



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, February 25, 2015  
President's Office Conference Room**

**Trustees in attendance:**

Tyler Fairbank, Chair  
James Clemmer, Vice Chair  
Mohan Boodram (via conference call; joined at 9:17 a.m.)  
Lisa Chamberlain  
William Dudley  
Buffy Lord  
Denise Marshall  
Alyson Stolz, Student Trustee

**Trustees absent:**

JD Chesloff  
Shirley Edgerton  
Susan Gold

**Others present:**

Cynthia Farr Brown, Interim President  
Denise Richardello, Executive Vice President  
Jim Stakenas, Vice President of Administration &  
Ginger Menard, Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

Chair Fairbank began the meeting with a discussion of the upcoming Board Retreat. Though generally held in February, it was postponed this year due to extensive time commitments on the Trustees during the Presidential search.

The committee reviewed calendars and determined that the retreat will be held on Tuesday, March 31. Additionally, the Board meeting originally scheduled for Thursday, April 2 will now be on March 31 following the retreat.

One of the main agenda items is a review of state initiatives. Vincent Pedone, Executive Director of the Council of Presidents, will be invited to participate along with members of the Berkshire Delegation. The budget and campus master plan will be discussed and the Trustees must also receive training in relation to the Violence Against Women Act.

Trustee Clemmer mentioned affordability and the importance of keeping this topic at the forefront as it affects so many of our students. Though a successful capital campaign is coming to a close the issues of access and affordability continue to be of concern especially as state dollars are less and less dependable. Money is needed for financial aid and affordability must be considered when determining fees annually.

The final agenda item will be the presidential transition. Chair Fairbank noted that the Trustees should map out a fifteen month plan that will provide a structure for support and feedback throughout the transition.

### **President Search Review**

The Trustees discussed the presidential search as the Board meeting on March 5 has been scheduled to vote on the finalist recommendation to the Board of Higher Education (BHE). Chair Fairbank remarked on the impressive dedication of the co-chairs, Trustees Boodram and Gold, for their hard work and the enormous amount of time they have given to this process.

As the Trustees have collectively interviewed each of the three finalists he would like them to have an opportunity to share their thoughts. Chair Fairbank also noted the substantial feedback that was received from the campus. This information, along with the extensive reference checks on the three candidates, has been shared with the Board. He thanked Mary Ellen Olenyk, Human Resources Director, for gathering and consolidating the feedback which shows that there is campus support for these candidates. He shared that a group of faculty met but were unable to come to a consensus on one candidate, and other individual faculty members expressed to him that each of the candidates had the ability to serve as the next president.

The Trustees discussed the merits of each of the three candidates. All agreed that they were each extremely capable and accomplished with each having specific strengths in different areas. It was noted that each of three candidates showed a strong commitment to public liberal arts education and a passion for the mission of the College.

Trustee Stoltz shared that she was specifically looking for the next “MCLA” president – someone genuine, welcoming, and authentic with a strong commitment to the campus.

Chair Fairbank remarked that the time everyone has invested in the search directly relates to the deep commitment and passion of the staff, faculty and students. This is a critical decision for the institution and the Board is very focused on the needs of the College over the next five to ten years. He reported that he has engaged in further conversation with the candidates and has conducted additional reference checks with the assistance of Trustee Boodram. Following these conversations he truly believes any of the three candidates would make an outstanding president.

Chair Fairbank reviewed the agenda for March 5. The Trustees will be asked to share their thoughts and perspectives on the final candidates and offer their recommendation. Following any discussion, as needed, a roll call vote will be taken. In accordance with BHE guidelines, he will confirm each candidate’s interest level in advance of the meeting. He offered his thanks to

Commissioner Freeland for his guidance throughout this process. As a reminder, the final candidate must have a majority of votes and a quorum must be present. Following the meeting, a timeline and summary of the search process will be submitted to the Department of Higher Education along with the recommendation of the final candidate.

Chair Fairbank offered his thank for the thoughtful discussion today and for everyone's thoughtfulness and commitment throughout this process.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.