



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

September 30, 2021
Murdock Hall, Room 208
Audio/Video Conference

The following Trustees were present:

Mohan Boodram
John Barrett III*
Brenda Burdick
JD Chesloff

Susan Gold
Frederick Keator*
Karen Kowalczyk*
Denise Marshall

Edgar Perez
Robert Reilly
Kathleen Therrien*

MCLA Staff in attendance:

James F. Birge, President
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk

*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 Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met on September 30, 2021 with Board Chair Boodram presiding.

For purposes of recording, it was noted that the Board Development session was held at 4:30 p.m. and Trustees were provided an overview of the DHE's Equity Agenda with Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Chief of Staff and Assistant Commissioner for Academic Policy & Student Success.

Chair Boodram called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. and began by welcoming newly elected Student Trustee Edgar Perez.

Executive Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of June 10, 2021

Chair Boodram presented the report of the Executive Committee meetings of June 10, 2021. The Executive Committee of the Board met on June 10 to discuss potential honorary degree recipients for Commencement in May 2022. Typically, three or four recipients are selected to be awarded honorary degrees each year. The Committee reviewed a long list of potential recipients, and discussed options for a commencement speaker. The list of names is included with the minutes of that meeting.

Those to be invited to serve as commencement speaker are Audra McDonald, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, and Amanda Gorman.

Potential candidates to join this Board of Trustees were presented by President Birge and the appointment process was reviewed. In March 2022, four current trustee terms will end, however Trustees will continue to serve until their successor is identified and appointed by the Governor. Suggestions for Trustee positions should take into consideration the need to fill any gaps in domains of expertise that may exist with the remaining trustees.

Presidential Evaluation Committee Chair Report on the Meetings of July 14, September 2, and September 8, 2021

Trustee Burdick presented the report of the Presidential Evaluation Committee meetings of July 14, September 2, and September 8, 2021.

The Presidential Evaluation Committee held three meetings to prepare President Birge's FY21 performance evaluation. The President's self-evaluation and the Committee evaluation were both provided in the materials provided for today's Board of Trustees meeting.

The Committee evaluated the President in the following areas:

- Executive searches
- Enrollment
- Facilities capital projects
- Dashboard development
- Budget and deficit reduction
- Fundraising and campaign
- Equity and diversity

Members of the Evaluation Committee sought feedback from members of the President's staff regarding the aforementioned areas as they relate to the President's goals and performance. The committee identified no areas of major concern and recommends that President Birge receive the maximum increase consistent with the guidelines established by the DHE.

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

VOTED: to accept the President's evaluation for FY21 as provided by the Evaluation Committee.

Student Affairs Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of September 30, 2021

Trustee Chesloff presented the report of the Student Affairs Committee meeting of September 30, 2021. The Committee was provided a general overview of each department within the Student Affairs Division by members of the SA staff.

Residential life has returned to double occupancy, unless the student is unvaccinated or requested a single room. Residential staff are meeting one-to-one with every student in their respective buildings.

Counseling and Health Services continue to provide students with needed services on campus. Dean Quire has assumed the role of Title IX coordinator for students and attended training to be compliant with Title IX requirements. The student handbook has been revised and is now referred to as Community Standards.

Trustee Chesloff commended the team for their work and noted that the renewed energy within the SA division was evident.

Enrollment Management Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of September 23, 2021

On behalf of Trustee Reilly, VP Puc presented the report of the Enrollment Management Committee meeting September 23, 2021.

VP Puc began with a review of the events of the past 18 months and the efforts focused on keeping the community safe through the on-going pandemic. Enrollment is down consistent with national trends. Community colleges, in particular, were hard hit and this is reflected in transfer student enrollment numbers. The division is focused on a rebound and strategies for enrollment.

Student recruiting continues in two modalities: in-person and virtually. Organizational structures within the division have been made with the addition of the Office of the Registrar and Student Records to the Enrollment Division.

Ms. Hollins provided an update from the Office of Admission. An increase in acceptances was seen as a result of the College's move to test blind/test free policy for 2020 and 2021 applications. New students hail from 29 states and 36% identify as Student of Color.

Staffing for recruitment strategies for 2021/22 were reviewed. Two vacant admission counselor positions have been filled. Efforts continue to improve the division's connection across the College with the addition of a liaison with the College's TRiO and Athletics programs. All counselors are currently on the road or conducting recruitment work by Zoom.

Ms. Boyer discussed outreach and communication efforts for 2021/22. Targeted postcards were sent to approximately 78,000 high school seniors with more personalized messaging. Interactive text messaging campaigns have been undertaken to reach high school students.

