



**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of March 30, 2023**  
**87 Blackinton St, North Adams**  
**Audio/Video Conference**

**Members in Attendance**

Mohan Boodram, Chair\*  
Brenda Burdick, Chair of the Board of Trustees\*  
Kathleen Therrien\*

**Others in Attendance**

James Birge, President  
Gina Puc, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk  
Bernadette Alden, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Jana Boyer, Director of Enrollment Operations  
Bonnie Howland, Director of Student Financial Services  
Brigid Lawler, Executive Director of Enrollment Management  
Waqas Mirza, Registrar

\*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 in-person and via audio/video-conference, the Enrollment Management Committee of the Board of Trustees of March 30, 2023 with Committee Chair Boodram presiding was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

**MCLA Nursing Program Rollout**

Director Boyer began with an overview of the division's nursing admissions efforts. The College's web page for the newly approved nursing program was launched as soon as the press release was made to the public. Communication efforts began with emails to current students, inquiries, prospective students, and student who have deferred enrollment. Emails were also sent to parent email addresses and high school guidance counselors.

The response to outreach was immediate. Inquiries have been made for more information and a one sheet was developed to answer frequently asked questions.

Director Alden reviewed social media efforts. Digital paid media has been amplified with additional social media ads both targeted for ages 18-65 years and untargeted for ages 13-17 years. Spend for these efforts is \$1,000, with only \$400 expended to date. In the 13-17 year age group there were 1,200 link

clicks, and 276,000 reach views and 720,000 impressions. In the 18-65 year age group there were 34,000 reach views and 65,000 impression.

In addition to social media efforts, marketing work with Simpson Scarborough continues with a focus on health science language targeting.

Billboards are planned for the spring in Berkshire County, at the Vermont border, in Springfield/Holyoke, Boston, and the Albany/Troy NY areas. Sample billboard images were presented.

VP Puc noted that other print advertising is being developed, as well as video with the College's health care partners to take advantage of the end of the current recruitment cycle in preparation for the next in fall 24 and spring 25.

The MCA.EDU/Nursing landing web page was presented. Much of the text content is a requirement of the Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) and consumer protection provisions that are required to be available to the general public.

At this time, the College has received 18 applications for the pre-nursing program, and one student has already been enrolled.

### **Department Updates**

Director Boyer provided an update on behalf of the Office of Admission beginning with fall trends:

- 7% increase in first year applications (1,719 vs. 1,618)
- 53% increase in first year deposits (92 vs. 61 – This is skewed because of the effects of the pandemic, but the trend is upward.)
- 25% increase in transfer applications
- 36% increase in out-of-state applications
- 10% increase in NEBHE (New England Board of Higher Education) applications (CT, ME, NH, RI, VT)
- 30% increase in international applications (largely due to men's and women's hockey)

A breakdown of first year applicants by state was presented. Of the out-of-state applications, 12 of the 18 are a result of the ice hockey program, and three of the international applications are for women's ice hockey.

VP Puc stated that the focus is on intentional funnel management to address demographic decreases in Massachusetts, and how to respond to the changing enrollment needs. The Division will engage internally in conversations around the implications of the changing student demographics and what that means for institutional aid awarding. For the nursing program, the College has access to about 20 nursing scholarships through the MCLA Foundation.

In response to a question inquiring why deposits in MA are up, but applications are down, ED Lawler highlighted the more intentional outreach that results in higher yield. The Division will continue to be

more targeted and focused with recruitment efforts as they look at demographics and where best to focus those efforts.

The campus visit schedule was adjusted to change from one campus tour in the summer months to offering tours on an open basis.

Director Boyer then reviewed application increases by major which are similar to past trends:

- Art
- Biology
- Business
- Health Sciences
- Math
- Performing Arts
- Psychology

VP Puc noted that interest in health sciences continues to grow, with a 40% increase over the past five-year period.

In response to a question regarding decreases in applications, Director Boyer state that the largest decrease overall is in applications from Massachusetts students. There are no large decreases in major outside of English and Communications, which is a national trend.

