

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**January 29, 2024**

**87 Blackinton St, North Adams**

**MS Teams Audio/Video**

**Committee members in attendance:**

Frederick Keator, Committee Chair\* (FK)  
Yvonne Spicer\* (YS)  
Brenda Burdick\* (BB)  
Mohan Boodram\* (MB)

**Absent:**

**Others present:**

James Birge, President (PJB)  
Richard Glejzer, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs\* (RG)  
Jason Canales, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (JC)  
Kate Flower, Research and Instruction Librarian (KF)  
Clio Sterns, Assistant Professor of Education (CS)

\*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 Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of January 29, 2025, with Committee Chair Keator presiding was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

**Introduction of Tenure Candidacy Faculty:**

RG: explained to the Board the steps of the tenure review process, and that the candidates they are meeting are currently eligible. The board members introduced themselves and VP Glejzer then introduced Dr. Clio Sterns as the first candidate.

Dr. Clio Sterns shared:

- Six years as a faculty at MCLA in the Education Department.
- Began teaching career in the Peace Corp, for two years teaching in an elementary school in Eastern Russia.
- Has taught in several types of schools and in different parts of United States before coming to MCLA.
- Received PhD from University of New Hampshire in 2013

- Prof. Sterns currently teaches: Education & Society, Children's Literature, Queer Childhood (honors course) in the undergraduate program and Classroom Management in the M.Ed. program. Clio also supervises the Elementary and Middle School Teacher Candidates.

Scholarship:

Current has two books published and one in progress:

1. Critiquing Social and Emotional Learning  
What happens in the classroom on social and emotional levels.
2. Consent in the Childhood Classroom  
What do student expect from school and what can school really provide
3. The content of the book currently in progress is regarding Berkshire County schools (rural and poor) and the relationship between teachers and students within these schools.

Dr. Sterns stated that she conducts her classroom in a way that forms relationships with the students and with one another. She creates a space for the students to discuss, to laugh, to keep calm and a space for students to bring what they need into the experience and leave behind in the space what they feel they need to. She focuses on interaction and discuss more than on lecture.

FK – Thanked Dr. Sterns for her presentation and work. He mentioned that difference that happens because as aspiring teachers they have to engage their classrooms, but when they are the student, it may be a challenge to get them engaged in the class.

YS- Also thanked Dr. Sterns for her work and said she applauds what she brings to the classroom. Dr. Spicer said she would like to see a follow-up to Dr. Sterns research if classrooms did become more holistic spaces.

MB – Mentioned the importance of a classroom core value of everybody speaks. He asked, what if someone comes from a background that does not buy into speaking in the classroom?

CS (response)- I like to lean into the silence that occurs in a classroom. She provided an example of a student that was not interested in the use of pronouns. At first Dr. Sterns had a productive side conversation with the student, and two weeks later seems to be building a positive relationship with the student.

RG - next welcomed Kate Flower, Research and Instruction Librarian

Kate Flower explained that her role with the Freel Library staff is very dynamic, and she wears many different hats throughout the course of a day. She highlighted five main roles that she is responsible for.

### Reference (research consultation)

After implementing a new scheduling system, she had over 50 appointments with students in the 2024 fall semester. These appointments primarily assisted students with exploring research topics, getting started to research a paper, reference support. She also explained that she planned passive reference opportunities for students using the library by crafting Lib Guides, planning instruction time and library skill lessons.

Kate also explained that she assisted students with evaluating sources, helping students find the appropriate sources for their work and teaching them the need for additional cited information.

One sheet instruction for several of the Library Services

### Library Outreach

- Library anxiety
- Game nights, mini golf
- Book Store tour of region

### Archives

- Local History Collection work with the North Adams Historical Society
- College Archives, used for special projects, planning for events, supporting research projects, etc.
- Recent project for Center of Resourceful Living
- She has been offering opportunities for Teaching in the Archives
- Mohawk History

### Enhancing On-Line Catalog System

- Work to enhance digital archives
- Use of Ai in research process focusing on topic discovery

### Consortium Work

- Working on an on-line public access catalogue system
- Accessibility work
- Has recently work on Accreditation Committee, and Student Affairs Committee. Participating in Green Dot Training
- Advisor for Ski Club, Outdoor Adventure group and assisted with the Queer Student Union trip to NYC.

FK – Referenced that he could help connect Kate with the owner of the Lenox Bookstore. He also asked if she had a Wish List for the Library.

KF- Kate explained that she would like more resources for streaming videos. Many of the licenses for video's professors would like to use for assignments have very expensive licensures.

MB- Highlighted that Library Anxiety is something very real for students and liked the nice touch of so many offerings especially free planting program to ease nervousness with the space.

PJB – Added that Kate and Emily A. have worked hard to create a cool library space. He explained to the group that he asked Kate to do a Greek Life display for alumni weekend. Kate collected a wonderful display of material from the archives that made a very nice presentation for the alumni to enjoy.

YS- Libraries have become the space for exploration. It is going to be interesting on how they evolve into the future on campuses. What direction do you see the library heading in?

KF- Information Literacy and Media Literacy. The library needs to be the teaching space of skills students can use to identify Ai.

BB- Commented on how impressed she is with the work being done with the library.

RG- Thanked Clio and Kate for their presentations.

Introduced Jason Canales, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning to discuss data he collected on comparative institutions and methodology used to select possible peers.

JC- Began his presentation using the four-page handout (MCLA – Planning Peer Group Methodology Outline) as an outline. He spoke about the importance for NECHE evaluation as well as for Strategic Planning to define who we are and who do we look like and should aspire to be. He stressed how the MA State Colleges are looking less and less like MCLA: size, type of student, costs, etc....

Jason stated that he used IPEDS Data to compare institutions to assure for consistency. He evaluated 152 institutions (127 privates and 25 public). He then refined the group using enrollment as a standard, specifically schools with less than 2,000 students. Of this group 32 schools stood out (26 private and 6 publics).

He then asked the committee members if they thought that the Methodology made sense?

FK- asked what would it look like if we were to include in the grouping schools with high retention rates?

JC/RG- both explained that the schools with high retention rates are institutions like Bates, Amherst, Williams, that are not comparable to us and the data would not be helpful because they are just too far of outliers from MCLA.

FK- also asked if there was any comparisons to be had with large community colleges?

JC/RG- Explained that this research is based on who MCLA would want to aspire to be. But that we will keep an eye on schools that have unique program offerings that we can learn from.

FK – time is running out for this meeting but wants to make sure that this topic is added to a future meeting for the board to explore more deeply.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:34am

Respectfully Submitted  
Joshua Mendel  
Chief of Staff