out the

curriculum. We will get a final report soon. Aside from one minor website communications issue, all other areas passed.

There was discussion on our success versus a tech school. Provost Glejzer noted that we have 100% placement and JCERT exam passing. When looking at the institution, students come in knowing they will have credentials for doing work beyond the technical.

There was further discussion that the program is near full capacity before requiring additional hires capacity in program. Student Athletes also find the program valuable.

Provost Glejzer noted the Political Science Program review and Community Health program review were also recently completed. Poli-Sci reviewers recommend more internship capacity, and overall report was positive.

The Education program was also recently reviewed by DESE and we received full approval without any outstanding items to address.

All these visits were helpful for a review of current practices and future changes.

Faculty Incentive Awards

Provost Glejzer detailed the awarding of Faculty Incentive Awards to support research and development. The awards are donor-funded through the Foundation. They are awarded by previous faculty awardees. There was discussion of the awards process and how the college works to be fair and equitable in their process while maintaining faculty input. Academic Affairs is the final arbiter, working in tandem with the committee and can intervene as needed.

These were awarded publicly yesterday. The donors have been pleased with use of funds as well. The following faculty are recipients of the 2024-25 Faculty Incentive Awards:

New Course and Program Development Award (\$2,000 each)

- Graziana D'Elia-Brillante, "Modern Languages 102- Special Topics in Modern Languages"
- Laura Standley, "Examining Practical Theatre Experience: A Comparative Study"
- Omotara Adeeko, "ECON 1XX: Introduction to Economics"
- Sharon Claffey, "PSYC 3XX: Psychology of Stigma"

Research Award for Tenure-Track Faculty (\$3,000)

- Thomas Burton, "Investigating the Impact of Surface Geometry on Optical Performance in 3D Printed Lenses"

Sabbatical Research Award for Approved Sabbatical Projects (\$4,000)

- Liz Hartung, "Collaborative Research in Chemical Graph Theory & Combinatorial Generation"

- Travis Beaver, “The Mitigation, Management, and Meanings of Sport Injuries among Older Alpine Skiers”
- Hannah Haynes, “White Women and Discourses of Supremacy”
- Jerome Socolof, “Theorizing the causes of rural inequity in competitively-awarded state arts agency grant funding”

Three-credit Research APR

- Sam Pettey, “Where are the Women?: A recruitment study on women on local politics and a preliminary state-level analysis on Abortion Restriction”
- Mariah Hepworth, “War and the American Imagination”

Sabbatical Applications 25/26

Provost Glejzer then detailed the applications for sabbaticals as well as the requirements to apply. There was discussion of how to share the research back with the Trustees which may include presentations at future meetings.

Professor David Eve’s application is not being approved as both faculty in comp sci asked for sabbatical. David volunteered to withdraw his sabbatical. Dean Dehner has applied as well.

There was discussion of coverage for classes. In some cases when there is a full year we do need to hire an adjunct to cover. The Provost is not concerned with the current coverage needs.

Provost Glejzer noted that they will work on the form to make it clear what the work will be, He is proud of this body of requests and it is exciting to see this work from our faculty. They connect back to their teaching in every instance, and we see the influence of the liberal arts in all of the applications.

There was discussion of the Professors retaining intellectual property rights for the work they create while on sabbatical. They may write books or create other products. The expectation for earnings from the projects is low. We are mindful that the line is clear between work and college work.

Provost Glejzer provided a review of the faculty members who have applied for sabbaticals in 2025/2026.

The following faculty members have requested sabbatical leave for Academic Year 2024–2025:

Dr. Mariana Bolivar, Associate Professor of Spanish, AY 2025-2026
Dr. Christine Condaris, Professor of Music, Spring 2026
Dr. Carolyn Dehner Professor of Chemistry, Spring 2026
Dr. George Hamaoui, Associate Professor of Biology, Spring 2026
Dr. Robert Harris, Professor of Chemistry, Fall 2025
Dr. Ely Janis, Professor of History, Fall 2025

Ms. Michaela Petrovich, Associate Professor of Theatre, Fall 2025
Dr. Guodong Wang, Associate Professor of Computer Science, Fall 2025

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

VOTED: to accept the sabbatical applications as presented for advancement to the Board of Trustees.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk