



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of October 22, 2020
Murdock Hall Room 208
Tele/Video Conference**

Members in Attendance

JD Chesloff, Chair
Mohan Boodram, Board Chair
Susan Gold

Others in Attendance

James F. Birge, President
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs
Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk
Spencer Moser, Director of Civic and Community Engagement
DeAnna Wardwell, Student

Trustee Chesloff called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m. It was noted that a student trustee had not been successfully elected at this time.

Food Pantry

VP Holbrook introduced Spencer Moser and DeAnna Wardwell to talk about MCLA's Food Pantry program. Ms. Wardwell explained how the food pantry was able to shift to allow for safe access to the food pantry that follows pandemic guidelines. Access moved away from individual students being given a key to access the pantry, to volunteers creating an on-line ordering system for students to complete, then those same volunteers packaging the orders for pickup. Student access to the food pantry has seen an increase this semester and is attributed to an increased social media presence, and the ease of ordering and accessing the pantry.

Mr. Moser discussed the usage pattern being seen. From the items ordered it is clear that students are being deliberate in gathering ingredients to create meals. An increase in ordering from the pantry has been seen with commuter students with families.

With regard to supplies and inventory, Mr. Moser stated that the food pantry is able to operate as a result of donations, and the MCLA Foundation has a fund established for the food pantry. A campus ask will be made if inventory begins to get low, and the Advancement Office is working on ways to secure gift cards from local stores. As well, dining services provides packaged meals that can be frozen and distributed.

An article about the food pantry was published in the Beacon and will be shared with Trustees.

Student Trustee Status

VP Holbrook provided an overview of the Student Government Association elections which resulted in a failure to elect a student trustee. There were three students who took out nomination papers, but they were unable to secure the necessary 100 signatures needed to be placed on the ballot. There was also a failed write-in attempt by two students for the trustee position. Advisors to SGA will work with leaders to discuss ways to put forward a candidate for student trustee.

It is anticipated that SGA will be able to resolve the election concerns and a student trustee will be elected before the next committee and board of trustees meetings.

Student Experience

VP Holbrook provided an update on the student experience on campus. Students are developing routines around dining, who they dine with regularly, and whether they choose to eat in the cafeteria or select to-go meal options. COVID regulations are beginning to wear on students and this is showing itself in small ways, such as riding the elevator with more than the designated capacity. Students are still largely complying with social distancing and other pandemic guidelines.

For events, students are gravitating toward events that they can attend in-person. Virtual events outside of classes are seeing light attendance. However, attendance at the virtual Day of Dialogue was an exception.

VP Puc presented the COVID-19 dashboard data to the Committee. Data is updated weekly on Friday morning and includes all Broad testing results in aggregate. There have been just under 3,000 tests conducted with zero cases reported over the past seven days. Positive test results are not reflective of positive cases as a case will be tested multiple times once identified as positive. There were three positive cases reported to date, with no active cases currently.

A plan for COVID-19 testing for the spring semester is in progress and will be similar to the fall testing plan. One difference will be the expansion of testing to include commuter students and wider testing for faculty and staff.

With regard to first year students, VP Holbrook commented that these students reside in Hoosac Hall and have a common lounge for gathering within guidelines. Programs were developed specifically for these students that encouraged introductory interactions. The first eight weeks programs helped students connect. As well, residence life staff are checking in with first year students regularly.

The COVID-19 dashboard will be placed on the agenda as a standing item for future committee meetings.

Election 2020 Pre and Post Initiatives

VP Holbrook provided a summary of the planning underway to provide election support to students. Staff in the Student Affairs division have been working since late summer on get out the vote initiatives and other voting efforts. A cross divisional group is developing a resource guide that will be provided the week prior to election day. As well, planned activities include a Stroll to the Poll (students will walk with faculty and staff to the polls to encourage participation in voting), a viewing party and open classes offered by Faculty in the Political Science program, educational opportunities on the ballot questions, and an airing of Professor Samantha Pettey's Constitution Day lecture.

More thought is being given to planning for activities post-election, which is the larger challenge as it is likely that the results of the election will not be known on November 4. Gathering spaces have been designated for students to rally, protest, or celebrate as they choose. The counseling center has held their scheduling open to allow for immediate access to students as needed. Space will also be created for faculty and staff to decompress before attempting to provide assistance to students.

Joint communications will be sent pre-and post-election to all campus community members from President Birge, the SGA president, and union presidents and stewards.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.