



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

December 4, 2025

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

**MINUTES**

**Trustees in attendance:** Thomas Bernard\*, Dr. Jean Clarke-Mitchell\*, Buffy Lord\*, Darlene Rodowicz, Yvonne Spicer\*

**MCLA Staff in attendance:** James F. Birge, President; Kelli Kozak, Clerk

\*Denotes remote participation

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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 in person and via audio/video conference, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met on December 4, 2025 with Chair Buffy Lord presiding.

Chair Lord called the meeting to order at 8:31a.m. and requested that President Birge begin his presentation.

- 1) Preparation for Dec 11 Board of Trustees Meeting
  - a. Board Development Session will be with the WittKieffer search firm to introduce and meet the Trustees. President Birge will not attend this meeting or other on campus meetings.
  - b. Post meeting reception – small reception for former Trustees. Mohan Boodram and Denise Marshall will be in person.
- 2) Website Updates – [www.mcla.edu](http://www.mcla.edu) As part of marketing strategy work the team has been updating but not overhauling the website. They have added much more video, new navigation, and AI search capability. This will also support recruitment efforts.

- 3) Update on potential Commencement speaker – There has been no response to date on invitation which was expected. We will continue to work on this process. Another suggestion was AG Campbell or an SJC Justice. There was discussion of reaching out to alumni attorneys or other justices who could speak at other engagements.
- 4) Presidential Search Update – WittKieffer is meeting search committee tomorrow. Then they will be on campus as well as various online meetings. This is the time to provide input to WittKieffer who will then develop the position profile. The Committee makes a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees and they make the final decision aligned with the strategic and Board initiatives. Chair Lord and Search co-Chair Spicer noted the high quality of the service from WittKieffer so far.
- 5) Presidential Goals & Evaluation Process was then presented by Chair Lord
  - a. President Birge has provided his goals for this year. The Trustees will likely not need to do the evaluation at year end as he is retiring however he will work towards these goals this year and that will help us as we develop goals for the next President. President Birge appreciates having the goals as a guide.
  - b. There was discussion of goal 1 – adding DEIB strategic planning goals specifically. There was also discussion of utilizing more specific timelines and measurable goals for the new President but President Birge’s timeline is winding down. President Birge noted these goals were crafted directly from the full evaluation completed last year. There is also Department of Higher Education (DHE) input to ongoing Presidential goals.
  - c. There is no action required but they will go to the full Board as an FYI. The Committee noted these are also helpful as we transition to new leadership.
- 6) Chair Lord then reviewed the Executive Session minutes from August 21, 2025. The need for confidentiality has passed and the minutes can now be released as required.

Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was

**VOTED:** To recommend to the full board to release the Executive Session minutes from August 21, 2025.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:56a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kelli Kozak, Clerk