

**Minutes of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL MEETING  
Thursday, September 15, 2016  
Fitzpatrick Room, Murdock Hall 208**

**The following Trustees were present:**

Susan Gold, Chair

JD Chesloff, Vice Chair

John Barrett III  
Mohan Boodram

Lisa Chamberlain

Buffy Lord

Denise Marshall

Kathleen Therrien

Brianne O’Rourke, Student Trustee

**Others present:**

Dr. James F. Birge, President

Denise Richardello, Executive Vice President  
Cynthia Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Larry Behan, Vice President of Administration & Finance

Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs

Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs

Curt King, Chief Information Officer

Theresa O’Bryant, Associate Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator

Mary Hastings, VP of Institutional Advancement

Francesca Shanks, Marketing & Communication Manager

Harmony Birch, Editor, *The Beacon*  
John Clark, Manager, MCLA Computer Help Desk  
Ginger Menard, Clerk

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 September 15, 2016 with Board Chair Gold presiding.

Chair Gold called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. She extended a welcome to MCLA’s newest Trustee, Kathleen Therrien, the alumni representative to the Board, and introduced Student-Trustee, Brianne O’Rourke.

**Approval of Minutes: May 19, 2016 Board of Trustees meeting**  
Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the May 19, 2016, meeting of the Board and

all actions contained therein.

**Report on the Minutes of the September 7, 2016 Fiscal Affairs Committee Meeting**

Trustee Marshall reported on behalf of the committee. She noted that the committee is bringing forward one action item for consideration this evening.   
  
The committee reviewed the 4th Quarter report from FY16 which showed positive variances in various line items including a reduction in the residence hall debt service due to lower interest rates. They also reviewed the project list for the MSCBA funds which must be allocated to areas that affect student life. One of the current projects is a feasibility study of the campus center pool to determine the best use for that space which will have the greatest impact on student life.

Vice President Behan presented the FY 2017 budget. The budget is based on a projected enrollment of 1,423 and includes a $1 million transfer from reserves. Administration & Finance will be adjusting the budget process going forward to better track actual spending.

Trustee Barrett asked about the use of the reserves and if this was linked to a lack of state funding. President Birge confirmed that is the case along with the lack of funding for collective bargaining. He added that based on other budget variables such as grants, the final amount drawn from reserves might be reduced.

The Board discussed 9C cuts and how they could affect formula funding and Gallery 51 funding if enacted by the Governor. Trustee Boodram asked if there were any concerns related to formula funding and how those metrics are determined. Though the metrics have changed over the years, they are currently dispersed with a flat percentage across the institutions so there are no concerns at this time.

The final item reported to the committee was that the Mac lab equipment will be purchased rather than leased and the financing is with a local institution.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was.

**VOTED** To approve the Fiscal Year 2017 budget

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the September 7 2016, meeting of the Fiscal Affairs Committee and all actions contained therein.

**Chairperson’s report**

Chair Gold extended her thanks to everyone who participated in First Days including Move-In, Opening Breakfast, and Convocation. She highlighted some upcoming events this fall including Fall Family and Reunion weekend Oct 14-16 and the upcoming lectures including the Hardman Lecture on Thursday, October 13 with Abderrahim Foukara, Al Jazeera’s Washington DC Bureau Chief; and the 6th annual Michael S. and Kitty Dukakis Public Policy Lecture on Thursday, November 3 featuring Cokie Roberts of ABC News and NPR. Also, on October 21-22 MCLA will host the COPLAC Undergraduate Research Conference. The conference is similar to our Undergraduate Research Conference in the spring and features participants from all of the regional COPLAC schools.  
  
Chair Gold shared that President Birge’s inauguration will be held on Friday, April 21, the day following MCLA’s Undergraduate Research Conference. The focus of the inaugural events will be on student achievement and that date will allow for greater inclusion of student scholarship and student performances as part of the celebration.

Chair Gold reminded the Trustees about two required annual forms they must complete: the MCLA Confidentiality Agreement and the MCLA Disclosure Questionnaire. She requested that all Trustees complete and return these forms to Ginger Menard.

Finally, Chair Gold shared that she has been meeting with President Birge every other week, either in person or via phone. One of their discussion items has been his goals for the upcoming year. As the Commissioner noted when he was here last spring, the first evaluation of President Birge will need to be completed by June 30, 2017.

Chair Gold reported the following performance goals that President Birge has established for Fiscal Year 2017:

1. To grow student enrollment by opening new recruiting markets for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education so that by fall 2017 there are 1,700 (1,500 undergrad, 200 DGCE) students enrolled at MCLA.
2. To grow student enrollment by launching new academic programs and athletic programs so that by fall 2018 undergraduate enrollment is 1,550.
3. To improve college financial position by increasing Annual Fund Revenues, Alumni participation, and external donor support so that FY17 ends with $500,000 surplus.
4. To create a more diverse Academic community that attracts diverse employees and Board members, promotes inclusive dialogue on issues of gender identity, culture, race, ethnicity, and faith, convenes diverse speakers promoting examination of multi-cultural issues, and creates a campus environment conducive to teaching and learning in an inclusive manner.
5. To realize flat or improving performance indicators for Vision Project Dashboard of college participation, closing the achievement Gap, and college completion.

Chair Gold stated that these are comprehensive, timely, and important goals. Trustee Chesloff asked about the metrics that will be applied to measure these goals and Trustee Lord requested that the evaluation sub-committee be established in January to allow sufficient time to review the requirements and prepare the Presidential evaluation for the June deadline.

**President’s Report**

President Birge also extended a welcome to Trustee Therrien and Student Trustee O’Rourke.  
He then shared statistics on current enrollment and the incoming freshman class noting that both enrollment and the retention rate have increased for Fall 2016.

He reminded the Trustees of the recent awarding of the Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education which will allow the College to increase resources for retention for students from low-income families and students of color. The grant will provide funding for the purchase of academic advising software which will increase advising, on-line learning, and student to student mentoring. It will also allow for the purchase of necessary equipment for the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation which will benefit both teaching and learning.

Additionally, the core curriculum is being reviewed and redesigned by a committee headed by Dr. Adrienne Wootters. The goal is to make certain the core is reflecting the goals of a liberal arts education and serving students in the way we would like while also reflecting the needs of future employers. Trustee Chesloff asked about the process for this and how it will be operationalized. President Birge responded that it is a Faculty-driven process being led by a committee which will include student input as well. The committee will meet with various stakeholders and then suggest changes that must then be approved by both the Curriculum and All College committees.

President Birge shared that he has submitted names to the Public Education Nominating Council (PENC) to fill the existing opening on the Board as Tyler Fairbank’s service officially ended in March of 2016, as well as the opening that is forthcoming in December when Dr. Will Dudley steps down from the Board.  
  
The Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation recently received LEED Gold certification by the by the U.S. Green Building Council. President Birge shared that it is one of the finest academic facilities he has seen in his career and offered congratulations to those involved in the design and maintenance of the building.   
  
He reminded the Trustees of the upcoming forum hosted by 1Berkshire and the MA Business Roundtable with Commissioner Carlos Santiago as the featured speaker. It is on Tuesday, September 21 at the Pittsfield Country Club.  
  
President Birge also shared that Trustee Lord would be receiving the “Service to the College Award” at the Distinguished Alumni luncheon on October 15 during Alumni weekend.   
  
 **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 5:39 p.m.