



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

December 3, 2021

MS Teams Audio/Video

Committee members in attendance:

Brenda Burdick, Committee Chair*
Robert Reilly*
Mohan Boodram, Board Chair*

Absent:

Franklyn Reynolds

Others present:

James F. Birge, President*
Richard Glejzer, Vice President, Academic Affairs*
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk*
Ely Janis, Dean, Academic Affairs*
Paul Petritis, Dean, Division of Graduate and Continuing Education*
Travis Beaver, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work*

*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 in-person and via audio/video-conference, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees with Committee Chair Burdick presiding was called to order at 8 a.m.

Tenure Candidacy

Tenure candidate presenting at this session was:

- Travis Beaver, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work

Dr. Beaver introduced himself to the Committee members, provided an overview of his educational background, teaching, scholarly work including publications and major presentations, and service, and responded to questions from the Trustees.

Dr. Beaver reviewed his career as an educator beginning at Colgate University, then Flagler College, and his current position with the College as an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work. His course instruction at MCLA is mainly sociology and includes core courses such as Introduction to Sociology and Social Problem, with a primary focus on social theory and the sociology of gender.

Dr. Beaver reviewed his research and publications on the topic of roller derby in peer-reviewed articles. He has published chapters forthcoming with the NY University Press and Edward Elgar Publishing. He has also provided book reviews and is working on two manuscripts.

In response to a question regarding professional society members, Dr. Beaver stated that he is a member of the Eastern Sociological Society and American Sociological Association.

With no further questions or discussion of tenure candidacy, Dr. Beaver departed the meeting at 8:16 a.m.

Substantive Changes for Board Consideration

Distance Education and Fully Online Learning

VP Glejzer introduced Dean Petritis, who provided an overview of the two substantive change items that require approval from the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). Both proposals also require approval by the Board before submission.

The first substantive change asks for formal permission to develop fully online versions of five current programs:

- Certificates in Network Security and Principles of Accounting
- BA completion in Interdisciplinary Studies
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Education.

In each case, DGCE has already run online versions of these courses in response to the pandemic and the application to NECHE builds on this experience to serve more fully the needs of our adult students.

With regard to the Academic Technology division, President Birge commended Jerel Petruzella and Jessica Yurkofsky for their work in supporting students and for familiarizing faculty with online models of course delivery as the college pivoted to distance learning in the early months of the pandemic. This work positioned MCLA for success and to be able to offer a fully online learning option to our students in DGCE.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, following a roll call vote, it was:

VOTED: to recommend approval to the Board of Trustees for the establishment of a Distance Education and Fully Online Learning program as detailed in the NECHE Substantive Change Request presented.

Interdisciplinary Studies Degree Completion Program at Greenfield Community College

The second substantive change creates a partnership with Greenfield Community College to offer MCLA's degree completion program on their campus. Although this is a well-established program, NECHE requires that institutions seek approval when offering credit at another site.

DGCE currently offers degree completion in a hybrid format for bachelor degrees in Business Administration and Interdisciplinary Studies. Student support services for these programs is provided on campus and remotely with the focus on replicating in Pittsfield the services provided at the College's North Adams campus. These programs are taught by a combination of full-time and adjunct faculty based on availability with full-time faculty being given the priority.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, following a roll call vote, it was:

VOTED: to recommend approval to the Board of Trustees for the College to offer MCLA's Interdisciplinary Studies Degree Completion Program at Greenfield Community College as detailed in the NECHE Substantive Change Request presented.

Sabbatical Applications

VP Glejzer reviewed the AY 2022-2023 sabbatical applications submitted by faculty members who have completed six years of full-time service to the College:

- **Dr. Anna Jaysane-Darr**, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Fall 2022
- **Dr. Ingrid Castro**, Professor of Sociology, Academic Year 2022-2023
- **Dr. Eric Doucette**, Associate Professor of Biology, Spring 2023
- **Ms. Melanie Mowinski**, Professor of Art, Academic Year 2022-2023
- **Dr. Chali Nondo**, Professor of Economics, Spring 2023
- **Dr. Samantha Pettey**, Associate Professor of Political Science, Spring 2023
- **Dr. Ruby Vega**, Associate Professor of Psychology. Spring, 2023
- **Mr. Jeremy Winchester**, Associate Professor of Theatre, Spring 2023

With regard to the format for submitting sabbatical applications, VP Glejzer noted that a more formal process for documenting the request has been developed.

Trustees discussed documenting and reporting outcomes of a sabbatical, and whether there are consequences for not fulfilling the sabbatical goals. President Birge provided an overview of work done to assist faculty with ensuring the sabbatical is successful. It is important to understand that one of the possible outcomes of research is that the results expected are not actualized, and in these instances, faculty are encouraged to continue their work and provide additional information on why the research project may have ended the way it did.

Should a faculty member not return to the College post-sabbatical, they are contractually obligated to reimburse the College for the pay they received during the sabbatical.

Trustee Reilly expressed interest in hearing from faculty about their research and or projects upon completion of sabbaticals. VP Glejzer commented on the need for infrastructure within the College community to support sharing post sabbatical work.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, following a roll call vote, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to accept the sabbatical applications, as presented, for advancement to the Board of Trustees.

Academic Affairs Update

VP Glejzer provided an update on the Academic Affairs department.

The search for an Associate Dean of Nursing came to a successful conclusion with the hiring of Dr. Elizabeth Fiscella. Dr. Fiscella brings substantial teaching and administrative experience to MCLA, currently directing the RN to BSN Nursing program at Elms College after having served for many years as Nursing faculty and in administration at Berkshire Community College. As a long-time Berkshire County resident, she has a deep connection to our community and to health providers in the region. Dr. Fiscella will officially start on February 1st but will begin her transition to MCLA early in the new year.

After careful review of departmental curricular needs and course enrollments, and informed by MCLA's strategic plan to increase diversity in the faculty, four tenure-track faculty searches were recently approved, bringing the total number of tenure-track searches this year to five. The five faculty searches are in the following areas:

- Business Administration – Economics
- Computer Science – Electrical Engineering
- Fine and Performing Arts – Art History and Museum Studies
- Psychology – Counseling (approved in June, offer pending)
- Psychology – Specialty Open

All five position descriptions explicitly focus on bringing greater diversity to our curricular offerings and teaching strategies, with each position framed around racial/ethnic equity and

culturally responsive pedagogy. By clustering these five positions around equity and inclusion, we expect to have greater diversity in our candidate pools.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.