



My College. Right from the Start.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 9, 2013
87 Blackinton Street Conference Room**

Members in attendance

William Dudley, Chair
Mohan Boodram (via conference call)
Susan Gold

Members absent

JD Chesloff
Stephen Crowe

Others in attendance

Mary K. Grant, President
Cynthia Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs
James Stakenas, Vice President of Administration & Finance
Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs
Kristina Bendikas, Associate Dean for Assessment and Planning
Maureen Horak, Associate Dean of Library Services
Thomas Bernard, Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Trustee Dudley.

Fiscal Year 2014 Budget and Student Fees

President Grant and Vice President Stakenas presented an update on the state budget process for FY 2014. President Grant noted that the University of Massachusetts system proposed to the legislature a plan to move the system toward a state appropriation level that would fund 50% of campus operations, with the university committing to not raise student fees for the coming academic year.

The state university system proposed a similar agreement to reach the 50% funding level over the course of several years – with additional funding appropriated to support negotiated collective bargaining increased – with a commitment not to raise fees for the upcoming academic year should the legislature appropriate additional operating funds for FY 2014. The CFOs of the system determined that the funding gap to reach 50% of campus operations across the system

was \$45 million. The House Ways and Means Committee budget included an additional \$15 million for the state university system for FY 2014.

The state university system presidents and CFOs identified a formula for allocating the additional funds that provided each campus with a base amount, and divided the balance of the funding on a proportional enrollment basis. The presidents also agreed not to increase student fees for the coming academic year as a condition of this proposal.

Having passed the House, the FY 2014 budget proposal is under consideration by the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and it remains to be seen whether the Senate committee will support the increased proposal. If the additional funding for the state university system is not available, fee increases would be necessary at each campus.

In light of the House Ways and Means Committee budget proposal, and the uncertain state of this proposal in the Senate, the committee discussed fee options for FY 2014. Should the FY 14 budget include the proposed increase for the state university system, MCLA would not raise the campus support fee for the 2013-2014 academic year. However, if the proposed funding is not included in the final budget bill, we anticipate some level of fee increase will be necessary.

After discussion of these scenarios, the committee agreed to propose a fee range of \$0-\$500 for the coming year, based on the outcome of the state budget process.

Assessment and Vision Project Update

Associate Dean Kris Bendikas provided an update on MCLA's campus level assessment work and College participation in statewide assessment efforts, as well as the Vision Project.

At MCLA, assessment of the core curriculum and major programs is underway. One finding has been that highly developed department level assessment programs feature a close mentoring relationship between veteran and developing faculty. As this work continues, assessment efforts will expand to consider learning outcomes in service learning courses, and the assessment of High Impact Experiences. Faculty professional development is an essential component of the MCLA assessment program.

At the state level, MCLA participates in the Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment (AMCOA) initiative. As part of statewide assessment efforts, work is underway to look at student learning outcomes in the areas of writing, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking. While participating in statewide efforts, it is important that MCLA remain focused on campus-level work, connecting to state efforts in ways that complement our faculty-led and faculty driven commitments.

Freel Library Update

Associate Dean Maureen Horak provided an overview of Freel Library programs and services. The work of the library is guided by a strategic plan for Freel that aligns with the MCLA strategic plan, and is focused on the evolution of the library as both a physical and virtual learning space. President Grant noted that the library's plan is a model of planning practice at the departmental level.

In support of this goal, the College hired a digital services librarian in 2012 who has been instrumental in enhancing the library's social media presence, and in the development of LibGuides – online research guides – in a range of subjects. In addition, the library has incorporated elements of a “learning commons” model – including space design, furniture, and enhanced technology – to create an environment to support multiple modes of learning, with an emphasis on collaborative work. As a result of these intentional efforts, library usage increased by 46% from 2010 to 2012.

Adjournment

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