



**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of February 4, 2022**  
**Audio/Video Conference**

**Members in Attendance**

Mohan Boodram, Chair\*  
Brenda Burdick, Vice Chair\*  
JD Chesloff\*  
Robert Reilly\*

**Members Absent:**

Karen Kowalczyk

**Others in Attendance**

James F. Birge, President\*  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk\*

\*Denotes remote participation

Upon establishing a quorum of the Executive Committee Members present, Chair Boodram called the February 4, 2022 meeting of the Board of Trustees Executive Committee to order at 4:32 p.m.

President Birge led a discussion of recommendations of honorary degree recipients and potential commencement speakers.

As discussed at a prior board of trustees meeting, individuals to be invited to serve as commencement speaker were actress Audra MacDonald, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, and author Amanda Gorman. Ms. MacDonald declined the invitation, Justice Sotomayor indicated that she has paused on speaking engagements, and Lt. Governor Polito has a conflict on the day of commencement. No response was received from Ms. Gorman. President Birge also extended an invitation to Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, Dr. Carlos Santiago, who graciously accepted to serve as Speaker at MCLA's May 2022 commencement exercises.

For honorary degree recipients, the following individuals were proposed:

- Thomas Bernard, Former Mayor of the City of North Adams
- Susan Gold, Former MCLA Trustee
- Carlos Santiago, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Discussion of the proposed degree recipients followed.

Upon motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously:

**VOTED:** to recommend to the Board of Trustees approval of Thomas Bernard, Susan Gold, and Carlos Santiago as honorary degrees recipients at commencement exercises on May 14, 2022.

In response to questions regarding commencement, President Birge stated that the ceremony will be held in-person on campus. Guest attendance may be limited, but a final decision on this will depend upon circumstances related to the pandemic closer to the event.

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m. by Chair Boodram.