



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
Minutes of the Meeting of June 10, 2021  
Tele/Video Conference**

**Members in Attendance**

JD Chesloff, Chair  
Mohan Boodram, Board Chair  
Justin Daniels  
Susan Gold

**Others in Attendance**

James F. Birge, President  
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk  
Gina Puc, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives  
Heather Quire, Dean of Students

Trustee Chesloff called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

**End of Semester Update**

VP Holbrook began with a recap of the semester's end. In early spring, residential living on campus was moved to near quarantine status as a result of increasing number of students testing positive for COVID-19. Positive cases continued to increase through March 31, 2021, at which point there were 28. This necessitated full isolation or quarantine due to close contact of 70 students: 52 residential and 18 commuter. With the impact on the quality of residential living, the difficulty with delivering meals to students in isolation, and the increased need for health services, it was agreed to move remote learning for the remainder of the semester and close campus residences. As well, baccalaureate and commencement ceremonies for the classes of 2020 and 2021 were conducted virtually.

Trustee Daniels provided his perspective on the residential closure and the events that lead up to that. He expressed frustration with the move to remote learning, and the anger students had toward each other knowing that many had behaved irresponsibly.

Having spent time in quarantine, Trustee Daniels provided thoughts on that experience with the most frustration being experienced with meal offerings and delivery.

Returning to a remote environment from a technology and experience point of view was not difficult as students had already managed a partial semester in this manner.

VP Holbrook commented on the origins of the outbreak noting that there were several reports of social activity among students, but none of the reports were substantiated nor lead to violations of the Trailblazer agreement.

In response to what MCLA can take-away from the pandemic to this point, VP Holbrook stated that the events at the end of the semester highlighted the strength of MCLA's health services operations. Dining services had instituted an on-line meal ordering option, and this option will remain part of dining services based on its reception from students. The pandemic has also revealed that students do not like to be alone in their own rooms regardless of feeling safer in this living arrangement.

Committee members discussed the use of video technology in the classrooms and its use in future semesters post-pandemic.

### **Planning for Fall Return**

VP Puc provided an update on MCLA's plans for a full return to campus residential living in Fall 2021. All students will be required to be vaccinated from the COVID-19 virus to return to the college in the fall. A survey was conducted of faculty and staff to gauge herd immunity among the campus community. Responses from 248 employees indicate a 93% vaccine rate, and it is anticipated that we will have herd immunity when students return. Student responses to provide proof of vaccination have been slow with few requests for religious and medical exemptions. Course schedules for the fall have moved to in-person delivery and a full return to campus message will be issued in the coming week.

VP Puc reviewed residential living plans for AY22. Double occupancy rooms will return, and the College's physical operations are returning to pre-pandemic mode. Student outreach is in process to work on their summer and fall return to campus plans.

CARES and ARP resources for students were discussed. A weighted formula will be used to serve the neediest students first. Funds availability will be communicated to students prior to the next billing cycle.

Fall move-in and surveillance testing plans are being developed with guidance from the local DPH and The Broad Institute. Communications are shifting to language that leans to a more normal semester with the return to campus in the fall.

### **Residential Plans for 2021-2022**

VP Holbrook provided a review of residential plans for AY22. Student housing numbers have not rebounded to pre-COVID levels.

Dean Quire stated the focus for fall will be to create connectedness and a sense of belonging for students as the student feedback indicates the need for this. Hoosac Hall will be taken off-line for the fall semester based on reduced occupancy. This is a temporary adjustment as we anticipate a return to pre-pandemic residential enrollment.

In response to a question regarding the disposition of Hoosac Hall, President Birge stated that while it is off-line for student residence, it will be considered available for rental for local events such as MoCA's Fresh Grass Festival. He reiterated that taking this facility off-line is a temporary action.

### **Update on Work with Public Safety**

VP Holbrook provided an update on the work being done by Dr. Lorenzo Boyd with MCLA's public safety department, and funded by a higher ed innovation fund grant. Listening sessions have been held with various constituents on campus. Feedback from these sessions is being used to create a program for dialogue and develop programs to advance our public safety departments work toward community policing.

Campus police officers have been skeptically optimistic of this work as they are not training to be police officers, but rather focusing on their approach and relationships with the students and campus community.

### **Other Business**

Under other business, VP Holbrook thanked Trustee Daniels for his responsive and engaged approach to service on the board and with this committee in particular.

Trustee Chesloff thanked VP Holbrook for her service to the College and the Board of Trustees.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.