



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

October 5, 2022

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

Committee members in attendance:

Frederick Keator, Committee Chair
Brenda Burdick, Board Chair
Jean Clarke-Mitchell*

Absent:

Robert Reilly

Others present:

James F. Birge, President
Richard Glejzer, Vice President, Academic Affairs
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk
Dr. Victoria Papa
Dr. George Hamaoui
Dr. Mohammad Junaid
Dr. Michaela Petrovich
Dr. Margaret Clark
Dr. Lisa Arrastia

*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 of the Board of Trustees with Committee Chair Keator presiding was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Faculty Tenure Candidates

Faculty members who are seeking tenure this academic year were introduced and each provided an overview of their teaching, research, and background.

Dr. Victoria Papa is an Assistant Professor of English and Visual Culture in her 6th year of teaching at the College. Her research and teaching examine the intersections of creative expression and the survival of structural traumas in literature and visual culture from the modernist period to the present. Her work is especially interested in how writers and artists make use of aesthetic possibilities to enact life-affirming counternarratives of care and kinship.

Dr. Papa commented on several of the courses she currently teaches, and the creation of a new course on MASS MoCA Immersions. As well, she is currently working on a book.

With regard to collaborative efforts across departments, Dr. Papa highlighted some of her work with the FPA department around visual culture.

Dr. Michaela Petrovich is an Assistant Professor of Costume Design and Technology where she teaches courses in theatrical design and technologies as well as in theatre history and collaboration. She holds an MFA in Costume Design from the University of Washington and a BA in “Costume Design: History, Theory, Praxis” through the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies at the University of Redlands. Prior to entering academia, Dr. Petrovich worked in the costume shops at Los Angeles Opera and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Dr. Petrovich believes that an understanding and appreciation of the past positively informs and enhances creative work. As a designer, she is drawn to historical plays and classic work that allow the opportunity to reinvigorate old work for a new audience. Petrovich is particularly interested in dress history which often drives her design work and curriculum. She offered a genre-based theatre design topics course, “Costume Design in Fantasy” at MCLA which focused on effectively translating dress history into fantasy costume design and in-depth analysis of the genre through a theatrical design lens.

Dr. Petrovich is currently working on a production of *The Tempest* set to open in early November.

Dr. Mohamad Junaid is an Assistant Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, and is a co-director of the College’s Honors Program.

Dr. Junaid holds a strong belief in teaching as crucial to creating a just, sustainable, and pluralistic world. He seeks to inspire students to build a critical understanding of socio-political questions in local and global contexts, and to appreciate the interconnectedness of human and non-human worlds. He provides students with intellectual tools to nurture open-mindedness and to develop new modes of thinking.

In the classroom, Dr. Junaid uses a combination of social theory, ethnographic texts, and documentary films to illuminate anthropological approaches to cultural difference and questions of inequality and power, as well as to the discipline’s creative and imaginative potential.

Dr. Junaid is interested in the production of knowledge about “South Asia,” the centering of India in that knowledge, and the consequences for those who live in its political, social and geographical

margins. Informed in important ways by his lived experiences in the US, India and Kashmir, he engages questions like colonial continuities in postcolonial state formation, aporias of democracy and self-determination, history and memory, space and place, and visual logics of geopolitics.

Dr. Junaid's previous work examined the history of youth activism, political subjectivity, and practices of state violence in Kashmir. His current project is an ethnographic study of the visual economy of violence in South Asia. He analyzes ways in which the professional demands, material logistics, and ethics of photojournalism, as well as notions of 'photorealism,' relate to the visual framing of violence, how such framing mediates local and global understanding of political conflicts, and how images of violence are mobilized politically by governments, human rights groups, and activists in pursuit of inclusionary and exclusionary ends

Dr. Petrovich departed the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

Dr. Margaret Clark is an Assistant Professor in the Education Department, returning home to Berkshire County after studying education and teaching in schools in California, New York, and Connecticut.

Dr. Clark works closely with students who are either in their first semesters of the Education program, or in their final semester of student teaching, about to enter the profession. These courses include a first-year seminar that introduces students to the foundations and ethics of schooling in America, along with the initial field placement course when students are conducting their first observations in our partner public schools. She also leads the student teaching seminar, where students are teaching full time in their final semester of the program. Her focus is not simply to guide the students but provide them the space to question and critique the current state of education, and ask them important questions about their identities, experiences, and beliefs in learning and teaching.

