



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
Minutes of the Meeting of June 2, 2022  
Murdock Hall, Room 208  
Tele/Video Conference**

**Members in Attendance**

JD Chesloff, Chair  
Mohan Boodram, Board Chair  
Kathleen Therrien  
Edgar Perez\*

\*Denotes remote participation

**Others in Attendance**

James F. Birge, President  
Jeannette Smith, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk  
Patrick Connelly, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, and  
Interim Title IX Coordinator and Equal Opportunity Officer  
Taylor Hope, Student Trustee Elect  
April Wright, Director of Division Operations and Programs

Upon establishing a quorum of the Student Affairs Committee members, Trustee Chesloff called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

Student Trustee elect, Taylor Hope, was welcomed to the Board of Trustees and introduced herself to the Committee members.

**Overview of AY22**

VP Smith provided an overview of the 2022 academic year (AY) beginning with reintroductions of April Wright and Patrick Connelly. VP Smith stated that the focus over the past year has been on day-to-day operations, and assessing future student support services. The Student Affairs team continues to meet to discuss future plans and connecting those plans to the strategic mission. Conversations include data collection, partnerships within the campus community, how the division functions differently with students today vs. students tomorrow, improvements, and equity.

April Wright commented on the intentionality being used for looking at planning and programming going forward citing for example the canceling of the student leadership program and guest speaker based on low interest from students to take time to reimagine what this event looks like in the future.

The Student Affairs team will assess events and activities not based on traditions, but instead on how these things done impact our students and their participation. The spring semester saw more engagement than previous semester, but much work remains to be done.

Patrick Connelly spoke about this particular time as a moment of challenge and opportunity. The College will have three classes of students who have no concept of residential life at MCLA, and timing is right to re-envision how staff and faculty interact with students, how to create community with each other; and how students want to interact as an institution. He commented on student mental health and how the College manages wellness and mental health on campus from working with students in crisis and how to work with students before they get to crisis, to how to work with students and create a culture for them where the norm is to ask for help for their mental and physical health.

Committee members discussed programming space and the need for that space to be accessible and safe for all.

VP Smith commented on the College's Affirmation Closet, which came about from student leaders. The Closet provides students with access to free clothing and accessories ranging from workout wear to professional styles. The Closet also gives students access to clothing that reflects who they are, and offers a space for trans students to try on clothing they would not otherwise feel safe accessing. Certain types items that are requested from the closet must be provided brand new/unused and work to secure these is in process.

In response to a question about the number of classes entering College without traditional education experiences, it was noted that classes of the past two years were done remote and hybrid, and with limited access to peers as a result of the pandemic. This has implications for students entering college and their expectations of what the college experience will be.

### **Staff Changes**

VP Smith reviewed staffing changes made to develop community and culture that are more responsive to community needs. Residential life support staff will have offices in Hoosac Hall and will be there to represent marginalized and underrepresented students, LGBTQIA+ specifically. These staff members will also be part of the Student Affairs duty rotation system. Programming in the Townhouses is being reviewed to improve community connectedness of students there. Because the physical structure of the Townhouses is not conducive to community, staff will be tasked with intentionality to build that community.

Efforts are being made to revive the College's motor pool program to address students' need to access, for example grocery/department stores, and pharmacies. Programming will also include home economics type education such as how to clean an oven; skills that students need to attain to be successful when living on their own post-graduation.

Arlene Theodore has been promoted to Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice, and her office and Multicultural Resource Center will be located in Hoosac Hall on the first floor. Space will be made in this location for affinity groups to meet and gather. Active and passive programming will exist throughout the day to challenge students and to encourage them to interact with staff across divisions.

In response to questions regarding police activity, it was stated that police reports are provided to member so the Student Affairs staff. Work is done to support students with the issues they face that put them in positions of becoming involved with the police.

### **Solid Sound Festival Rental**

Over the Memorial Day holiday weekend, Berkshire Towers and Hoosac Hall rooms were rented out through MASS MoCA for Solid Sound Festival attendees. There were approximately 300 guests in the two buildings and resulted in an expected net income of approximately \$100k. Student Affairs and Advancement staff worked the weekend and reported no disturbances.

Residential rentals for summer and other low student use times are being explored for additional revenue, including MASS MoCA's Fresh Grass Festival in the fall.

### **Student Mental Health**

Interim Dean Connelly discussed the College's three-year goal of establishing a culture of care on campus for all community members. Funding is available through ARPA and grants to support student mental health.

The College's counseling services provided 1,654 session to 219 students. Students have access to see a counselor within 24 hours of their request; but they are not guaranteed a visit with their provider of choice. As well, 24/7 access is available to support in the community and through the suicide hotline.

TRiO staff are engaged in the mental health processes and through membership on the CARES team.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.