



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
Thursday, April 23, 2015  
President's Office Conference Room**

**Trustees in attendance:**

Shirley Edgerton, Chair  
Susan Gold  
Alyson Stolz, Student Trustee

**Others present:**

Cynthia Brown, Interim President  
Theresa O'Bryant, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs  
Jim Stakenas, Vice President of Administration & Finance  
Ashton Darrett, Career Services – Center for Student Success & Engagement  
Ginger Menard, Clerk  
TaylorJae Taber, student  
Jasmine Cespedes-Mejia, student

Trustee Edgerton called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Due to the timing of student schedules the order of the agenda was changed and the meeting began with the presentation of the Study Away and Student Abroad programs.

**Study Away/Study Abroad**

Ashton Darrett of the Center for Student Success and Engagement (CSSE) coordinates the Study Away/Abroad opportunities for MCLA's students. Study away is for students traveling to other institutions within the United States or Canada and Study Abroad encompasses opportunities in all other countries. Students must be a junior, have at least a 2.5 GPA, and good campus citizenship to participate.

MCLA partners with a number of organizations to expand opportunities for students including National Student Exchange, Semester at Sea, CISabroad, and International Studies Abroad. CSSE continues to seek out more companies with which to participate to increase the number of options available to students. Additionally, we also partner with organizations such as The Washington Center, for example, to provide internship opportunities for students. The Washington Center program provides internships along with academic courses and structured activities and boasts an almost 100% employment rate for past participants.

Jasmine Cespedes-Mejia recently spent a semester in Spain at the University of Seville through the International Studies Abroad program and shared details of this life-changing experience. Jasmine is a psychology major with a minor in business/behavioral analysis. She studied international marketing and international relations and all credits were transferable. She also traveled throughout southern Spain as part of her exchange program. Jasmine noted that this was one of the best experiences of her life allowing her to become more independent and more outgoing. While traveling throughout southern Spain and Portugal she realized that every province is unique and incomparable. She participated in this program along with ten fellow college students from all over the United States and has remained connected to each of them as well.

TaylorJae Taber participated in the National Student Exchange and went to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She is an Environmental Studies major with a minor in biology and plans to work with wildlife. One of her goals was to identify a graduate program in Alaska and her plan is to return to the University of Alaska Fairbanks to continue her studies after earning her bachelor's degree at MCLA. Like Jasmine, TaylorJae met students from all over the world. She had the chance to rock climb, ice climb, and dog sled. Her courses included a survey of wildlife science, horticulture, anthropology, intro to geology, and arctic survival.

With the National Student Exchange tuition and fees are paid to MCLA and room and board are paid to the host institution. MCLA hosts students as well and currently has a student from Alaska and a student from Puerto Rico.

Darrett is working to increase awareness of these opportunities via participation in orientation sessions, visits to clubs and classes, and informational fairs. He is continuing to seek out scholarships for students who wish to travel as well as donations for this program.

## **Student Fees**

Vice President Stakenas provided an update on the budget for the upcoming year and the likely need for an increase to student fees.

As a result of 9c cuts from the Governor's office continuing into FY2016, and the lack of funding provided in the state budget for collective bargaining, we will not have sufficient funds to avoid a fee increase. The range that will be presented to the Fiscal Affairs Committee is \$0 to \$500.

The College is obligated to pay collective bargaining increases as these were negotiated between the state and the unions. In past years resources have been allocated by the state to cover these costs but none is included for the coming year.

There are three potential scenarios at this time. If the Senate's budget does not include collective bargaining the maximum increase will be needed. If a portion of collective bargaining is included in the budget the increase might be reduced to \$350. If collective bargaining were fully

funded a fee increase might not be needed. It is highly likely that some increase will be necessary.

There has also been some discussion of reevaluating the technology and/or capital fees.

Interim President Brown noted that we are trying to keep any increases moderate and in line with the other state universities.

There is some additional performance-based funding available through the Board of Higher Education and VP Stakenas is serving on the committee to establish a distribution formula among the nine state universities.

It is important to note that MCLA has the largest percentage of Pell eligible students in the state university system.

VP Stakenas will meet with Student Government Association at their next meeting to provide an update on the potential fee increase.

Decisions on fees must be made by July 1 for billing purposes.

### **Other Business**

As this was Student Trustee Stolz's final meeting, the Committee thanked her for her terrific work over the last two years.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.