



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

November 10, 2022

**87 Blackinton St, North Adams
MS Teams Audio/Video**

Committee members in attendance:

Frederick Keator, Committee Chair*
Jean Clarke-Mitchell*
Robert Reilly*

Others present:

James F. Birge, President
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk
Richard Glejzer, Vice President, Academic Affairs
Gina Puc, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Enrollment Management

*Denotes remote participation

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 Academic Affairs Committee meeting of November 10, 2022, with Committee Chair Keator presiding was called to order at 9 a.m.

Nursing Program

President Birge opened the meeting with a presentation of the proposed Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. This presentation is being made to discuss the program and advance it to the Board of Trustees for their consideration. The timing allows the College to then advance the program to the Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) and to the Massachusetts Department of Education in advance for their work toward approval prior to the end of the calendar year. This in turn allows the College to begin actively recruiting to the program in January 2023.

President Birge reviewed the BSN program approval process which began with administration's submittal of the program to the All College Committee (ACC) starting the internal governance process. ACC then assigned the proposal to the Curriculum Committee where once approved on

October 19, 2022, it advanced to All College Committee. ACC considered the proposal and voted to approve and advance the proposal to the President for his consideration on November 10. The proposal is now before this Committee, and will advance to the Board of Trustees dependent upon the Committee's decision. Once reviewed by the Board of Trustees on November 17, the program proposal would advance to BORN and the DHE with anticipated reviews in late fall 2022/early winter 2023.

The initial plan for marketing and recruitment efforts was discussed. During the first six to nine months of the program launch, targeted marketing efforts will be done to build program awareness. Digital and social media will use geo-farming to target nursing specific programs, advertise in nursing specific industry publications, and to push a short promotional video. The College will host specialized nursing events, share highly specialized collateral pieces, and work with high school counselors to promote the program.

President Birge reviewed the budget including revenue, operational expenses, student enrollment, and net revenue using high and low projections. In year one, with low projections, the net revenue is anticipated to be \$63k, and with high projections, \$190k. Through year four, low projection for net revenue is \$55k, and high is \$678k.

Assumptions for this budget include:

- Auxiliary revenue from sources including room and board are not included
- Grant revenue, which is cash in hand at this point in time, is spread out over four years
- Scholarship money is not included

Curriculum for the first year of the program was presented, and courses in this year are considered as work for pre-nursing majors. This curriculum does not require the hiring of nursing faculty until year two of the program. The second, third, and fourth year curriculum was presented.

In development of the program, the College conducted comparisons with peers from the public and private sector with similar size and geography to MCLA. Program credits are in line with those peers, and the tuition and fees proposed are lower than four of the five peer institutions.

With regard to enrollment numbers in year one projected as a low of 25, President Birge acknowledge that number, and stated that based on research and development done for the program, the expectation is that enrollment for nursing will be between 70 and 110 students. Attrition is built into the projected numbers.

In response to a question regarding support for students in the program, more specifically for students who will struggle with first year biology and math courses, it was stated that College's existing support structure, which has undergone a recent realignment creating the Academic and Advising Support Center, will be fully available to all students in the nursing program. These resources include advising with staff and faculty, the math drop-in center with faculty and student peers, and the writing studio also with faculty and student peers.

Funding for the program was presented. The College currently has over \$3m in commitment specifically for this program with cash in hand of \$319k for operations, and \$105k for scholarships. Pledges have been made and include \$220k for scholarships and \$476k for operations. These are not included in the budget presented earlier and will be added once they become cash in hand. This will have a positive impact on the net revenue budgeted. Deferred gifts are currently a little over \$2m for nursing scholarships. This latter gift means that students will not realize certain costs associated with enrollment in the nursing program.

Current grants the College has secured predominately for equipment, some of which is combined with other College programs, stand at \$698k. Sources include MA Skills Capital received in FY 20 and 21, and MassHire Healthcare HUB.

College administration has been working with Chairman Richard Neal and his team for a FY23/24 Community Projects grant which would be used to cover salaries and equipment associated with the program. Responses have been positive on this grant and further word is awaited from Chairman Neal's office.

There are upcoming state grant/competitive funding opportunities that will be pursued. These include:

- \$1m: Executive Office of Health and Human Services (two-year grant with anticipated announcement December 30, 2022)
- \$500k - \$1.5m: MA Skills Capital
- \$30k: Mass Life Sciences
- Beginning FY26 – eligibility for training grants through the Commonwealth Corporation (typically \$10,000/graduate)

Funds exist in a state budget line item supporting in-demand fields, of which nursing is one. There is also \$2.5m in the state budget to fund pipeline nursing programs. President Birge has a meeting on November 14, 2022 with Senator-elect Paul Mark and will discuss access to those funds.

A local health services organization has committed \$220k to the program. This commitment is not included in the projected budget as presented because it has not been placed in writing, though the College anticipates it will start receiving funds this fiscal year. In addition to the one organization committed, administration has been approached by other healthcare services to partner with as we develop the program.

Trustees discussed student recruiting efforts. When considering the development of the nursing program early in the process, student inquiries at time of application included nearly 200 asking if the College had a nursing program. This has been a consistent trend over at least the past five years.

The Enrollment Division has been working with the Assistant Dean of Nursing on best practices to begin recruiting during this phase when BORN restricts language around the program before it has been reviewed and approved.

Work that has been done and is ready to begin as soon as authorized include:

- Communications with students through targeted databases
- Digital advertising targeting students on social media where there is indication of interest in nursing education
- Pre-purchase of names of individuals who have completed testing from licensing agencies and the College Board

Administration has been working with vocational LPN programs in MA to establish ways to use that education as a jump start with MCLA for completion of a BSN. Specifically, work has been underway with the Superintendent of the local vocational school, which has a post-secondary LPN program, to build an early college program around nursing. This type of program would be the first of its kind in MA.

With regard to potential 2+2 programming with the local community college, President Birge noted that there were early discussions but the concern is around that program's ability to provide enough students from their pipeline to feed our program in addition to the numerous other institutions they collaborate with. A 2+2 program will be considered as the program grows.

Trustees discussed the application process and how to address interest in the program that exceeds capacity of the program. There is a designated admission application reader in the division which follows best practice within the industry. Students who may not be accepted into the nursing program will be guided into other health sciences programs, or other programs that may be of interest such as psychology, sociology, and education, all of which appeal to students with a service orientation.

With regard to the admissions criteria, there will be differing and likely higher requirements for acceptance into the nursing program. Considerations may include a student's GPA or SAT score, for example.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, with no further discussion, following a roll call vote it was unanimously:

VOTED: to accept the recommendation of the President to advance the Bachelors of Science in Nursing Program to the College's Board of Trustees for consideration.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 9:21 a.m.