



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of November 21, 2024
Tele/Video Conference**

Members in Attendance

Jean Clarke-Mitchell, Committee Chair*
Mohan Boodram, Chair*
Buffy Lord
William Garrity

Others in Attendance

Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk
Jeannette Smith, Vice President for Student Affairs
Daniel Colonno, Chief of Police
Lucas Morrill, Dean of Students
Spencer Moser, *title*

*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 via audio/video-conference, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of November 21, 2024, with Committee Chair Clarke-Mitchel presiding was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Incident Involving Student Struck by Car

Chief Colonno began with an update on the incident involving a student who was struck by a car in the crosswalk on Church Street in front Berkshire Towers. Members of administration have met to discuss traffic calming measures to reduce the risk of pedestrian incidents. The street falls under the City's jurisdiction and any traffic changes are managed by the City's Traffic Commission.

Data from the electronic speed sign located at the crosswalk on Church St was used and it was determined that excess vehicle speed was not a factor in the incident. The driver of the car was charged with failure to yield right of way.

A quote to purchase additional portable speed recording signs was submitted and is waiting on a decision to complete the purchase.

The student is not expected to return to campus this semester.

In response to a question from Trustee Garrity regarding the use of speed tables, Chief Colonno stated that any changes must go through the City's Traffic Commission and would take months to

see any action. Work is in process to consider other options the College can implement such as upgrading cross walk signs and more advanced notification signs of a pedestrian crossing in the roadway. Residence Life staff have been engaged in education around pedestrian safety and continue to emphasize the importance of being mindful and attentive when crossing streets.

Clery Report

Chief Daniel Colonno presented the College's annual Clery Report (2024 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report) for reporting year 2023 noting that the full report is available at the College's website and was provided to the College community. He provided a summary of the reporting requirements and the Clery Act for disclosure of campus security policy and campus crime statistics.

In 2023, there were two reports of sex offenses-forcible (rape), and one report of sex offenses-non-forcible, all of which were handled through the Title IX process. There were three incidents of domestic violence, and four instances of stalking. All three domestic violence reports resulted in the arrest of two students and one non-student.

There was one report of a hate crime related to sexual orientation and handled through the Title IX process. The incident was the result of an off-campus party spilling onto campus with a physical fight that was initially responded to by North Adams Police. No arrests were made by MCLA. Two non-students were trespassed by campus police. The commuter student was trespassed from the residential areas of campus.

There were two drug law violations and 22 liquor law violations. The significant increase of liquor law violations year over year from 5 to 22 elevates reporting and requires an explanation. The 22 violations were the result of one incident, a house party on campus. All violations were handled through the College's conduct process holding students accountable for their actions without creating a criminal record.

There were no fires in any of the three residence halls. Two fire drills were conducted during the year.

In response to a question from Trustee Clarke-Mitchell regarding counseling data, VP Smith shared that there were 291 appointments held by counseling services which breakdown as follows:

Crisis	6
Intake (new clients)	34
Personal counseling	138
Psychiatry new	10
Psychiatry returners	29

In response to a question from Trustee Boodram regarding how non-resident summer program incidents are tracked, Chief Colonno stated that non-student incidents are required to be included in the Clery Reporting as directed by the Department of Higher Education but we have not had any to report.

VP Smith commented on the potential for changes in reporting with the incoming federal administration. MCLA expects that this type of reporting will continue but at the State level.

Chief Colonno departed the meeting.

Basic Needs Center

Mr. Moser provided an update on the Basic Needs Center which has been officially named the Essential Needs Center (ENC) as voted by students. He introduced students Evie Ross and Kaiya Cocliff.

Kaiya explained the meaning and the value of the ENC. She reviewed the expanded services that resulted from a review of the existing program, which led to the addition of cleaning supplies, bedroom necessities, and hygiene and personal care items. All items in the ENC can be requested with a QR code or links to a form that is easy to navigate. To date, the new process has been successful.

Kaiya commented on the partnership with ARAMARK that provides students with prepared meals that are stored in the freezer and available for students to take and reheat as needed.

The ENC can connect students with a contact for SNAP benefits who will guide the student through the application process including granting permission to the contact to complete the form for the student in real time.

In October 2023 there were 152 walk-in visits to the needs center, and this October there were 258. Repeat students represent 90% of user demographics. There were 21 first-time visitors in October and the ENC continues to fill a consistent gap in students' lives.

New software, PantrySOFT, will help with future data analysis of the ENC.

Evie introduced themselves for context. They are a philosophy major with an interest in ethics and developing mutual aid and relationships with one another. The responsibility we have to one another is central to creating societies and micro-societies around care. The ENC makes students feel more cared for by the College and community.

Using their friend group as reference, Evie noted that all students in general are routinely concerned with obtaining groceries. All of them use the dining hall consistently, which unfortunately does not cover all dining needs due to limited hours of operation, student schedules for class and work, and the inability to satisfy dietary needs of differing students. Many students struggle with eating disorders, dietary restrictions, securing satisfying meals, and feeding themselves well and consistently. The ENC offers healthy foods that are filling and make a

difference in daily nutrition and provide students options that allow them to satisfy their hunger. Students also indicate that they do not view the pantry as their go to for consumption and are not relying on it regularly as a main source of food.

Residence Life and Housing

VP Smith provided a high-level review of the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) strategic plan for the nine state Universities. Through 2015 state occupancy in residential buildings was over 100% and has fallen to 76% in 2023 as universities enroll less residential students. The MSCBA is working on alternative uses for vacant building and to maximize the space to better serve students. Of the nine state institutions, four, including MCLA, have unoccupied buildings.

The current nationwide trend for housing has led to the use of empty residential buildings for employee housing and partnerships around retirement housing. Some are using facilities for storage and hotel models, and MCLA does this to some extent.

Dean Morrill shared that the relationship with MSCBA focuses on granular and immediate housing needs, repairs, and maintenance, which are not long-term strategic plans and do not address long term housing needs. Any interest in developing the MSCBA owned buildings for aesthetic or programmatic use is done through funding as available from MSCBA, but is more likely at the College's own expense.

Dean Morrill's goal is to engage with MSCBA now in ways that MCLA has not done in the past to secure a strategic partner in MSCBA for long term plans and use of residential buildings. Discussion with MSCBA would include the disposition of the townhouse complex, which is cost prohibitive for the College to invest in.

With no other business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.