



**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of March 10, 2022**  
**87 Blackinton St, North Adams**  
**Audio/Video Conference**

**Members in Attendance**

Robert Reilly, Chair  
Mohan Boodram, Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Frederick Keator

All trustees attended virtually.

**Others in Attendance**

James Birge, President  
Gina Puc, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives  
Lisa Lesarbeau, Clerk  
Jana Boyer, Director of Enrollment Operations  
Kayla Hollins, Director of Admission  
Bonnie Howland, Director of Student Financial Services  
Bernadette Alden, Director of Communications

Upon establishing a quorum of the Enrollment Management Committee Members present, Chair Reilly called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

VP Puc began with a review of the agenda for today's meeting which will focus on practices in admission for yield season, events, and new student onboarding.

Ms. Hollins provided an update from the Office of Admission noting that it is yield season. The new student funnel report was reviewed. Inquiries for first year students show an increase of 43%, applications 13%, and accepts 9%, year over year. There are currently 41 students enrolled for Fall 2022 admission. Transfer inquiries are up 33%, applications 23%, and accepts 19%, with five enrolled students. Both enrollment numbers are even with prior year activity.

In response to a question regarding the applications declined, Ms. Hollins explained that these were largely due to GPA below the 2.0 state guideline. Most transfer applications declined at this time are due to incomplete applications or missing information, and that the staff work with these students to complete their applications.

First year student trends were reviewed. Majors ahead for accepted students are arts, communications, computer science, English, physics, performing arts and sociology. The average GPA for applicants is 3.47, up from 3.39. Regionally, applications are down from Berkshire, Hampden and Plymouth counties, with initiatives focused on these areas for improvement. Meetings with guidance counselors reveal that high school students are not applying or are not engaged in the application process. Staff are engaging

with guidance counselors, associations and families to assist students in the application process. Messaging is being altered to make it clear that transfer students do not have to live on campus and that commuting is an option. This messaging is based on feedback from BCC students who were not applying to MCLA because they thought there was a residency requirement.

Applications from New York, Vermont and other states outside of New England are ahead year over year, largely attributable to athletic recruitment efforts. While high school senior population continues a downward trend in New England, staff have placed additional focus on transfer students to counter this trend. Accepted applications from students of color have increased 10% to 46%, year over year.

National trends show a 14% increase in application volume, an increase of 5% in applications per applicant, and a 19% increase in underrepresented and first-generation student applications. As well, only five of 914 schools in the common app are requiring applicant's test scores. MCLA continues to be test blind, but a permanent decision on this practice will need to be made by College administration.

Ms. Hollins provided her perspective on testing scores as an admissions officer. Standardized testing is not equitable for all students and she is on the side of continuing the practice to be test blind. This practice currently shows success in accepts, and with students who have been accepted under this practice.

VP Puc provided information regarding test score requirement activity underway at the Department of Higher Education. Work continues at that level relative to implementing their racial justice and equity plan which includes a recommendation to abandon testing requirements. As well, validity studies matching SAT scores with retention data show no correlation.

Trustees discussed MCAS testing in K-12, which was suspended during the pandemic, and the need, or lack thereof, for standardized testing.

Returning to first year student trends, Ms. Hollins commented on the regional reduction and efforts to attract applicants from outside of New England. Social media, print, and other digital messaging efforts are being used to communicate outside of New England to reach potential students. The College's increase in applications year over year continues to outpace the Common App's growth and is an indication of the staff's efforts to market to areas outside the immediate region.

Transfer student trends and strategies were presented. Majors ahead at this time are business administration, computer science and English. The average GPA is 3.28, up from 3.07 year over year. Transfer applications in Berkshire County are ahead 33% year over year, though it is early in this process. Work continues with Berkshire Community College on the course equivalency guide, radiological technology articulation, and information session and instant decision day on March 22, 2022. Updates are underway to the College's MassTransfer plan for submission to the State.

Accepted student weekends are now being held in-person on campus. The first held on March 4-5, was attended by 45 students. The second weekend has 60 students registered at this time. The activities of the weekend, including the overnight program, mock classes and sessions with athletics, clubs and organizations, were reviewed.

VP Puc provided an overview of the national and local impact on higher education enrollment trends resulting from the COVID-19 disruption. One in four students who started college in fall 2019 did not return in fall 2020. This is the highest rate of interruption in over a decade. Based on this data, focus is being directed to what efforts are needed to engage those students who did not return. Recruitment practices are being examined to address the disruption, and a division retreat was held to reexamine and readjust practices within the enrollment division. In consideration, as well, is the disruption that high school students experienced and the resulting skills gap that needs to be addressed. Student on-boarding practices are being adjusted to account for this piece of the disruption.

Ms. Hollins reviewed new student onboarding programs. Online orientation is conducted through the College's CANVAS application, which students begin to use as soon as enrolled. As students complete modules, they are awarded badges, and upon completion of all orientation modules, students are awarded a gift card for the College's bookstore.

In-person orientation is scheduled for June 23-25, and students will have the opportunity to meet with faculty, meet their classmates, and learn about MCLA resources. Individual day orientation programs are also scheduled for August 4, 5 and 6.

Summer LEAD and STEM academies are offered June 25 through 29, and are optional for first year students only. A third academy is being developed with the TRiO program.

Ms. Hollins reviewed TRiO student support services and their offerings. Students can expect academic support, enrichment and personal development opportunities, and education and personal resources.

New student move-in is scheduled for September 2, and we anticipate a return to having a team of students helping with move-in, convocation and other traditional opening activities.

The College's First Year Experience program aids students in becoming a member of the Trailblazer community through CANVAS courses, peer mentors and the First-year Seminar (FSEM).

Chair Boodram shared with this Committee that the format for committee reporting at meetings of the Board of Trustees will change beginning with the April 7, 2022 session. Committee Chairs will not provide individual reports at the session, and minutes of all committee meetings, which are provided in advance of the meeting will be motioned at one time for discussion and approval. This change allows more time during the board meetings to address fiduciary responsibilities.

## **Adjournment**

Enrollment Management Committee Minutes of  
March 10, 2022

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 a.m.