



**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of September 20, 2018**  
**Murdock Hall Room 208**

**Members in attendance:**

Denise Marshall, Chair  
JD Chesloff, Vice Chair  
Mohan Boodram  
Brenda Burdick  
Lisa Chamberlain  
Susan Gold

**Others present:**

Dr. James Birge, President  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk

Chair Marshall called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

President Birge provided an overview of recently hired members of the President's Office and Executive Team including Lisa Lescarbeau, Executive Assistant to the President, Robert Ziomek, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, and Emily Williams, Vice President of Academic Affairs. In addition, he discussed the elevated role Gina Puc will serve as Dean of Enrollment Management and Community Relations. He also discussed the team's dynamics and the recent staff development retreat.

In response to a question regarding relationships interdepartmentally, President Birge reviewed the aligning of departments with common goals with focus on improved efficiency and effectiveness.

President Birge then answered a question regarding MCLA's retention rates as compared to peers. He stated that MCLA ranks better than the mean among public higher education institutes and slightly behind the mean in Massachusetts. Management efforts are focused on improving retention through advising and student experience.

Technological tools for advising students on their path to degrees is available to MCLA faculty, but is not used consistently. Data provided as a result of use is valuable to analyzing retention efforts. President Birge discussed his concerns in this area and action he is prepared to take to enforce use.

With regard to student integration with the community at large, President Birge provided an overview of efforts from local organizations to provide affordable and accessible access to attractions and events. Current marketing efforts will aid with integration and outreach to the broader community.

President Birge next provided an update on union contract negotiations. The AFSCME contract has been settled and is awaiting signature of the Governor. The APA contract was sent to the Office of Employee Relations two weeks ago where it faced opposition based on uniform allowances for campus police departments. Due in large part to the work of the COP, OER relented and recommended approval of the APA contract.

Concern still surrounds the MSCA contract due to a miscalculation by management of the impact of compensation increase for equivalencies. The University wide impact is \$7.2MM. The increase at MCLA is \$200k, which was included in the budget. COP will advocate for Governor Baker to sign the MSCA contract.

Trustees next discussed the additional appropriations the college received in FY 2018/19 funding, current budget and year end FY 2017/18 performance. The current budget does not include the additional appropriations and the Fiscal Affairs Committee made no recommendations for budget changes or use of the funds.

President Birge next presented his recommendations for recipients of honorary degrees: Robin Stelmach, Richard Alcombright and Rachel Maddow. Ms. Maddow will also be asked to serve as Commencement Speaker in May 2019.

Chair Marshall then led a discussion on a potential board retreat noting that past retreats were held in February. It was agreed that a retreat will be scheduled to occur in February. Topics to consider include strategic plan update, board self-evaluation and effectiveness, governance and trustee roles, and trustee relationship to the institution.

President Birge provided an overview of the marketing update to be provided to Trustees at the October Board development session and asked Trustees to participate in the marketing survey that would be launched in early October.

In response to questions regarding President Birge's annual performance evaluation, he summarized his evaluation meeting with Commissioner Santiago noting that the Commissioner is pleased with MCLA's performance.

President Birge commented on Christopher MacDonald-Dennis's performance as Chief Diversity Officer. Mr. MacDonald-Dennis is developing good relationship with students, while also embracing ways to impact DEI throughout the institution.

Lastly, Chair Marshall inquired for other business. None being brought forth, upon motion duly made and seconded, it was **VOTED** to adjourn at 4:19 p.m.