



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of September 17, 2020
Murdock Hall Room 208
Tele/Video Conference**

Members in Attendance

JD Chesloff, Chair
Mohan Boodram, Board Chair
Susan Gold

Others in Attendance

James F. Birge, President
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs
Heather Quire, Dean of Student Affairs
Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk

Trustee Chesloff called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m. It was noted that the student trustee was not in attendance for this session, and it was explained that the election for this position had been delayed as a result of the pandemic. Attendees also discussed the process for electing a student trustee.

A Day in the Life of a Student

VP Holbrook began with a discussion of what a day in the life of a residential student looks like on campus amid the pandemic. She provided an overview of the return to campus planning process and the areas this work had to encompass: residential living, campus dining, an exception process for remote learning, behavioral expectations, COVID testing program, education materials and supplies, physical and mental health, and life outside the classroom. The priority in all of this was based around how we have a residential campus that is as safe as possible for students during this pandemic.

Residential areas were de-densified with all students housed in single rooms in all three residence areas. There are approximately 530 students in residence. Isolation rooms have been set aside in the Flagg Townhouses to accommodate up to 20 students. Lounges are open with posted

maximum capacities and kitchenettes remain closed. Face masks are required in all areas of campus except the student's personal bedroom. Guests are not allowed on campus.

In response to questions regarding student mental health, VP Holbrook noted that there was no noticeable increase in counseling service needs.

Meal plans were simplified and all students with a residency requirement were offered one meal plan. Dining areas are bound by restaurant guidelines and seating was reduced in the Centennial Room, dining space was added to Venable Hall gym, and to-go meals options have increased. Students are observing social distancing guidelines during dining and have been observed taking meals outside while the weather has been good.

Students were provided the option to request fully remote learning and waiver of residency requirement for medical risks of COVID and other unique situations. There were more requests submitted than expected and a system is being developed to make the exception process more effective for the spring semester.

All students were required to sign an agreement relative to behavioral expectations. These expectations are consistent with our peers and were established to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Students are expected to take personal responsibility to protect their own health and that of others in the community. The agreement includes good hygiene, mask wearing, social distancing, health monitoring, compliance with required virus testing, and quarantine and isolation protocols. The agreement was signed by 70% of the student body prior to the start of the semester.

The committee members discussed how the agreement is to be enforced. It was noted that this agreement is considered part of MCLA's code of conduct and subject to the same guidelines. With regard to mask wearing in the classrooms, VP Holbrook stated that there have been no reported issues with compliance on this.

A COVID testing program was implemented for all residential students. Each residential student was tested upon arrival and prior to moving into their residence area. Subsequent testing was done for these same students, once per week for three weeks. At that point, 20% of the residential student body will be tested each week for the remainder of the semester on campus. As well, asymptomatic commuter students were offered an optional test in September, and asymptomatic faculty and staff have been offered monthly optional testing. Results are returned from the Broad Institute, most within 24 hours. A partnership has been established with a MA DPH nurse for contact tracing and monitoring of potential cases.

Funding for testing was discussed. Funds were allocated for this from the CARES Act, but covers only a portion of the expenses. The remainder of the testing expense will be absorbed by the College, and was taken into consideration during budgeting.

VP Holbrook continued with an overview of what student life looks like outside the classroom. Student Affairs staff worked with Student Government to develop guidelines for clubs and organizations that meet MA gathering regulations and focus on safe engagement. Clubs are

encouraged to meet virtually. Where in-person events are held, capacity is set to 25 indoors and 50 outdoors, and attendance is tracked to enable contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID case. The new fitness center is open as is the campus center gym for recreation within gathering guidelines.

HVAC and air handling systems were adjusted to optimize operation as required by DCAMM

At this time, there have been no reports of large gatherings off-campus, and it has been made clear that there will be zero tolerance for any such gatherings.

Aramark will conduct a survey approximately four weeks into the semester. As well, they will convene a committee on food service that will consist of faculty, students and residential life staff to gather feedback.

Food insecurity concerns were discussed by the Committee. Meals plans were required for residential students, and has aided in some ways to reducing food insecurity. The food pantry remains operational with online ordering and volunteers packaging food for pickup. To go meals are made available through the food recovery student group; this is used mostly by commuter students.

Student Conduct Program Overview

Dean Heather Quire was introduced to the Trustees and provided an overview of the recently revised student conduct program. Changes were made to ensure best practices, to allow students to gain a better understanding of student conduct and the process, and to establish mission, goals and outcomes that allow for assessment.

The program mission states:

“The MCLA Student Conduct Program is committed to fostering an inclusive campus that promotes active and responsible citizenship through an educational and developmental process that values respect, responsibility, and accountability for all members of the MCLA community.”

Dean Quire reviewed the program goals including promotion of a consistent, fair and timely student conduct process, education of the community about the student’s rights and responsibilities, assistance for students seeking out resources for learning and living that enhances overall well-being, facilitation of conduct related training for all campus community involved in the conduct program, and development and maintenance of a comprehensive assessment strategy.

Student outcomes of the program were highlighted. Students will be able to explain why College policies exist, understand the impact of their behaviors, communicate their personal responsibility for their behavior, and identify ways to address their actions to avoid negative impact on their education goals and success.

A brief overview of the conduct program philosophy and principles of community were presented. Dean Quire explained that it is important to understand that conduct review process is different from criminal and civil court proceedings. This process is intended to be fair, but does not include the same due process protections afforded by the courts. The decision of responsibility is based on the preponderance of information, and outcomes will be proportionate to the severity of the violation and cumulative conduct history of the student.

Case resolutions may include informal resolution, letter of reprimand, conduct review meetings, administrative hearings, and college hearing board hearings. The steps in the review process are notice, attendance, meeting/hearing, finding and outcome, notice of outcome, and appeal.

The student conduct program is available on line in the student handbook. As well, students were provided the student handbook with their welcome letter at the beginning of the semester.

Retirement of VP Holbrook

President Birge announced the retirement notice given by VP Holbrook, which will occur at the end of the academic year. He reviewed the highlights of her career, including her six years with MCLA as VP of Student Affairs. He thanked VP Holbrook for her service to MCLA's students and the campus community, and for her good work most notably during the pandemic. In honor of her efforts and contributions, President Birge presented VP Holbrook with the Presidential Bowtie pin.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:29 p.m.