



*My College. Right from the Start.*

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Thursday, September 11, 2014  
Murdock Hall Room 218**

**The following Trustees were present:**

Tyler Fairbank, Chair  
Mohan Boodram  
Lisa Chamberlain  
JD Chesloff  
James Clemmer  
William Dudley  
Shirley Edgerton  
Susan Gold  
Buffy Lord  
Denise Marshall  
Alyson Stolz, Student Trustee

**Others present:**

Mary Grant, President  
Cynthia Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Denise Richardello, Executive Vice President  
James Stakenas, Vice President of Administration & Finance  
Charlotte Degen, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Marianne Drake, Chief Advancement Officer  
Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs  
Bernadette Alden, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Ginger Menard, Clerk

Thomas Alexander, Coordinator of ALANA and International Programs and Services  
Kristina Bendikas, Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment  
Dr. Michael Birch, Professor of English/Communications  
Laura Brown, Director of Fiscal Affairs  
Joseph Charon, Director of Public Safety  
Howard "Jake" Eberwein, Dean of Continuing Education  
Nicholas Heringle, MCLA Student Government Association Treasurer  
Christopher Himes, STEM Coordinator  
Suzanne Hunger, Associate Dean, Center for Student Success and Engagement  
Lyndsay Isham-Morton, Executive Assistant for Student Affairs

**Others present (continued):**

Charles Kimberling, Director of Facilities  
Curt King, Chief Information Officer  
Jennifer Macksey, Director of Student Accounts  
Roberta McCulloch-Dews, Assistant to the President  
Spencer Moser, Center for Service and Citizenship  
Christine Naughton, Director of Alumni Relations & Development  
Scott Nichols, Director of Athletics  
Theresa O'Bryant, Associate Dean of Student Affairs  
Mary Ellen Olenyk, Director of Human Resources  
Brandon Pender, Web and Communications Manager  
Brendan Peltier, MCLA Student Government Association President  
Elizabeth Petri, Director of Financial Aid  
Jeff Puleri, Assistant Athletic Director  
Gina Puc, Director, Admission

Ed Damon, *Berkshire Eagle*  
Jennifer Perkins, Director, Massachusetts Office of Trustee Relations

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Complying with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30 and 15A, Section 9, and with a quorum present, the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met at 5:02 p.m. in the Room 218 of Murdock Hall on September 11, 2014 with Board Chair Fairbank presiding.

Chair Fairbank opened the meeting by requesting a moment of silence in recognition of the anniversary of September 11, 2001.

Following this reflection he welcomed everyone to the beginning of a new academic year, and introduced and welcomed the newest Trustee to the MCLA Board, Lisa Chamberlain. President Grant thanked the members of the faculty and staff in attendance for their presence at the meeting and requested that each attendee introduce themselves.

**Approval of the Minutes of the May 22, 2014, Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the May 22, 2014, meeting of the Board and all actions contained therein.

**Report and Approval of Minutes of the June 27, 2014, Meeting of the Executive and Fiscal Affairs Committees**

Trustee Fairbank delivered the report on behalf of the committee.

In July, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law the state budget for Fiscal Year 2015 (FY 15) and while it included increased funding for the state university system it was at a lesser level than received in FY14. In recognition of the potential for decreased funding, the Board had previously approved a motion to allow for a fee increase up to \$500 for the 2014-2015 academic year. As a result of this lesser funding, fees for the coming year have increased \$225 per semester.

The Trustees will continue to receive updates from President Grant and Vice President Stakenas in relation to income and expenses throughout the year at Board and Committee meetings, as well as the work to ensure the budget is fully balanced when we close out the fiscal year in June, 2015.

Chair Fairbank reported on the vote to approve and accept the transfer of \$250,000 from the accrued leave account to cover the cost of retirements and other leave payouts – the purpose for which this account was established.

