



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, February 27, 2018  
87 Blackinton Street**

**Members in attendance**

Susan Gold, Acting Committee Chair  
Mohan Boodram, *via teleconference*  
Rob Reilly  
Mitchell Chapman, Student Trustee

**Others in attendance**

James F. Birge, President  
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Theresa O'Bryant, Associate Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator  
Spencer Moser, Director, Center for Service and Citizenship  
Heidi Riello, Director, Counseling Center  
Julie Gambill, student  
Juliana Henault, student  
Ginger Menard, clerk

Chair Gold called the meeting to order at 9:28 a.m.

**College Student Mental Health**

Heidi Riello, Director of the Counseling Center, reported on the nationwide trend of increased need for mental health services for college students as more students are entering college with pre-existing issues such as depression and anxiety. Staff has been added each of the last two years to address the increased need; there are 2 full-time and 2 part-time clinicians in addition to the director who also serves as a clinician. Riello stressed that student mental health is a campus-wide responsibility. All faculty and staff must be aware and talk with students.

The committee discussed issues related to providing services such as staff capacity and the lack of availability to see students more regularly, cost of providing services to students (which are free of charge), and the availability of clinicians for off-campus referrals which often include transportation issues. Incoming students, especially those who require medication, are encouraged to continue their relationship with their current provider.

Riello shared the process for students dealing with emergencies after hours. The College works closely with the Brien Center Crisis team to provide an assessment if need. Additionally, MCLA has a strong relationship with the Jones unit at BMC for students who require hospitalization. The staff at Jones will then work with MCLA to help a student determine if they should return to school or take a leave of absence. The College does not have an involuntary hospitalization policy; however, campus police are trained responders and can use a “section 12” to take someone in for evaluation if necessary.

Riello provided information on a potential tool that the College is exploring, TAO (Therapist Assisted Online), a suite of online mental health tools that more colleges are using. Students can work on modules based on their individual needs. TAO could also benefit those ambivalent about counseling but who know they need some type of help as well as assist students who come in regularly to be more actively engaged in their own treatment. Counselors would be able to verify online if students are engaging with the program.

### **Campus food bank**

Sophomore Julie Gambill and Freshman Juliana Henault shared with the committee their desire to establish a campus food bank to address food insecurity on campus.

Julie previously served with AmeriCorps and she feels strongly that in addition to an issue of poverty, food insecurity is also a social justice issue. Juliana shared that while growing up her family relied on food stamps so she knows firsthand how debilitating this issue can be. Another goal of this program is to address the shame associated with food insecurity and education is an important component in removing that stigma. Through their work the students will strive to maintain dignity for all and break down barriers for those who need this resource.

They are also looking at how other campuses engage in this work as they work to establish a food pantry that will be accessible to students as well as faculty and staff. The goal is to have this be just another service that is available with minimal information required to access. The committee discussed the physical space required to establish a food pantry and Trustee Reilly suggested that perhaps McCann Technical High School might be able to build shelving.

Additionally, the students are talking with Aramark, the College’s food service provider, about another alternative for students – a community meal swipe card. Money could be donated to the card which students could then use to access a hot meal. Implementation would be fairly easy but a balance of \$7-\$9 must be maintained on the card for it to be useful.

Spencer Moser, Director of the Center for Service and Citizenship, commended the students for their commitment to growing this project that initially began as a community-based learning project in a class. He also shared that Julie and Juliana are Steve Green Civic Engagement scholars.

Prof. Nicole Porther has agreed to work with the students to identify a student intern/volunteer and she will also put together a needs assessment.

### **Current Issues in Campus Safety**

VP Holbrook will draft a brief description to share with the committee regarding questions about campus safety that have come up in the past weeks in response to the recent school shooting in Florida. Additionally, Student Affairs and Public Safety will be holding a campus forum tomorrow, February 28, to discuss safety training and emergency procedures that are in place if something were to happen on campus.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.