



MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING**

November 25, 2025

**President's Office, 87 Blackinton Street, North Adams, MA  
& Microsoft Teams Audio/Video Conference**

**MINUTES**

**Trustees in attendance:** W. David Halbert, Buffy Lord, Yina Moore, Yvonne Spicer

**Trustees Absent:** B. Downing

**MCLA Staff in attendance:**

James F. Birge	President
Richard Glejzer	Provost
Kelli Kozak	Clerk
Joshua Mendel	Chief of Staff

\*All attendees participated remotely

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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 Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met on November 25, 2025 with Chair Yvonne Spicer presiding.

Chair Spicer called the meeting to order at 8:32a.m. and requested that Provost Glejzer present the agenda items.

**Program Reviews**

Provost Glejzer noted that program reviews are a regular part of the evaluation process including for NECHE review. External professors come in and receive a stipend to participate in the review. They all spend time with faculty, students, and other campus constituencies including the Dean and Provost. NECHE accreditors use our program as a best practice example to other schools. The theme of many reports has been connecting with other departments as well as some departments who do not encourage that connection. MCLA is intentionally working to break down those silos. Further discussion of making the major requirements robust but not so large that it discourages students from taking other classes or double majoring. Provost Glejzer feels this is a very good process and works well to expand MCLA as well as satisfy our accreditors. Discussion that our faculty is also asked to do reviews and NECHE visits at other institutions.

The following departments are conducting program reviews during the 2025-26 academic year: Environmental Studies, History, Psychology, Sociology.

The following departments completed program reviews during the 2024-25 academic year: Community Health, English, Political Science.

The Business Administration Department also completed a five-year accreditation review by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs. It was a lighter evaluation and had some suggestions about data collection.

MCLA also had a successful JRCERT (Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiation Technology) review. They commented specifically on the skills and advantages of being part of a liberal arts school.

### **Faculty Incentive Awards 2025-26**

Provost Glejzer noted that professional development is an important component of the faculty lifespan. This is a state mandated program, and it is utilized to support faculty as they develop through promotion and tenure. This increased and expanded via a donation. The awards are peer reviewed and given annually. It is a competitive process. The Award Committee is made up of last year's awardees. There was discussion of the process and funding priorities, especially to meet increased expense needs.

The following received faculty incentive awards:

- Justin Golub received the New Course and Program Development Award for his project "Pre-Professional Pathways at MCLA"
- Gregory Scheckler received the Creative Civic Learning and Engagement Award for his project "Pictures within Pictures: Migrations in Time"
- Lisa Donovan received the Creative Civic Learning and Engagement Award for her project "Developing an Open Educational Resource (OER) for Community Arts Engagement and Education"
- Samuel Bruun received the Research Award for Tenure-Track Faculty for his project "Theoretical Framework and Methodology"
- Michaela Petrovich received the Sabbatical Research Award for her project "Reimagining the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Casket"
- Ely Janis received the Sabbatical Research Award for his project "The Battle of New York: Henry George, Abram Hewitt, Theodore Roosevelt and the 1886 New York City Mayoral Campaign"
- Carter Carter received the Three-credit Research APR for his project "Field Theory: Agrarianism and Analysis"
- Daniel Shustack received the Three-credit Research APR for his project "Testing predictions of differential migration with a common songbird in western Mass"
- Andrew Best received the Three-credit Research APR for his project, "Does sweat gland density matter?"

### **Sabbatical Applications 2026-27**

Provost Glejzer discussed that sabbaticals are awarded every 6 years and required by contract unless there is an extenuating circumstance. They receive a full year at half pay or one semester fully paid, managing the process is important for coverage as well. We anticipate that the costs will be covered by the full year pay reduction. Provost Glejzer gave examples of specific sabbatical proposals. The Committee discussed Provost Glejzer's enthusiasm for the

educational process and also asked if there could be a follow up presentation. Faculty present their projects at internal meetings but it is not a contractual requirement to present formally. However, we can invite them to volunteer to share with the Board. This cohort is a larger percentage of full year. Further discussion of the challenges to the student advisee relationships, with Provost Glejzer noting that advisees are reassigned and communication is robust.

Upon motion made and duly seconded it was

**VOTED**: to recommend the list of faculty sabbaticals to the full board for action at their next meeting:

Dr. Carolyn Dehner Professor of Chemistry, Spring 2027  
Dr. Lisa Donovan Professor of Arts Management, AY 2026-2027  
Dr. David Eve, Professor of Computer Science, Spring 2027  
Dr. Zachary Finch, Professor of English, Spring 2027  
Dr. Whitney Gecker Assistant Professor of Sociology, AY 2026-2027  
Dr. Paul Nnodim, Professor of Philosophy, Fall 2026  
Dr. Jenna Sciuto, Professor of English, AY 2026-2027  
Dr. Clio Stearns, Associate Professor of Education, Fall 2026  
Dr. Sara Steele, Associate Professor of Psychology, Fall 2026  
Dr. J. Antonio Templanza, Assistant Professor of English, AY 2026-2027

With no other business the meeting adjourned at 9:52a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Kozak, Clerk