Additionally, the Executive and Fiscal Committees voted and approved two proposals concerning the funding of IT Infrastructure Projects. These projects, to be completed in three phases, are necessary to deliver technology services and meet campus demand for network resources. The first phase included the network infrastructure for the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation and was completed using resources committed to the science building project. For the remaining phases, \$284,296 will be drawn from the campus support trust fund and paid back with interest over a five year period. The final funding of \$270,832, will be allocated from the campus technology fee trust fund

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the June 27, 2014, meeting of the Executive and Fiscal Affairs Committees and all actions contained therein.

#### **Approval of the Minutes of the August 28, 2014, Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the August 28, 2014, meeting of the Board and all actions contained therein.

#### **Report of the Enrollment Management Committee**

Trustee Boodram reported that the Enrollment Management Committee met prior to today's Board meeting. The Committee has reviewed the enrollment and strategic plans for Admissions which are well-managed by Gina Puc, director of Admission, and metrics are advancing in all areas. They will reconvene later in the fall to review strategy and status of the ongoing recruitment efforts. Trustee Boodram thanked Gina and her staff for all of their hard work.

## Chairperson's Report

Chair Fairbank noted that the College is at an important juncture with the announcement in August of President Grant's appointment as Chancellor of UNC Asheville effective January 5, 2015. As a result of this news, the Board convened an earlier meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup> to provide an opportunity for board discussion and conversation regarding the search and upcoming transition – including the appointment of an interim president. As MCLA moves through this process all stakeholder groups including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members will have opportunities for engagement and the process will follow the guidelines for Presidential Searches as outlined by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE).

Chair Fairbank provided an overview of the timeline for the search. The goal is to bring forward the name of a final candidate to the MCLA Board of Trustees not later than the meeting in April 2015 with final approval at the BHE meeting later that month.

The selection of the Search Committee is the next critical step in the process. The committee should reflect the broad range of constituents of the College and, following BHE guidelines, must include a minimum of three trustees along with at least one individual from the major campus constituencies (students, faculty, professional staff, and non-unit staff) along with an appointed member by the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Trustees Susan Gold and Mohan Boodram have agreed to serve as co-chairs of the Search Committee. Proposed members of the committee represent the committed, passionate, and diverse MCLA community. The role of the Search Committee is to review and screen candidates presented from the search firm (to be selected at a later date) and select 3 to 5 individuals to visit campus and participate in on-campus interviews. Following these visits, it is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to select the next president.

Chair Fairbank asked Trustee Gold to bring forth the names of the individuals who have been asked to serve as members of the Search Committee. In addition to Trustees Gold and Boodram, Trustees Edgerton and Chesloff will also serve on behalf of the Board. Faculty representatives included Christopher Himes, Dana Rapp, and Adrienne Wootters. Staff representatives will be Charles Cianfiarini, Marianne Drake, and John Greenbush. Student representatives are Ama Bemba Adwetewa-Badu and Brendan Peltier along with Alumni representative Rachel Churchill. Chair Fairbank noted that the BHE representative would be named at a later date. In addition to these members Chair Fairbank and Mary Ellen Olenyk, director of human resources, will serve as *ex officio* members.

Trustee Boodram expressed thanks for the input and suggestions that he and Trustee Gold received. He is confident in those selected and respectfully requests endorsement from his fellow Trustees.

Chair Fairbank extend his thanks to Trustees Gold and Boodram for their leadership and to all the Trustees for their thoughtfulness and assistance in this process.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the slate of appointees for the Search Committee.

Chair Fairbank spoke about the need to appoint an interim president for the period between President Grant's departure and the start date of a new president. He noted that the most important goal for the interim president is to maintain the currently trajectory of the College. Much thought and energy has been put into this decision as MCLA has an incredible leadership team and there are a number of qualified individuals. After much consideration, it is the Chair's recommendation that Dr. Cynthia Brown assume the role of interim president.

Trustee Clemmer supported this recommendation and feels confident with Dr. Brown as well as the entire senior staff as all are highly capable, proactive, and strategic problem-solvers..