Ms. Hollins discussed the division's student-centered recruitment efforts. With the Liaison CRM as a partner, over 100,000 surveys were sent to prospects and inquiries. Key findings of the results show the importance of highlighting MCLA's naming in the Top Ten Colleges by US News and World Report.

Fall 2021 events and tours were reviewed. These include daily and Saturday tours, open houses, an instant decision day, athletic preview day, virtual athletic preview day, and group and virtual tours.

Ms. Alden presented an update on the College's marketing and communications work. Simpson Scarborough has been retained to assist with market research and testing, and a paid digital advertising campaign. Renderings of display ads, social media ads, and billboard examples were shared with the Trustees.

Ms. Howland provided an update from the Office of Student Financial Services and Registrar. FASFA filing for 2022/23 will be opening on October 1. American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds were distributed for students registered for summer and fall with another disbursement to take place in mid-November.

A consultant from AACRAO will be on board to assist with a review of structures and practices of the Office of the Registrar.

Fiscal Affairs Committee Chair Report on the Meeting of September 14, 2021

Trustee Kowalczyk presented the report of the Fiscal Affairs Committee of September 14, 2021. The fourth quarter report for FY21 was reviewed. Financial reports were included with the material provided to the Trustees prior to the meeting. Of note, revenue exceeded budget by \$208K and expenses were under budget by \$4.7M. The \$2.4M surplus will be placed in the stabilization reserve funds.

Noted variances were as followed:

- State revenue exceeded budget by \$1.9M due to level funding and increased formula level funding.
- Fees under budget by \$1.6K due to COVID and refunds resulting from the move to remote learning.
- Scholarship income under budget by \$387K due to decreased enrollment. Scholarship income is made up of Transferred Institutional Aid and Foundation transfers. While the scholarship revenue was down by \$387K the corresponding expense was down \$1.1M for a positive affect which was driven by lower enrollment and fewer students in dorms with COVID guidelines of single occupancy.
- Miscellaneous income under budget due to COVID, specifically the loss of Blue and Gold Athletics fundraising, and no conferences and summer programs.
- Full time employee expenses were under budget \$325K as a result of unfilled positions.
- Almost all other categories under budget were due to COVID related decreases.

The Committee was provided and update on the FY22 budget. Two month's actual numbers are positive to date. Revenue is under budget by \$224K, expenses by \$92K, and net income by \$131K.

Noted variances include:

- State revenue exceeded budget by \$380K related to formula funding of appropriation.
- Tuition is under budget by \$534K due to decreased enrollment of 47 FTEs.
- Full time employee expense is under budget by \$128K due to open positions.
- Special employee compensation expense is over budget by \$99K due to an increase in adjunct faculty.
- Construction expense is under budget by \$152K as a result of timing and weather related delays.
- IT expenses exceed budget by \$109K due to late notice from software vendors regarding significant service contract increases.

FY21 and FY22 capital projects were reviewed. Funds available for small repairs in FY22 is \$450K. The critical repairs fund, which requires a 20% match from the College, has \$3.2M available and must be used by the end of FY23. The process to engage a House Doctor for a six-year contract has been initiated.

With regard to investments, the College currently has \$16+M split between Berkshire Bank (\$10M) and Adams Community Bank (\$6M) with both accounts earning very little interest. VP DaSilva has proposed establishing an Investment Committee to explore ways to improve income from these funds. Short term investment decisions will remain with President Birge. Upon motion duly made and seconded, by roll call vote, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to approve establishment of an exploratory Investment Advisory Committee as recommended by the Fiscal Affairs Committee.

The Committee discussed the payoff of notes with Berkshire Bank totaling \$390K and at an interest rate of 2.5%, and the corresponding certificate of deposit of \$390K earning interest at a rate of 0.1%. It was agreed that the best course of action was to pay off the notes with Berkshire Bank given the cost of funds and related return on investment.

Critical repairs and small projects funds have been designated for roof replacement on Mark Hopkins Hall and Amsler Campus Center.

MCLA Foundation

Trustee Marshall presented the report of MCLA's Foundation Board meeting of September 14, 2021. Fiscal year 2021 financial statements and revised FY22 budget were discussed and approved. The Board voted to have the By-Laws Committee revise the Foundation's by-laws to increase the maximum number of Directors from 20 to 25.

The endowment value as of August 31, 2021 was \$17.8M and total foundation assets were \$24.4M. Major donations and grants to date this fiscal year include:

- \$450K - anonymous gift to support a nursing program and scholarship
- \$120K - Charles Travelli Scholarships

- \$84K - Alice Ayling Scholarships
- \$31K - net revenue from the annual Golf Classic
- \$30K - MA DHE STEM Starter Academy
- \$26.5K - MassHire Berkshire Healthcare Hub

The Alumni Association Board of Directors met on June 19, 2021 to elect officers: President, Kaite Rosa '10; Vice President, Michelle Hansen '08; and Foundation Board Representative, Jonathan Monroy '13.