Dr. Clark's research focuses on projects that nurture the healthy development of young children and provide support to the adults that care for and educate them. She examines how early childhood educators, and the care that they provide, is both visible and invisible in the current educational, political, and sociocultural environment. Her recent research focuses on how educators can engage in critical reflective practice and collaborative inquiry to support one another in what can be quite isolating work – both in homes and in school-based settings.

In addition to her research and teaching, Dr. Clark advises nonprofit organizations, philanthropic foundations, and public policy initiatives that promote education and care for families and children, the social and emotional development of young children, and literacy initiatives both in and outside of the classroom setting.

Dr. George Hamaoui is an Assistant Professor of Biology with courses centering on molecular biology, genetics, and environmental microbiology, he has developed a style of teaching that both engages students while requiring practice of skills that are needed to succeed in settings such as graduate/professional school or the workforce.

As a microbial ecologist, Dr. Hamaoui's research broadly centers on characterizing microbial communities and how these communities interact with each other in a variety of natural habitats. His graduate work consisted of understanding the effects of anthropogenic (human-caused) disturbance on soil microbial communities catalyzing the nitrogen (N) cycle.

At MCLA, Dr. Hamaoui has three major projects centering on different aspects of microbial ecology:

1. Characterization of the bacterial microbiome of the orange-striped sea anemone *Diadumene lineata* (an invasive sea anemone expanding along the coasts of Massachusetts; project done in conjunction with Dr. Anne Goodwin, MCLA Biol. Dept.)
2. Characterization of the feather degrading microbial communities found on the plumage of local populations of Dark-Eyed Junco songbirds (*Junco hyemalis*; project done in conjunction with Dr. Dan Shustack, MCLA ENVI Dept.)
3. Establishment of DNA sequencing capabilities at MCLA using the Oxford Nanopore MinIon sequencing platform

Dr. Hamaoui has served on several committees in the department and for the College including Curriculum Committee, Academic Policies Committee and P-CIRT (pandemic – critical incident response team).

Dr. Lisa Arrastia is an Associate Professor in the Education Department, who is from West Harlem in New York City. She has served as a high school teacher, school leader, equity and public purpose director, and school founder in New York, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Chicago. With a PhD in American studies, MEd in administration and supervision, MA in education, and BS in sociology and Black studies, her professional expertise is broad while remaining dedicated to disrupting notions of difference.

Dr. Arrastia's teaching and projects focus on generating empathic communities where young people and educators have the freedom to think, question, and innovate as they wrestle with the tangled complexities of self, other, and difference. She is committed to national and global efforts for social change.

Dr. Arrastia is the curator and donor of the Young People's Archive at East Side Freedom Library and winner of an American Association of University Women's award and year-long educational leadership fellowships with New Leaders and Big Picture Learning. She co-edited *Starting Up: Critical Lessons from Ten New Schools* (Teachers College Press) and contributed the essay "Love Pedagogy: Teaching to Disrupt" to *The Crisis of Connection* (NYU Press).

Dr. Arrastia's fields of concentration are audio-ethnography (digital oral history remix), an aesthetics-based education methodology she designed to examine difference at the intersection of race, social class, and place. Her scholarship investigates discourses of racial capitalism and pedagogies of culture that frame notions of individualism, whiteness, and masculinity.

Faculty departed the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

NECHE Self-Study

VP Glejzer noted that a NECHE briefing will be provided at the Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for October 13, 2022.

Student Support Services

VP Glejzer provided a brief update on Student Support Services noting that new furniture purchased with Title III funding is expected to arrive soon.

Faculty Retention

VP Glejzer commented on the number of faculty resignations that have occurred recently with four of the seven being international faculty members. Efforts have been made to correct the retention concerns for members of the College's international community including immediate support through the VISA process.

Committee members discussed the challenges international faculty members face, the effort it takes for them to qualify to become a professor, and the special qualities they bring to the College.

With regard to international travel, VP Glejzer stated that there are currently five student trips planned for the academic year. Funding is provided by a small endowment from the Foundation that directly helps students with the cost of travel. In addition to these short one- to two-week trips, some students have done semesters in other locations including Italy, Ireland and at sea.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.