Trustee Dudley seconded Trustee Clemmer's support. He added the importance of the community having confidence during this period that the mission will continue to drive the College within a supportive environment of teaching and learning. It is essential that the interim president have a deep understanding of the College and is familiar to the College community. Trustee Dudley added it is commonly best practice to have a chief academic officer in a transitional leadership role to support core of mission.

Trustee Marshall offered her endorsement as well and Trustee Boodram spoke of Vice President Brown's deep concern for the success of both students and faculty which he has witnessed as a member of the Academic Affairs committee.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve the appointment of Dr. Cynthia Brown as interim president.

Chair Fairbank will advance Dr. Brown's name to Commissioner Freeland in accordance with the BHE guidelines.

Each year it is responsibility of the Board of Trustees to review and evaluate the work of the president. Chair Fairbank offered his thanks to Trustee Lord for leading the ad hoc presidential evaluation committee and to Trustees Marshall and Boodram for their participation. He noted that the BHE evaluation requirements include consideration of both institutional and system-level goals. He recognized the outstanding work of President Grant which is reflected in the success of students and their commitment to achieve at the highest levels. He also commented that her care and concern for the entire MCLA community including students, faculty, staff, and alumni is extraordinary.

Trustee Lord reported on President Grant's evaluation commending her for her exceptional leadership. MCLA applies best practices in all areas of the institution and she has elevated MCLA's leadership position at both the state and national levels. It is recommended that President Grant receive the maximum merit increase of 3.5% as determined by the BHE.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To recommend to the Board of Higher Education that President Grant receive a 3.5% merit increase.

### **MCLA Disclosure/Confidentiality**

Chair Fairbank reminded the Trustees about two required annual forms they must complete: the MCLA Confidentiality Agreement and the MCLA Disclosure Questionnaire. He requested that all Trustees complete and return these forms to Ginger Menard in the MCLA President's Office.

### **President's Report**

President Grant acknowledged the commitment of the Board of Trustees and that it is MCLA's good fortune to have this group of stewards who understand the institution and how best to offer guidance during the upcoming transition. She also offered thanks to members of her senior team for their exceptional work and to Vice President Brown for taking on this interim role. President Grant expressed her confidence in the newly appointed Search Committee to make the best institutional recommendations to the Board.

President Grant shared that for the fourth consecutive year, MCLA was included in the Top Ten Public Liberal Arts Colleges as ranked by *U.S. News and World Reports*, moving up one spot to #9. This is a result of the collective work on campus, across the community, and in conjunction with the Commonwealth. She then presented highlights of the many academic programs and construction projects that occurred on campus over the summer.

The fall semester began by welcoming the freshman class to campus on move-in day followed by a week of welcoming events including the annual hike up Mt. Greylock. The ALANA welcome and awards dinner took place which included the presenting of both the Mitch West and Margaret Hart scholarships. This year's Convocation speaker was Kevin Barbary '85.

President Grant acknowledged the receipt of two significant grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF). One award provides scholarships for underrepresented students in the STEM field, and the other is in partnership with Williams College and the North Adams public schools to develop science units based on the Next Generation Science Standards.

Athletic season is underway and this is the first year of recruitment for the new women's lacrosse team. Jeff Puleri, assistant athletic director, is working with Advancement to increase athletic alumni participation for scholarship and fundraising as well as the initiative to raise funds for lighting on the athletic fields.

The semester ahead includes many exciting lectures, performances, gallery openings and events including the Hardman lecture with Nicholas Kristof, in conjunction with the continued *Creating Equality* series and the SENCER conference.

Board members have received a copy of the chapter on MCLA from the new book, *Remembering Massachusetts State Normal Schools: Pioneers in Teacher Education*. This chapter was written by MCLA faculty Ellen Barber and Susan Egerton. Also included in their packets is an article co-authored by physics professor Emily Maher, on the MINERvA Collaboration at Fermilab. These are just two examples of the extensive and important work of the MCLA faculty.

President Grant then informed the Trustees that members of the MCLA staff would present information about select college division, programs, and services.

