



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting of December 10, 2020
Audio/Video Conference

Members in Attendance

Mohan Boodram, Chair
Brenda Burdick, Vice Chair
JD Chesloff
Karen Kowalczyk
Robert Reilly

Others in Attendance

James Birge, President
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk

Upon establishing a quorum of the Executive Committee Members present, Chair Boodram called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. noting the agenda for this session includes the HD recipients and commencement speaker.

Dr. Birge provided an update on plans for commencement for the classes of 2020 and 2021 which are both scheduled in May 2021. The commencement speaker for the class of 2020 was selected last year and Mary Dana Hinton accepted this role. Jenn Smith was selected as a recipient of an honorary degree as part of the Class of 2020 ceremonies.

As of this meeting, the commencement speaker and honorary degree recipients have not been selected. Dr. Birge presented Massachusetts Chief Justice Kimberly Budd for consideration as commencement speaker.

Dr. Birge also provided a list of proposed recipients of an honorary degree as part of the class of 2021 commencement ceremonies.

Trustees discussed the format of commencement ceremonies and the desire to be in-person should gathering restrictions be loosened. Dr. Birge noted that at this time commencement plans will proceed for an in-person commencement ceremony with plans in place to pivot to virtual dependent upon gathering restrictions, a possible resurgence of the virus, and vaccine availability.

Following further discussion of honorary degree recipient recommendations and commencement speaker, President Birge will invite Ms. Audra McDonald to participate as commencement speaker and be awarded an honorary doctoral degree.

For the class of 2020 commencement the following are to be considered as recipients of an honorary degree: Mary Dana Hinton and Jenn Smith.

For the class of 2021 commencement the following are to be considered for invitation to serve as commencement speaker and honorary degree recipients: Audra McDonald, Kimberly Budd, and Marylou Sudders, in that order. And the following are to be considered as recipients of an honorary degree: Stephen Body, Dennis Powell and Susan Gold. Susan Gold's consideration will depend upon the appointment of a successor for her Trustee position.

Dr. Birge will approach potential degree recipients to determine interest before presenting names to the board of trustees for final discussion and approval.

Other Business

Trustee Reilly commented on statistics from DESE regarding the increase in emergency room visits by high school students, and inquired if MCLA health or student services monitors this. Dr. Birge stated that privacy laws prohibit staff from conducting any type of inquiry into a student's medical and mental health. Should a faculty or staff member become concerned for a student, they are encouraged to contact counseling services and/or student affairs so an outreach effort can be made.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.