



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of October 10, 2024
Tele/Video Conference**

Members in Attendance

Jean Clarke-Mitchell, Committee Chair*
Mohan Boodram, Chair*
Buffy Lord
William Garrity

Others in Attendance

James F. Birge, President
Lisa Lescarbeau, Board Clerk
Jeannette Smith, Vice President for Student Affairs
Daniel Colonno, Chief of Police
Lucas Morrill, Dean of Students
Marissa Parker, Administrative Assistant
April Wright, Director of Student Engagement and Programs

*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 via audio/video-conference, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of October 10, 2024, with Committee Chair Clarke-Mitchel presiding was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Trustees and attendees began the meeting with introductions. Staff attendees provided a brief overview of their areas of responsibility at the College.

VP Smith next provided a brief review of the Greylock Lead Academy and Orientation program. This program has been revised to improve the student onboarding experience and support student success. Components of the program begin with first-year student recruitment efforts and the associated communications, engagement days, opportunities for families to be on campus and engage in the community, and continue through the deposit, enrollment and registration phases up until students arrive on campus.

Dean Morrill provided additional detail of the orientation program which begins 10 days before the start of the fall semester. The schedule leading up to the first day of classes is a structured and includes an assessment piece to determine the program's success and future refinements.

The College's orientation programming consists of elements of known student development models that are intentional in their efforts to engage students, improve retention and student success rates, and create a sense of belonging. President Birge noted the correlation of this program with the Colleges improving retention rates over the past two years, and pointed to research supporting these programs and the resulting student retention.

VP Smith discussed residential life and the College's commitment to identifying as a residential College. Students currently reside in the townhouses and Berkshire Towers, and account for 60% of enrolled undergraduates. Efforts in the division are focuses on policies, practices, training and onboarding of student employees to continue to improve residential life for students. Professional development days are held with staff and work is done on skills to help them be successful.

In response to questions regarding the use of Hoosac Hall in the future, VP Smith stated that conversations of the best use of space in ways that are responsive to the needs of the entire College community have been ongoing. In addition to student housing, residential spaces need to take into consideration the increase of emotional support animals, the potential for temporary emergency employee housing, and for other revenue generating conferences and housing. As well, the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) meets monthly and the College's plans for space usage are in line with MSCBA thoughts. Four of the 9 state universities are in conversation with MSCBA about updating the design of facilities to support future needs.

Trustee Lord inquired about the residency requirement and the potential impact of free community college on future residency. It was confirmed that the College has a three-year residency requirement of undergraduate students outside the commuter radius. With regard to community college transfers, Dean Morrill commented on current internal discussions and the agreement that the onboarding and orientation program will need to be adjusted to serve a different population. Efforts are in place now to refine the onboarding process in anticipation of the potential increase in transfer students. VP Smith noted that there is currently a smaller collaborative program through the State for students to reside on MCLA's campus and attend classes at Berkshire Community College.

President Birge commented on traditional recruiting efforts for students to transfer from a community college to MCLA. The geographic area for this includes not only Berkshire County, but all community colleges in Massachusetts, as well as from neighboring New York institutions.

Trustee Garrity provided his perspective as a community college transfer student now living on campus at MCLA.

VP Smith presented information on the College's first year seminar (FSEM) and first year experience (FYE), which are part of the College's core curriculum. All incoming students are required to participate in programs led by MCLA's faculty. Staff members are part of the program and are recruited and hired to participate in the first-year programming. It is important to note that participation from the College's faculty and staff members has grown and contributes to the program's success.

In response to a question from Trustee Clarke-Mitchell, VP Smith will provide an update at a future meeting on how in the FYE incorporates a student's Trailblazer team into the program.

Fall programming was presented. VP Smith commented on the amount of programming that takes place on campus and the challenge of gathering that information into a central place. The recently created Global Events Management (GEM) team begins to address and coordinate program planning and communication.

Director Wright provided an overview of student engagement events managed through the Division of Student Affairs. Work is focused on creating intentional programs that students want to participate in and creates community. Traditional events include the annual President's Ice Cream Social, Student Activities Fairs, and Resource Fair. These three events saw large participation among the student body.

Other events planned off-campus include a trip to the Big E, a preseason AHL hockey game, an October trip to Salem, MA, and FrighFest at a nearby amusement park. Students have been hired to assist with planning and organizing student facing events. Some smaller events include glow bowling, Concerts by Candlelight, and WinterLights at Naumkeag.

Internal, pop-up style events will continue through the academic year. These include food events in the Student Engagement Café offering specialty grilled cheese sandwiches, a cereal bar, quesadillas, tacos, pizza, and iced coffee. These events held between 8 and 10 p.m. in the evening are seeing good participation with residential students and an increased attendance among commuter students.

With no other business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 a.m.