### **Strategic Presentations**

#### **New Student Enrollment and Student Success: Gina Puc, director of admission; and Monica Joslin, dean of academic affairs**

Gina Puc presented an overview of the extremely competitive market for student recruitment. The Northeast is experiencing a decline in high school graduates while New York state, within MCLA's demographic, has not yet had a similar decline. On average most students are applying to 7 or more colleges as well as opting to stay within 100 miles of home.

The Admission Office has been working in conjunction with the Alumni Board on recruitment efforts. Puc reported that there is a 28% increase in this year's freshman class, an increase in ethnic diversity, and stronger academic profiles. A third of the students were accepted during early admission and 86% live on campus. There is also an increase in transfer students, with the Early Childhood Cohort being a strong draw for these students.

Dean Joslin spoke about the work of the Center for Student Success and Engagement (CSSE), designed to integrate career services, learning services, study abroad, internship opportunities and advising services. It provides a hub of support for students. Strategies have been implemented to ensure that students enter their 2<sup>nd</sup> year with 30 credits or more to remain on track to graduate within 4 years.

#### **Campus Safety: Theresa O'Bryant, associate dean of student affairs; and Mary Ellen Olenyk, director of Human Resources**

Associate Dean O'Bryant and Human Resources Director, Mary Ellen Olenyk, provided an in-depth overview of the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which has been expanded to include the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act to address the needs of vulnerable populations on campus. Per compliance guidelines, MCLA has implemented policies of education and awareness and continued to ensure that guidelines for reporting, investigation, and adjudication are clear and comprehensive through campus task force meetings and educational programs with students during summer, fall, and winter semesters. Both O'Bryant and Olenyk are also participating in a statewide task force to develop unified policy and procedures.

**Information Technology: Curt King, chief information officer**

King reviewed 3 major IT projects that have impacted the campus this past summer including the conversion of the email system to Office 365 from First Class, updating and modernization of the wired and wireless networks, and the college's new website. Network enhancements have been accomplished in phases and the final phase will address the remainder of the campus, including outdoor spaces, which is scheduled for the coming year. This support is critical as students now enter college with an average of 5 wireless devices and network access is important to maintain a competitive edge.

**MCLA Dashboard: Kris Bendikas, associate dean of academic affairs**

Associate Dean Bendikas reported on MCLA's responsibility to track and share progress aligned with the college's strategic goals. She has been tasked with establishing a dashboard that will be accessible online and previewed a potential web page that included data on the incoming class, alignment with strategic goals and planning, state issues and policies, and alignment with Vision Project goals. Work on this document will continue as well as determining how best to share this information electronically.

President Grant thanked the presenters and acknowledged the dedication, energy, and spirit of the MCLA faculty and staff. She then offered special thanks to Vice President of Student Affairs, Charlotte Degen, who will be retiring next month after 40 years of service to MCLA. Vice President Degen, an alum of MCLA, has worn every hat in student affairs and has exemplified strong leadership, humanity, and compassion. Her first concern has always been the needs of the students. President Grant extended best wishes to Degen and her family on behalf of the Board, Faculty, and Staff. She has left an indelible print on MCLA.

Theresa O'Bryant will be the interim Vice President of Student Affairs and a search for this position will begin next semester. President Grant also acknowledged Director of Athletics, Scott Nichols, as he will be retiring in February.

Chair Fairbank mentioned one other item of business to bring before the Trustees regarding the upcoming Presidential search. The Board is tasked with approving a budget for the search as well as selecting the search firm. The budget will be addressed at a later date but Chair Fairbank would like to propose that the authority to select the search firm be designated to the Search Committee Co-Chairs, Trustees Mohan Boodram and Susan Gold.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To approve that the authority to select the search firm be designated to Trustees Boodram and Gold.

Chair Fairbank extended his thanks to all for attending this important meeting. He expressed appreciation to President Grant for her ongoing counsel and leadership and reminded everyone that the success of the upcoming presidential search is critical to the institution.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m.