Six new corporate connections and eight strategic partnerships were established or strengthened to date this fiscal year within the Advancement Division.

Foundation Board members were provided reminders for upcoming events including Homecoming Weekend, lectures, Hardman Journalist in Residence, foundation annual meeting, MCLA's Day of Dialogue, and December Academic Reception.

Approval of Minutes of Committee Meetings

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

VOTED: to approve the following meeting minutes and all actions contained therein:

- Board of Trustees of June 10, 2021
- Executive Committee Meeting of June 10, 2021
- Presidential Evaluation Committee of July 14, September 2 and 8, 2021
- Student Affairs Committee of September 30, 2021
- Enrollment Management Committee of September 23, 2021
- Fiscal Affairs of September 14, 2021

Vice President Introductions

President Birge introduced the recently hire Vice Presidents: Dr. Jeannette Smith, Dr. Richard Glejzer and Mr. Joseph DaSilva. Each vice president then provided an overview of their professional careers prior to joining MCLA, opportunities and challenges they have seen in their first days with the College, and their general reflections to this point in time.

Chairman's Report

Chair Boodram began his report to the Trustees with comments on the importance of giving consideration of why board members do the work that they do. He reminded Trustees that the College's mission statement is provided on the cover of the materials provided for each meeting, and asked each to review it prior to each session.

Chair Boodram commented on the College's revised handbook now referred to as Community Standards and the six core values it incorporates: respect, responsibility, ethics and accountability, community, integrity and social inclusion. These values should also be at the core of the work this Board is charged with.

Chair Boodram encouraged Trustees to attend the virtual DHE Trustee Convening on October 27.

President's Report

President Birge provided the President's Report to the Board and began with an overview of the return to fully in-person, on-campus living and learning. All but four courses are in physical classrooms, which is consistent with online offerings prior to the pandemic. Residence halls have returned to double occupancy with single rooms reserved as requested and for unvaccinated students.

Students, faculty and staff have been required to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, with vaccination rates of 97% of students and 89% of faculty and staff as of this date. All unvaccinated college community members are required to test for the virus weekly and wear face masks at all times while on campus regardless of being indoors or outdoors.

Vaccination rates to-date breakdown as follows: 99% of faculty, 86% of APA and non-unit professionals, and 80% AFSCME employees. Some of the deadlines to meet this requirement have not arrived, and it is anticipated that these rates will increase.

In response to questions regarding consequences for not complying with vaccination requirements, President Birge stated that the discipline is a tiered process with verbal, written and other actions leading up to possible termination of employment, or dismissal from campus in the case of students. A few students did not return, and one employee resigned, as a result of the College's vaccination requirement.

At this time, there are two students and four employees who tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Appropriate quarantine and isolation protocols were or are being followed for all of these community members.

President Birge provided an overview of collective bargaining agreements. MSCA and APA completed bargaining and contracts await ratification. Safety memorandums of agreement were implemented for COVID-19 vaccinations and mask wearing. AFSCME bargaining continues; however, a safety MOA for COVID-19 vaccinations and mask wearing has been agreed upon. DGCE negotiations have reached an impasse and no safety MOA was executed for this unit.

A recent issue with one of two recognized Greek organizations led to both organizations no longer being recognized by the College. A lapse in liability insurance and the organization being suspended through the College's conduct process resulted in noncompliance with the Inter Greek

Council requirement that the College have at least two organizations to maintain recognition. Work is in process to examine how best to proceed with Greek organizations.

US News and World Report issued their college and university annual rankings. The College is ranked #7 among public liberal arts colleges, #21 for social mobility and #126 among national liberal arts colleges. The social mobility ranking moved significantly from 46 to 21 this year with only two other public institutions ranking higher. This ranking speaks to the work we do bringing students to MCLA and educating them to be successful following graduation. As well, MCLA is the only state university ranked in the national category; this ranking is up from 148. While the College does not focus on chasing these rankings, they are important and are shared widely.

Trustee Reilly departed the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Executive Session

Chair Boodram announced that the Board would be entering into Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property for which open session may have detrimental effects on the negotiating position of this public body. Properties to be considered are the Freel Library, Mark Hopkins Hall and Eldridge Hall. The Board will not reconvene in open session following this Executive Session.

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

VOTED: to enter into Executive Session of the Board of Trustees to consider purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property for which open session may have detrimental effects on the negotiating position of this public body.

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

VOTED: to exit the Executive Session of the Board of Trustees.

With no other business being brought before the meeting, upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m.