VP Puc discussed tools other than marketing that the Division can employ at the top of the enrollment funnel to impact applications. These include third party sources for lead generation, and licensing of names through the College Board. As well, the new customer relations management platform will have tools to allow drilling into primary markets and refocus efforts in Massachusetts recruitment.

In response to a question regarding the impact of billboard advertising on applications, VP Puc stated that it could be generally expected to see in an increase in late applications noting that, for example, Suffolk County students typically apply late in the cycle.

With regard to locations of billboards in the Boston area, these are based on recommendations from the vendor and may also be a function of availability of billboards in that region.

As applicants for nursing programs are declined at other institutions, MCLA will likely see highly qualified applicants for our nursing program. There are on average 80,000 students eligible for nursing programs, but not equal space available in existing programs. MCLA will also benefit from institutions that have earlier application deadlines.

Director Boyer reviewed the current applications for the ice hockey and nursing programs. There are 52 and 43 applicants for men's and women's ice hockey, respectively. Of those, 29 men and 34 women have been accepted into the program, and there are six men and 15 women who have made deposits for the ice hockey programs. Each team roster will consist of between 20 and 25 players.

Director Boyer reviewed the recent and upcoming spring events and tours. For the March 31 overnight there are 22 students registered, and for the accepted student day on April 1 there are 115 students expected on campus. An additional overnight event has been added in April to make up for the early March weather cancellation.

Preview days are scheduled with dates remaining throughout April and May. An Athletics Preview day is scheduled for April 17.

The schedule for Accepted Student Day was reviewed. Students and their attendees tour campus and learn about what they might expect in their first year at MCLA. Students ask questions of a student panel, while their attendees ask questions of a faculty and staff panel. Students also attend a faculty-led mock class selecting from topics such as Explorations in Business, Intro to Actor Training, Reading Signs of Terror in Jaws: How we Understand Meaning in Media and Movies, Social Learning and Cognition, and Unequal Health.

A nursing specific event is being planned for May 6, which is International Nurses Day, and will be held at the College's location at Berkshire Medical Center North's campus.

Director Alden presented the current signage and way finding project underway to address the need for effective signage and increase the ease of wayfinding about campus. Technology will be incorporated into the signage allowing users to access QR codes that lead to electronic maps that move with the user as they traverse campus. Samples of signs were presented.

Director Howland presented an update on behalf of the Student Financial Services Department. FASFA awarding is on track. Student aid is being awarded as students are accepted, with notification of those awards being issued weekly. At this time there are approximately 800 awards issued.

Work is in process in conjunction with Office of Admission staff to encourage accepted students to complete their FASFA applications to ensure students receive available financial aid.

Applications for scholarships and awards through the Foundation are available. An extension on applications can be done through the Foundation, but the deadline for applications was already extended from two to four weeks. The focus is to award all of the available funds, and messaging and outreach to students to accomplish this continues.

In response to a question regarding what could be done to help with awarding, Director Howland expressed concern with the very specific and numerous requirements around many of the available awards. She expressed the need for the College's Foundation to work with donors to make sure that parameters for scholarships are accessible, or that there be no restrictions.

Director Mirza provided an update on behalf of the Registrar's Office. There are 195 total graduation applications being reviewed to ensure students are certified to graduate. This number is only two less than last year. Of the 195 student applications, 97 are for Bachelor of Art, 78 are Bachelor of Science, five are Master of Business Administration, and 15 are master of education. As core and program requirements are cleared, applicants will be certified to graduate.

### **Admissions CRM Proposals and Timeline**

VP Puc opened conversation on a CRM proposal and timeline for the Admissions Department. Nine vendors responded to the request for proposal and two vendors were selected to present their proposal. Launch of the CRM platform is planned for fall 2023.

ED Lawler stated that Slate had been selected as the preferred vendor, and the Division will move forward to engage with Slate. This platform has more functionality over the competitor, is more economical, and is incredibly user friendly. This CRM program will provide easier and on-demand access to data with multiple filtering options. At this time, efforts are focused on finding a third-party organization who will be able to assist MCLA with the implementation of Slate as the College's timeline is aggressive.

Trustee Boodram commented on his experience with Slate and strongly supports the use of a third party for implementation.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.