



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of June 3, 2020
Teleconference

Members in Attendance

Mohan Boodram, Chair
JD Chesloff
Kathleen Therrien

Others in Attendance

Denise Marshall, Chair of the Board of Trustees
James F. Birge, President
Gina Puc, Dean of Enrollment and Community Relations
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk
Jana Boyer, Associate Director of Admission Operations
Kayla Hollins, Associate Director of Freshman Admission
Bonnie Howland, Director of Student Financial Services

Following a roll call attendance of the Enrollment Management Committee Members, and upon establishing a quorum present, Chair Boodram called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

President Birge began with an acknowledgement of the events of late on a national and local level following the murder of George Floyd while in police custody. Town Hall meetings were held separately with faculty/staff and students on June 1, and began with statements from President Birge and Dr. MacDonald-Dennis acknowledging the murder of George Floyd, and subsequent protests and riots. Additional communications to all campus community members will be sent via e-mail before the end of this week.

Fall 2020 Admissions

MCLA's enrollment deadline has been extended to June 15, 2020.

Ms. Hollins reviewed the new student funnel for first years and transfers. First year and transfer applications have resulted in 170 and 34 enrolled students, respectively.

Ms. Hollins reviewed upcoming efforts by the Office of Admission to continue to recruit students throughout the summer and make sure that students currently enrolled stay at MCLA. Out-reach is also being conducted with students who have withdrawn. Efforts to acclimate students to college include a new course through Canvas titled Kick-off to College. This course provides an outline

for actions that students need to take before arriving on campus, and serves as an onboarding tool to introduce students to the Canvas platform.

Recruitment

Ms. Boyer presented Fall 2021 recruitment efforts. Biweekly virtual information sessions are scheduled in place of in-person meetings for recruiting, as well as webinars for each major, including faculty participation. SAT and ACT score requirements have been waived for Fall 2021 and 2022 applicants, in line with a number of competitor and peer institutions.

An FAQ page has been established for school counselors to assist them as they work with students making college selections. Summer efforts will focus on reimaging what recruitment looks like as we transition back to campus amid budget constraints and continued social distance measures as a result of the pandemic. Areas of impact include recruitment travel, limited campus events and visitors, and staffing constraints.

Financial Aid

Ms. Howland provided an update with regard to student financial aid. There were 693 returning and 836 new student awards processed. An uptick in financial aid special circumstances appeals is anticipated. While we await information on MA grant and cash grant allocations, we do anticipate a reduction in state funding. Knowing the amount of state funding MCLA will be appropriated is critical to our student financial aid plans.

Resiliency Fund/CARES Act Awarding

MCLA received \$1.3mm from the CARES Act award, \$650k of which is for students facing financial hardship. Much of this funding will be distributed through the MCLA Resiliency fund. Students facing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 are directed to this fund for assistance with expenses related to items such as rent, food, internet service, course materials including laptop computers, and summer courses. To date, over 300 students have been awarded funding.

Retention

Dean Puc presented an update on retention to-date. Registrations are being closely monitored and at this time there are 783 matriculated undergraduate students. This is a retention rate of 78% first-to-second year students.

The communications staff are plotting out social, electronic and print media, with an emphasis on print as it has proven to be more important in this unusual time. Messaging with students includes personal check-ins, helping with FAQs, updates on registration and housing processes, and providing additional information on the resiliency fund. Efforts focus on maintaining continuous contact with students

Return to Campus

President Birge discussed plans for a return to campus in the fall. A survey conducted with 10,000 college students and reported on by *NICHE* shows that 78% of students want in-class, on-campus learning. As well, one-third of respondents would transfer if their college continued online course delivery.

Academic Affairs is recommending a blended hybrid model for course delivery. Technology to support this is either currently in place or will be purchased before the start of the fall semester planned for September 2. The academic year will remain the same; however, students will leave campus at the Thanksgiving break, complete the remainder of the semester remotely, and return to campus for the beginning of the spring semester on January 20. This extended absence from campus allows for deeper cleaning of all facilities, and, as it falls at the peak of flu season, is anticipated to reduce the spread of both flu and COVID-19 viruses.

RPS is planning for all students residing on campus to be housed in single units. Students will be provided with return to campus packages including thermometers, face coverings, hand sanitizer, and information on safety. Residential space has been designated to allow for quarantining and isolation on campus. Dining will be arranged for socially distant operations and providing take out options.

Should COVID-19 see a resurgence, contingency plans are to pivot to a remote learning environment.

Staff will begin to repopulate campus beginning in early July with 25% of building capacity. Full staffing is anticipated to be in place when students return to campus. An exemption policy will be developed to allow for those with health concerns or other situations that risk their health to continue to work remotely. Work continues to finalize the full return plan.

Other Business

In response to a question regarding testing requirements for fall 2021, Dean Puc stated that guidance is awaited to update on waiving testing requirements at that time. Regardless of waiving testing requirements, the 10% exemption rule is still in place and has to be followed.

With regard to a question on modeling from RNL, Dean Puc noted that MCLA will end our engagement with RNL at the end of this fiscal year. Our math faculty have discussed developing our own model and we will pursue this option.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.