



*My College. Right from the Start.*

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Fiscal Affairs Committee  
Monday, May 9, 2011  
Admissions Office Conference Room**

**Members in attendance:**

Stephen Crowe, Chair  
Jane Allen  
James Clemmer (via conference call)  
Eugene Leibowitz

**Others in attendance:**

Mary K. Grant, President  
James Stakenas, Vice President of Administration and Finance  
Jerry Desmarais, Treasurer  
Joseph Charon, Director of Public Safety  
Thomas Bernard, Clerk  
David DiIulis, O'Connor & Drew P.C.

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Trustee Crowe.

## **Public Safety Discussion**

Public Safety Director Joseph Charon facilitated a discussion about the potential of arming campus police officers. President Grant noted that this is a conversation that is taking place across systems of public higher education, and reflects the evolving nature and scope of public safety work. Allowing campus police officers to carry firearms will require a decision by the Board.

The committee had a detailed discussion about the issues and their implications, as well as the training and certification process campus police officers would need to undergo as part of being approved to carry a firearm. Committee members raised a range of issues, questions, and concerns.

Each committee of the board will receive a briefing on the potential for arming campus police officers. Ongoing developmental work at MCLA will include a review of policies, identification of training needs, and cost implications, and developing plans for ongoing input and discussion. This work will inform additional campus conversations and discussion in the fall and, ultimately, a recommendation to the Board.

## **Auditor Selection**

The state universities and community colleges recently issued a request for proposals for auditing services. O'Connor and Drew, MCLA's current auditing firm, was among the companies selected to provide auditing services.

In the interest of good governance, the Fiscal Affairs Committee invited David DiIulis to provide an overview of O'Connor and Drew, and the firm's qualifications, and the services they offer public higher education clients. Mr. DiIulis's presentation to the Committee highlighted the firm's history, experience, quality control, and their work to date with MCLA. In addition, Mr. DiIulis noted that O'Connor and Drew currently serves 16 public higher education institutions in the Commonwealth.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To recommend to the full Board of Trustees that MCLA retain O'Connor and Drew as the College's auditor.

### **Ashland Street Warehouse funding**

As a result of heavy winter snow, the roof over one section of the Ashland Street warehouse collapsed. While the property was insured by the Massachusetts State College building authority, the cost of planned demolition and renovation of the property will cost more than initially estimated. Renovations include replacing the collapsed roof and wall, and demolition of one section of the building to make way for parking to replace spaces that will be lost through the construction of the Center for Science and Innovation.

The committee requested detailed information about the planning and costs associated with all phases of the project, included planned future work to convert the interior of the property for office and workshop space. This overview will be presented to the committee at a future meeting.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To authorize President Grant to transfer funds from MCLA to the MSCBA not to exceed the amount of \$425,000 to fund demolition and exterior construction work at the Ashland Street warehouse.

### **Campus Center Marketplace project update**

Plans are ongoing for renovation of the campus center marketplace and servery. Contract negotiations with ARAMARK brought additional funding to the table. The project will be completed in two phases; the servery will be renovated over the summer. The marketplace area renovation is planned for the semester break in late December. It is expected that the project will require the commitment of additional funds by the College. This request will be taken up by the committee in the fall.

President Grant noted that she will convene a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board over the summer to update the committee on the status of campus projects.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report FY 2011**

Departments continue to manage their budgets carefully. Expenses for the quarter ran below projections and revenue was higher than projected, partially due to additional stimulus funding. Treasurer Desmarais noted that third quarter revenue included students paying their spring semester bills, and that expenses and revenues will balance more closely in the fourth quarter. He expects the careful management of the budget to continue through into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, which will position the College to bring forward additional funds into FY 2012, to help offset budget challenges in the coming year.

The president noted that in addition to the budget challenges posed by the proposed state appropriation, the College will need to monitor and manage carefully federal issues, including possible changes and reductions around Pell Grants.

### **Student Fees FY 2012**

The FY 2012 budget process is underway. The House Ways and Means Committee budget recommendation provides level funding relative to last year's state appropriation. However, the budget recommendation does not fund collective bargaining for FY 2012, and federal stimulus dollars that were available in FY 2010 and 2011 will not be available for the coming year.

While the College continues to budget conservatively, an increase in student fees will be part of MCLA's FY 2012 budget plan. With any fee increase, the goal will be to ensure that MCLA remains affordable to the maximum number of students. In addition, scholarship dollars continue to be a fundraising priority in order to provide support to students.

President Grant noted that setting fees is an important statutory function of the Board of Trustees. Each committee of the board has received a briefing on the FY 2012 fee recommendation, but it is the Fiscal Affairs Committee that will carry the motion to the full board for approval at their May meeting.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To recommend to the full Board that President Grant be authorized to increase the Campus Support Fee by an amount not to exceed \$500 for the academic year beginning September 2011.

### **Student Account Write Offs**

Vice President Stakenas presented a recommendation to write off student accounts totaling \$26,000. The College has completed its due diligence to collect these funds and deemed them uncollectable. While the accounts will be written off, a hold will remain on the records of the students who owe these balances against future collection opportunities (e.g., students requesting transcripts). The committee noted that this amount represents a very small percentage of the College's receivables.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED** To accept the recommendation to write off the amount of \$26,000 related to these specific accounts.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.