



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
Thursday, November 9, 2017  
87 Blackinton Street**

**Members in attendance**

Buffy Lord, Chair  
Mohan Boodram, via teleconference  
Stephanie Collins, Student Trustee

**Members Absent:**

Rob Reilly

**Others in attendance**

James F. Birge, President  
Susan Gold, Board Chair  
Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Theresa O'Bryant, Associate Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator  
Celia Norcross, Assistant Dean, Student Engagement  
Jenn Craig, Director, Student Activities  
Michael Obasohan, Assistant Director, Multicultural Education Resource Center (MERC)  
Samantha Giffen, SGA President

Trustee Lord called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**Student Government Association (SGA) Goals**

SGA President Samantha Giffen shared SGA's goals for this year which include becoming a more inclusive and diverse organization as well as more being accessible and identifiable for students. SGA senators are holding office hours in the Campus Center Marketplace to reach a greater population of students as well as attending DEI and ALANA meetings to stay informed. They are also in the process of introducing two new representative positions in for Multicultural and LGBTQI+ students. SGA is also holding more open forums on campus to address a variety of issues and its member are more actively participating in campus events.

Trustee Lord asked about the revision of the SGA bylaws. Samantha shared that due to the recent resignation of their Parliamentarian that process has been slightly delayed but a new Parliamentarian has been appointed and the work will continue. They are working to ensure that the revision process is transparent and that all procedures are clear and up-to-date especially with the recent transition to online voting.

Samantha also provided an update on the recent Sam Gomez race which celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This year's beneficiary of funds raised was the National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) in Pittsfield. SGA has new logo for the race and will be updating signage. Based on feedback the race will have an earlier start time next year. The committee discussed the timing of the race now that it is separate from reunion weekend and additional ideas for advertising. Trustee Lord offered her assistance with race planning and marketing ideas as well.

### **Student Conference Attendance**

Celia Norcross shared information on the various conferences that students have attended, such as the National Association for Campus Activities, and noted that SGA has been provided critical funding to support students in this way. These conferences offer students an opportunity to learn from and network with fellow students from other schools while also raising the profile of MCLA.

Michael Obasohan shared information on a recent multi-day conference he attended with four students, the National Student Leadership Diversity Convention (NSLDC). The NSLDC focused on intergroup dialogue and was attended by colleges from throughout the U.S. As participants, students were tasked with identifying an issue on their campus, participating in workshops to explore and build on their knowledge of that issue, and developing an action plan to bring back to campus. Michael shared a letter from senior Kircys Canela about the impact and self-reflection that this opportunity provided.

A new opportunity being addressed is the possibility of students receiving credit for working on social justice issues. The format would be a practicum in which students enroll and select areas in which they want to implement work on pertinent social justice issues. This idea will continue to be refined and potential implementation will be discussed with the necessary departments.

Finally, VP Holbrook shared that MCLA hosted a regional conference for potential residence life directors.

## **Legislative Updates**

VP Holbrook shared an update on new campus assault legislation as well as the MA Transgender Anti-Discrimination Referendum which will be on the ballot in 2018.

Associate Dean O'Bryant offered more detail and a summary of the campus assault legislation which passed the Senate on November 3. Some requirements outlined in the law are in the current College policy but there are additional items that will need to be added pending final passage of this bill. The committee discussed the potential implications of this law and the new parameters it will introduce such as the addition of a designated confidential resource advisor.

The committee also discussed the MA Transgender Anti-Discrimination Referendum which will appear on the ballot in November 2018. VP Holbrook noted that regardless of the outcome the College will not change its policies related to transgender rights.

## **Planning for Dining Changes**

VP Holbrook shared that the College's contract with Aramark includes a provision for funding that will provide for renovations and updates to the campus center dining area. As Campus Center gym will be undergoing major renovations as well, a passageway is being proposed that will connect the Centennial Room with the renovated gym area. The committee discussed accessibility issues that need to be addressed with the addition of this passageway specifically with regard to mechanisms to permit direct access to the renovated gym area for those with mobility challenges and those utilizing the passageway for MCLA business without those individuals incurring a charge on their meal plans. Additional research and input from stakeholders is needed on this issue.

VP Holbrook is also working with Aramark to update the dining plans being offered so that they will be most beneficial to the students and will include at least three options from which to choose. The SGA food service committee has been involved in this process as well. Aramark is also meeting the increased student need for gluten-free and vegan options.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.