



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Fiscal Affairs Committee
Wednesday, March 7, 2012
87 Blackinton Street Conference Room**

Members in attendance:

James Clemmer, Chair
Steve Crowe
Eugene Leibowitz

Members absent:

Jane Allen

Others in attendance:

Mary K. Grant, President
James Stakenas, Vice President of Administration and Finance
Jerry Desmarais, Treasurer
Curt King, Chief Information Officer
Thomas Bernard, Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Trustee Clemmer.

Introduction of CIO Curt King

Vice President Stakenas opened the meeting by introducing the College's new Chief Information Officer, Curt King, who began his duties at MCLA on March 1st. Mr. King came to MCLA from Empire State College within the State University of New York (SUNY) system, where he served as Assistant Vice President of Information Technology, responsible for IT at 40 sites across New York that stretched from Long Island to Fredonia.

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Process

Vice President Stakenas provided an update on the Governor's budget recommendation for Fiscal Year 2013. The budget provides level funding relative to last year's state appropriation, but does not fund collective bargaining for FY 2013. The Board of Higher Education continues to advocate for a 5% increase in appropriations for public higher education, and funding for the collective bargaining agreements for FYs 12 and 13.

The House and Senate budget proposals are expected later this spring, It is unclear how the legislative proposals will compare to the governor's recommendation.

The campus budget process for FY 13 is underway, with departments preparing their budgets for review. In addition, Vice President Stakenas and Treasurer Desmarais are working with President Grant to model a variety of budget scenarios, with the goal of presenting the budget to the Trustees for acceptance at the May meeting of the Board.

Campus budget meetings are being scheduled to provide opportunities to inform students, faculty, and staff about the progress of the state budget process, and how that will inform the campus process.

Fiscal Year 2013 Fee Increase Considerations

The final state appropriation recommendation will influence how much student fees will need to be raised for the coming academic year. While a fee increase will be necessary, the goal will be to ensure that MCLA remains affordable to the maximum number of students. The Committee will discuss fee recommendations in greater detail at their next meeting.

If the state budget includes funding for collective bargaining increases, that would enable MCLA to explore a lower fee increase. With any fee increase, the goal would be to allocate some of the dollars raised through increased fees to student financial aid. The committee engaged in a discussion of the proportional effect of fee increases on in state and out of state students.

Campus and Community Projects

Mohawk Theater: The College is exploring partnership opportunities with the city around the planned renovation of the Mohawk Theater in downtown North Adams. The space offers promising teaching and production space for MCLA's theatre program. There are interesting partnership models for theatre collaborations between a community and a college (e.g., Emerson College in Boston) that MCLA will continue to explore as discussion proceeds.

Center for Science and Innovation: Construction is underway on the building site.

Bowman Hall Renovation: Planning is in process for the renovation of Bowman following the completion of the science center, including mapping out classroom and office relocations that will be required as part of the project.

87 Blackinton Street: The President's Office and Academic Affairs relocated to the former Admissions office following the move of Admissions to Smith House.

Center for Student Success and Engagement (CSSE): The space in Eldridge where the President's Office and Academic Affairs were located will house the various CSSE functions (advising, career, and learning services). The learning services move will free up space in the basement of Freel Library for additional library programs and services.

Bike Share Program: Student Affairs is working on a pilot bicycle share program that will officially launch following spring break. Bikes will be available to borrow through the library.

Ashland Street Warehouse Progress

The committee received an update on the renovations to date on the Ashland Street warehouse property, and the projected costs associated with the next phase of the project. As previously noted, since purchasing the property in November 2010, the Massachusetts State College Building Authority has overseen work to demolish a portion of the building to make way for additional campus parking, replaced a roof, and sealed the building envelope.

The next phase of work will support renovation to include space for administrative offices, trade shops and storage, shipping and receiving, vehicle parking and maintenance, and multipurpose and storage space for general campus use.

Before advancing construction, the College will commission final design and construction documents, including an accurate and detailed cost estimate to complete the project. Vice President Stakenas will present the final cost of the project at the next meeting of the Fiscal Affairs Committee, to be held in April. At that meeting, Treasurer Desmarais will present borrowing options to support the project. President Grant noted that under its current debt service obligations, the College has adequate capacity for additional borrowing to complete this project. This final cost projection will be presented to the Board of Trustees for acceptance at the May 24, 2012, meeting.

The committee requested that Vice President Stakenas provide a written summary of the project and outline of the project plan to complete work on the building at the March 29, 2012, meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED To authorize President Grant to commit MCLA funds not to exceed the amount of \$189,000 to produce detailed design and construction documents for the Ashland Street warehouse renovation, including a comprehensive budget to complete the project.

2nd Quarter Report FY 2013

Departments continue to manage their budgets carefully. Operating revenue and expenses ran above but within expected levels for the 2nd quarter. Both revenue and expenses were higher than normal due to the ongoing Campus Center Marketplace renovations and replacement of the fire alarm system in the campus center. Campus center project expenses in the 2nd quarter were offset by increased revenues received in the 1st quarter to support the project.

Treasurer Desmarais expects the careful management of the budget to continue through the third and fourth quarters, which will position the College to bring forward funds into FY 2013, to help offset budget challenges in the coming year.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.