



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 20, 2016
President's Office Conference Room**

Members in attendance

Buffy Lord, Chair

Nick Hernigle, Student Trustee

Others in attendance

Dr. James Birge, President

Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs

Spencer Moser, Director – Center for Service and Citizenship

Gina Puc, Director of Admission

Chris Tate, CSSE/Academic Support,

Susan Edgerton, Director of Honors Program

Allison Meehan, student (junior)

Kircys Canela, student (sophomore)

Miesha Adams, student (sophomore)

Ginger Menard, Clerk

Trustee Lord called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

VP Holbrook noted that the focus of today's meeting is high impact practices. She began with a discussion of Living Learning Communities (LLC) and the addition of these at MCLA.

Living Learning Communities

A Living Learning Community (LLC) is a high impact practice that provides opportunities for students with similar educational interests to live together in residence halls offering structured learning environments. They are intentionally designed to promote integration of in-class and out-of-class learning and to link academic goals with co-curricular interests. Examples of programs involving LLCs include common evening time, receptions, pizza with a professor events, and workshops.

Student Affairs is open to creating any LLC that has support from an academic department. They started with the honors program this year with the assistance of faculty member, Susan Edgerton. There are currently 14 students enrolled with space for 30 to 35 total. The goal is to have as many as four LLCs for the fall of 2017.

LLCs are also useful for recruitment as they can provide students with an immediate sense of community, one of the critical reasons a student may select one college over another.

Trustee Lord suggested the possibility of an LLC for undeclared students that includes programs focused on exploring their interests and providing interactions with the various academic departments. This would help them feel connected and also serve to increase retention within this student group.

Center for Service Programs

Spencer Moser, director of the Center for Service and Citizenship, provided background on community service programs at the College. The Center grew by listening to the needs of the community, assessing the civic engagement interests of the students, and working with faculty to determine the intersections between service programs and academic courses. The growth in community service programs facilitated the creation of the student program coordinator positions which have become highly sought after. Spencer asked three students to speak to their experiences as program coordinators.

Allison Meehan, an education and psychology major, shared stories from the Write Stuff program of which she is a co-coordinator. The program partners with Colegrove Elementary to bring their students to campus to work with MCLA students to improve their writing skills. Allison plans to teach elementary school and this program has provided valuable experience working with 6th and 7th graders and also allowed her to apply knowledge from her psychology major as well. She has seen students develop close relationships with their mentors on campus and noted the benefits of elementary school students spending time on a college campus.

Miesha Adams and Kircys Canela are co-coordinators of the E3 program where they work with students from grades 10-12 who have difficulty participating in a conventional high school structure and, as such, have the potential to drop out. The students come to campus and participate in workshops and work closely with MCLA student volunteers. As co-coordinators, Miesha and Kircys have recruited the athletic teams to participate in workshops with the E3 students and have seen firsthand the growth and increased confidence of the E3 participants. Miesha explained how the workshops are structured to be fun while also teaching valuable skills such as teamwork, leadership, and flexibility. She shared that these skills are vital for students whether they choose to enter the workforce, learn a trade, or continue with their education after high school.

Kircys added that both she and Miesha began as volunteers with this program last year, as freshmen, and became coordinators in their sophomore year. She added how it is important that they provide a non-judgmental environment and, because of that, have seen students open up who otherwise were not comfortable communicating in a group setting. Spencer added that the teachers of the E3 program have spoken highly about the influence of our students and how they have been enabled to make decisions and be real leaders.

Kircys also shared her experience as part of the Alternative Spring Break trip to Belize where she and her fellow students built the interior of health center for a community that only has access to a doctor every two months. Allison added that the Write-Stuff program connected with the community in Belize as well by establishing a pen pal program with their students.

Chris Tate, a current employee in MCLA's Center for Service and Student Engagement, is an alum of the service leadership program. He shared how important the work was to him as a student, and how the program led him to refocus his goals and changed the trajectory of his career. He added that the Center for Service and Citizenship kept him engaged while he was a student and made him feel connected to a community. He also gained valuable knowledge from building a program, reevaluating it, and then restructuring it to make it more impactful.

Review of the Year/Student Affairs Updates

Student Trustee Nick Hernigle reflected on his four years at MCLA. He noted the positive changes with Aramark including their increased involvement on campus and additional dining options. He also applauded the changes in the Athletic Department including their work to increase the cumulative GPA of student athletes and adopting the moniker of "one team" which creates more cohesion and support of one another.

He also noted a couple of items that he feels need improvement. The first is the campus smoking policy as he believes the College should be in alignment with the other state universities and become a non-smoking campus. VP Holbrook noted that a small group is working on this issue. He also noted that the addition of a student center – a hub for student activity that could include games and a space to hang out – would be beneficial as the space in Hoosac Hall only open to its residents.

Trustee Lord thanked Nick for his hard work this past year and VP Holbrook extended her thanks as she arrived on campus last summer and Nick has been a fantastic resource and she has enjoyed working with him.

Other business

Trustee Lord noted that she has been reading about food pantries on campus and student hunger issues and suggests this might be a topic at a future meeting. Spencer shared that students did establish a community meal on weekends last semester and did notice some need among the students as well as the community members.

President Birge offered that opioid addiction is another potential topic as MA has one of the highest overdose rates in the country. VP Holbrook reported that we are in the process of working with BMC to be the medical supervisor to the College so that we can have Narcan available at health services as well as with the campus police

Adjournment

There be no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:14 am.