



My College. Right from the Start.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, January 17, 2012
Campus Center Room 324A**

Committee members in attendance:

Steve Crowe, Chair
Jane Allen
Tyler Fairbank
Eugene Leibowitz

Other Trustees in attendance:

Jaynelle Bellemore, Student Trustee
Joelle Collins
Shirley Edgerton
Susan Gold
Dick Lamb

Committee members absent:

James Clemmer
William Dudley

Others present:

Mary K. Grant, President
James Stakenas, Vice President of Administration and Finance
Theresa O'Bryant, Associate Dean of Students
Joseph Charon, Director of Public Safety
Thomas Bernard, Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by Trustee Crowe.

Status of Public Safety Arming Discussions

The committee had an in-depth discussion of the background, process, and other considerations related to the question of whether to issue MCLA Campus Police Officers pistol firearms as part of their standard equipment.

MCLA Public Safety Director Joseph Charon outlined the campus process related to this issue, and noted that there has been a collective, community process of input and discussion over the

course of more than 40 meetings and briefings held since April 2011. He noted that in June, 2008, the company Applied Risk Management (ARM) delivered the report *Campus Violence Prevention and Response: Best Practices for Massachusetts Higher Education to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education*.

The report was commissioned in response to high-profile incidents of gun violence on college campuses including Virginia Tech in 2007 and Northern Illinois University in 2008. It outlined the nature and scope of campus violence in Massachusetts and nationally; highlighted established best practices for campus safety and violence prevention; reviewed existing campus safety and violence prevention practices in Massachusetts; and presented 27 recommendations for campus safety and violence prevention. Among the 27 items was the recommendation that “Sworn campus police officers should be armed and trained in the use of personal or specialized firearms.”

Since the release of the report, the College has made progress advancing work on each of the 27 recommendations.

The committee discussed the legal powers, duties and responsibilities of sworn police officers as compared to non-sworn officers. MCLA’s sworn special state police officers are empowered and expected to enforce laws, and also have the authority and duty to use appropriate levels of force in carrying out their duties.

It was noted that there has been consultation with College counsel, who indicated that authorizing the arming of campus police officers is within the statutory authority of the Board of Trustees. Director Charon noted he is updating department policies to cover the issuance of firearms, in the event that the Board votes to advance the arming of Campus Police Officers, and that these policies will be carefully reviewed.

The committee discussed the campus input process and range of meetings that took place with a range of campus constituencies. In addition, President Grant noted that she also met with the members of the MCLA Campus Police department. Trustee Allen complimented Director Charon for his professionalism during the input process.

Trustee Bellemore reported on a Student Government Association referendum that was held to gauge student opinion on the arming question.

Out of 1,690 undergraduate MCLA students, 455 participated in the referendum, which posed the question “Based on the college campus discussions and information provided, do you support the arming of the campus police.” The question received 147 Yes votes (32%) and 308 No votes (68%). Following the referendum, the Student Senate of SGA voted 10-4 to endorse the results of the vote, and to officially oppose the arming of campus police.

The MCLA Faculty Association and the campus chapter of the Association of Professional Administrators also conducted informal surveys of their members, but at this time neither group elected to adopt a formal position. The union representing classified staff (which includes Campus Police Officers) did not conduct a survey, but has been part of the campus input process.

Director Charon outlined the background and training of MCLA's Campus Police Officers. He noted that each member of the department attended certified law enforcement academies, are sworn and warranted special state police officers, and participate in a range of annual in-service training courses. Six members of the department are currently licensed to carry firearms in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. One officer is applying for a license. One officer is renewing their license. One officer is eligible but has not applied.

The committee discussed the importance of the fact that MCLA maintains a sworn and warranted team of Campus Police Officers, and the significant differences in training, duties, and responsibilities between sworn and warranted officers and security guards. It was noted that the level of training and professionalism of MCLA's officers, and their background and experience in community policing makes them highly valued by municipal police departments, which frequently attempt to recruit MCLA officers to municipal forces.

The committee took an informal poll of Board members present to get a sense of opinion around the question of whether to arm MCLA Campus Police Officers.

Trustees Allen, Collins, Crowe, Edgerton, Fairbank, Gold, Lamb, and Leibowitz expressed support for arming Campus Police Officers.

Trustee Bellemore, as Student Trustee, expressed opposition to arming Campus Police Officers, reflecting the opposition of the Student Government Association. She expressed appreciation for the work and professionalism around the input and communication process.

The full Board will review the process and recommendations at a special meeting of the Board to be held on Thursday, February 2, 2012, at 5:30 p.m.

Other Business

President Grant provided the committee with a brief updates on the following topics:

- Spring Semester Challenges and Opportunities
- The Board Retreat planned for February 4th
- Old Board Business

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.