



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of January 31, 2024
87 Blackinton St, North Adams
MS Teams Audio/Video

Committee members in attendance:

Frederick Keator, Committee Chair*
Brenda Burdick, Board Chair*
Jean Clarke-Mitchell*
Kathleen Therrien*

Others present:

James F. Birge, President
Richard Glejzer, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs
Amanda Despain, Clerk Pro Tem
Lynette Bond, Dean, Division of Graduate and Continuing Education
Joshua Mendel, Associate Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education for Partnerships
and Programs

*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 of January 31, 2024, with Committee Chair Keator presiding was called to order at 8:44 a.m.

Division of Graduate and Continuing Education

Lynette Bond presented an overview the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE). Ms. Bond explained that the program has gone through a number of changes while focusing on revenue changing programs such as Education and Business Administration. The Master of Education program has doubled in size from last year. The DGCE catalog is nearly ready to be published for AY 24-25.

Joshua Mendel provided an overview of the Early College Program. Dr. Mendel explained that this is the first rural district in Massachusetts to offer an Early College Program. Students will earn up to 30 college credits through this program which is currently in partnership with Drury High School. There are 70 students enrolled in early college classes at Drury and 15 students taking courses on MCLA's campus. The goals for the program are to expand beyond just Drury HS, should the State allow, and to have 125 students enrolled in the program by the end of 2025.

In response to questions regarding funding, Ms. Bond explained that the Early College Program is State funded, and MCLA will receive \$10,000 for support costs and \$180 per credit, per student enrolled in the program. The high school receives their own grants for the program and ensures that students earn credit free of cost. Early College funding is good for up to five years and operates on an annual cycle.

In response to questions about how students are selected for the program, Dr. Mendel explained that Drury works with their own school counselors and faculty to select students who they deem are socially, emotionally, and academically ready to participate in early college courses.

In response to questions about student cost for the program, Ms. Bond stated that costs for items such as books, transportation, food, and laptops, are covered through State funding of the program.

Department Restructurings

VP Glejzer provided an overview of the restructuring of the Academic Affairs Division. VP Glejzer and Dean Carolyn Dehner have been reviewing the administrative structure of academic programs and the ways that disciplines are organized in departments within the Division. VP Glejzer stated that departments need to be looking at restricting both Administrative and Curricular areas at the same time.

The Board and VP Glejzer discussed how the Academic Affairs Division determines the restructuring of departments, noting that each department has the ability to choose which concentrations they will teach.

Review of Majors and Concentrations

VP Glejzer provided an overview of the administrations review of majors and concentrations. Academic Affairs has been working closely with departments to review program majors and curricula considering long-term changes in enrollment and more recent shifts in faculty numbers. One consistent concern has been how some majors divide students into defined concentrations to create what often look and act like distinct programs. These concentrations reside in the major and are defined by required specialized courses that, with enrollment fluctuations, are often under enrolled or hard to staff due to fewer faculty. There is also a broader concern about how such specialized concentrations fit into MCLA's liberal arts mission.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.