



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING
November 13, 2025
President's Office, 87 Blackinton Street, North Adams, MA
& Microsoft Teams Audio/Video Conference

MINUTES

Trustees in attendance: A. Bayer, T. Bernard, J. Clarke-Mitchell*, B. Lord,
Trustees Absent: B. Burdick

MCLA Staff in attendance:

James F. Birge	President
Richard Glejzer	Provost
Kelli Kozak	Clerk
Arianna Marroquin	MERC Coordinator
Joshua Mendel	Chief of Staff
Jeannette Smith	VP, Student Affairs
Janeilah Vazquez	GSC Coordinator
Allison Williams	Asst Director of Student Engagement & Programming

*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 via audio/video conference, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met on November 13, 2025 with Chair Clarke-Mitchell presiding.

Chair Clarke-Mitchell called the meeting to order at 8:32a.m. and began with a general discussion of student well-being, with staff noting it is a broad spectrum. The student emergency fund has had over 100 applications, including students who are parents, food insecurity, meal swipe requests, also noted “moments of joy” – students are highly engaged, events and classes. It was also noted that an anonymous donor provided an unsolicited \$50k to support student needs.

Multicultural Education Resource Center (MERC) Updates – from A. Marroquin

- There are 7 ALANA clubs active by end of year

- The MERC staff provides advice and dialogue and collaboration to students and groups
- The physical space is very nice and provides multiple programming, lounge and interactive areas. There is also a smaller space that is well used – the empowerment lounge. That is very student driven. There is also prayer and meditation space
- Four student workers provide support for spaces, clubs, calendar and their own independent programming etc.
- The MERC has held 21 programs so far this year from clubs to RA, staff, and student programming, including collaborations and non-ALANA clubs meeting there. Women of Color Initiative and Asian Student Association have been very active.
- It is a staff priority to reengage the Latin American society especially because of our large Latinx population. All student leaders are highly engaged and very busy.
- Looking to the future – more programming this semester and more professional development for student leaders per their request, also basic space improvements including signage,
- There was discussion of the broad range of activities and reaching commuter and non-traditional students. The Committee also appreciated Ms. Marroquin's accomplishments in her short tenure. They also discussed challenges such as representation and students doing the lift of the work in the absence of a Diversity Officer. It was also noted that alumni could be beneficial to the process. The Committee offered kudos to both for their skill in presenting at the recent day of dialogue and for their accomplishments to date.

Gender & Sexuality Center (GSC) Updates – from J. Vazquez

- GSC works collaboratively with MERC.
- GSC has done 10 programs and is also working toward new programming including trans awareness programming
- Live out Loud conference planning in collaboration with BCC as well
- This organization supports queer and fem-facing students and includes an ally committee (QUAC), Queer Student Union is currently inactive. Feminine and masculine identity clubs are reviewing their charges and updating them this semester.
- J. Vazquez is also working on the affirmation closet and supporting individual student needs as well as program visibility and SAFE ZONE training.
- GSC has 6 students workers and 1 volunteer – they are experienced and helpful. They also have access to faculty fellows
- It was also noted that both Marroquin and Vazquez are also working in Res Life and are providing a resource for students
- There was Committee discussion of making connections with Berkshire Pride, North Adams Pride and other orgs.

Student experience and impact in the absence of a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) – J. Clarke-Mitchell with Provost Glejzer.

- Recent history - CDO to vice provost transition was led by REJI (Racial Equity and Justice Initiative) Group. It was determined that the expectations were very broad. Our peer organizations are also challenged by this. Looking forward the role will be reevaluated and that it is everyone's work. The goal is to set up the next person for success. This is also a significant part of the strategic planning process and is part of that workflow, so they are just meeting and will determine what the campus-wide systemic support is. Then they will craft a new job

description and support the hiring process. The intention is to be sustainable and supportive and not have an expectation that person is the only point of contact for this work.

- There was discussion of the optics of the position being vacant as well as public and student perception. President Birge noted that further clear communication is needed through this transition. Our commitment to the work is strong. It was also noted that some other states are requiring the removal of these programs.
- There was further discussion of search timing and availability of talent from other regions. The search timing is moving forward under the strategic planning process and will move forward with the search in winter/spring to have someone in place by the end of the semester. There was further discussion of communicating the process and supporting students and faculty throughout. The timing of the open position is also a challenge based on current events. This is a large and complex role, and our goal is to be as supportive and prepared as possible. Dr. Smith noted tangible action items include DEIB newsletter refresh and publication as well as first-gen student support committee working on strategic communications that could potentially be utilized for other student support processes. There is also ongoing work with HR to operationalize and make visible the engagement with this work. Noted that the campus has experienced loss recently as well.
- There was further discussion of acronyms used for labeling the positions and coordinating those across the programs.

Chair Clarke-Mitchell offered appreciation to the group for their presentations and then asked for further discussion. Hearing none, the meeting adjourned at 9:42a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli Kozak
Clerk