



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of September 10, 2020
Murdock Hall Room 208
Audio/Video Conference

Members in Attendance

Robert Reilly, Chair
Frederick Keator
Kathleen Therrien

Others in Attendance

Mohan Boodram, Chair of the Board of Trustees
James F. Birge, President
Gina Puc, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk
Jana Boyer, Director of Enrollment Operations
Kayla Hollins, Director of Admission
Bonnie Howland, Director of Student Financial Services

Upon establishing a quorum of the Enrollment Management Committee Members present, Chair Reilly called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and began with introductions of Trustees and staff in attendance.

VP Puc began the presentation with an overview of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM). SEM provides a unique framework for improving student and institutional outcomes by jointly enabling student access to and success in higher education, best business practices and comprehensive institutional planning.

An overview of the admissions funnel, which is the responsibility of the admissions unit, was provided. This funnel consists of many steps from developing leads and prospects, to acceptance and matriculation of students.

A map of the United States showing the projected change in high school graduates for 2019/20 to 2029/30 was presented, and shows a decline in Massachusetts students. VP Puc explained that there is a high competition factor for students in Massachusetts based on the ratio of higher education institutions to students. This number shows that of the 29,202 students graduating and choosing one of 117 in-state schools, each institution could expect 250 students on average. MCLA enrolled 180 first year students of which 75% are MA residents.

MCLA's first time/full time student retention rate for the 2019 fall cohort was 73%. VP Puc reviewed retention strengths and weaknesses. President Birge noted that the recently award TRIO

grant will allow us to assist students from under-resourced backgrounds and improve retention rates in these populations.

Priorities for the Enrollment Management division include equity and inclusion initiatives to review the financial aid awarding process and a proposal to conduct “test blind” awarding. The use of SAT score in consideration of applications has been suspended due to multiple COVID-19 related complications.

Ms. Boyer reviewed student communications efforts that will focus on providing a consistent experience for students throughout their college career. A master calendar of communications with students has been developed to align messages throughout the cycle.

Ms. Hollins provided an overview of recruitment plans for Fall 2021. Operations for recruitment is being conducted fully remote due to pandemic restrictions. While the elimination of travel for recruiting is not ideal, it does provide an opportunity to assess the value of travel in the recruitment process.

In Fall 2020 there were 1,862 applications received. Of those, 1,379 students were accepted with 269 new students enrolling. Out of the 269 new students, 178 are first year and the remaining are transfer or reenrolled students. These number are in line with projections which take into account the uncertainty resulting from the pandemic.

Ms. Hollins commented on CRM improvements, equity review previously mentioned, and campus connections among departments.

VP Puc provided an overview of the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education program. For Fall 2020, there are 69 students in four cohorts. There are 63 students enrolled in the M.Ed program, 45 in Leadership Academy, and 14 in the MBA program. These programs are seeing the impact of employers reducing their expenses by eliminating tuition assistance for employees.

Ms. Howland provided an up date on MCLA’s financial aid student profile noting that the trend nationally is a decrease in FAFSA filings. Eighty percent of students receive need based aid from the federal and state government, and the College. MCLA has seen an increase in Pell eligible students this year at 53% versus past years that typically fall between 46-48%. The DOE selected approximately 25% of FASFA applications for review, which is on par with prior years’ reviews. Special circumstances appeals were flat year over year. The impact of unemployment due to the pandemic is anticipated to be seen in the 2020 FASFA applications that will be based on 2019 income.

The CARES Act distribution black grants occurred in July based on Pell eligibility. Management is carefully monitoring institutional aid spend and watching for fluctuations due to students moving to a fully remote platform.

FASFA workshop week is scheduled for October 19, and virtual appointments will be scheduled with those requesting assistance with completing their financial aid applications.

Return to Campus

VP Puc summarized the return to campus activity. Enrollment at this point is stable having seen an 18% decline in total against a projection of 20%. The situation is still concerning and revenue and aid discounting are being monitored accordingly.

Fifty classrooms have been outfitted with technology to adapt to the hybrid model of course delivery. Cleaning schedules and wayfinding signage placement are being refined as needs change or concerns arise. To-date, there have been no major student conduct issues and there are no active cases of COVID on campus.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.