

## **MassArt Board of Trustees Academic & Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

January 21, 2021 9:00am-10:30am

Meeting Minutes

**Trustees present:** Denise Korn (Chair), Sunand Bhattacharya (arrived at 9:47am), Elisa Hamilton, Ella von Huene, Jan Saragoni, Mary Grant (ex-officio) Lyssa Palu-ay (Ad Hoc)

**Trustees absent:** Daren Bascome

**Other Trustees present:** Pamela Parisi

**MassArt staff present:** Karen Abbott, K. John Ashworth-King, Robert Chambers, Jamie Costello, Eric Dusseault, James Mason, Maureen Keefe, Jarrett Min Davis, Kate Russell, Maryellen Schroeder, Courtney Stock, Lauren Wilshusen, Hannah Voit

**Call to Order** - Chair Denise Korn

Chair Denise Korn called the meeting to order at 9:04am. She welcomed the group, noting that this is a public meeting, and that all votes will be taken by roll call. She also thanked all those involved in making the tour of Final Reviews happen in December.

**Approval of the Minutes:** November 5, 2021 - Chair Korn

To consolidate procedural matters, roll call vote on minutes will also be considered attendance of the trustees.

On a motion duly made and seconded, by a vote of four in favor, none against, none abstaining:

**VOTED: to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2021 Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting.**

Roll call: Bascome, absent; Hamilton, yes; von Huene, yes; Korn, yes; Saragoni, yes;

Attendance of other trustees was also taken to inform the public who is on the call.

**Report of the Student Trustee** - Student Trustee Ella von Huene '23

Student Trustee von Huene began by describing the first week of classes as a period of adjustment for students. She then provided a report of fall semester activities and accomplishments for the SGA clubs. Highlights include over 4000 tons of steel melted by the IronCorps, Clay for Change's Souper Bowl event at the Haley House, trips to the aquarium, ice skating, SIM's trip to MassMoca, Fibers' trip to an alpaca farm, and Printmaking's trip to the Whitney Museum.

**Report from Academic Affairs** - Interim Provost James Mason

Interim Provost Mason began by acknowledging that this is usually the time when faculty present reports on their sabbaticals to the board. These presentations will be slated for another agenda at a later time in order to allow faculty more time to prepare.

He then provided a report on the faculty searches currently taking place. There are 5 academic departments actively searching for positions. As of today, the job description postings on our site have been viewed 5090 times and there are 184 applications.

Interim Provost Mason then described planning for Black History Month and invited trustees to the Colleges of the Fenway (COF) Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. He noted several upcoming events as well, including MassArt Day on March 24th and the Tyrone Maurice Adderley Lecture in April.

### **Discussion**

**General Update on Student Climate** - Vice President Of Student Affairs Maureen Keefe  
Vice President Of Student Affairs Maureen Keefe began by mentioning that the Colleges of the Fenway (COF) Presidents and COF Coordinating Council are collaborating on strategic priorities around mental health for both students and employees. Specifically, they are looking at how we can use our collective resources and how to leverage the unique strengths of individual institutions.

Students are moving back into the residence halls, and we are seeing a range of emotions about being back on campus. The student-run MAC Board (MassArt Activities Council) decided before the winter break that the first two weeks of programming for the spring semester would be virtual. We are also hearing from student leaders that there are students who feel safer being on campus than at home because of our testing and compliance protocols, and communication about cases.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) and the Counseling and Wellness Center are seeing an increase in the number of medical leave of absences. At the end of the last semester, 10 students had applied during the withdrawal period (a time when this typically happens), but they have already received 4 this semester.

We continue to learn and respond as to how to best engage with students in a hybrid environment. We have been attentive to when there is value added to be in-person, and which events are more successful when they are virtual. Some events have been more successful virtually than in-person, and have experienced increased participation and better communication of information. We have also noticed benefits such as fewer students missing appointments with the ARC now that they are virtual. Alternatively, there are some services that students prefer to have in-person, such as counseling and appointments with our Counseling and Wellness team.

The ARC has moved to the Student Development suite in Kennedy in order to colocate departments and positions that collaborate closely in support of student well being. This move also makes sense with the introduction of evening hours and the need to reenergize the Student Development space. They will also be reactivating the space outside the Student Life Gallery in the hopes of strengthening engagement and establishing community through space. We particularly noticed this need with our transfer students who have more complex advising and retention needs.

The trustees and the President expressed their sincere appreciation to the entire team for being so focused on student wellbeing.

### **Major Pathways -**

Chair Korn introduced Associate Vice President and Dean of Students Jamie Costello, who explained Majors Exploration is a time when students explore their choices for majors. She then introduced Eric Dusseault, Assistant Director of Academic Support Programs, who in turn introduced Professor Jarrett Min Davis, and Academic Advisor Courteney Stock. They reviewed a presentation with the trustees, describing the collaboration between ARC and faculty, the process of introducing students to departments (past and present), and the student experience of discovery and decision making. They included data as to why major exploration is important at MassArt, noting that from 2018-21 approximately 25% of the incoming class were undecided

upon admissions. They also described the work of the First Year Experience Committee whose goal is to synergize the efforts of various departments (ARC, Liberal Arts, Studio Foundation, JET, Career Services, Residence Life, and Student Leadership) working on this.

(Trustee Saragoni logged off at 9:30am)  
(Trustee Bhattacharya joined at 9:47am)

They then discussed the impact of the pandemic on this experience and what we have learned by converting to a virtual format. Benefits have included increased outreach, expansion of participation to include prospective students and alumni, and provide more insight into majors and academic departments. The online presence for Majors Exploration provides a streamlined highway for students to explore academic departments (such as their resources, culture, events, and career possibilities), in addition to declaring their major online. Departments have also hosted panels with alumni, inviting prospective students to join. As a whole, the updated process provides a connection for previously siloed populations (prospective students, alumni, first year students, and upperclassmen), built up collaboration and community between internal departments, and streamlined the Majors Exploration processes.

### **Career Internship Fair**

Trustee Korn introduced Vice President Maureen Keefe, who in turn introduced Director of Career Development Maryellen Schroeder. Director Schroeder reviewed a presentation about the transition of MassArt's Creative Career and Internship Fair from an in-person event to a virtual event. The goal of the fair is to provide students with an opportunity to interact with the Career Services office and explore summer internships, as well as other career and internship opportunities. The necessity of being in a virtual environment has opened opportunities to expand audience outreach and increased communication about how to prepare for the fair and what to expect when meeting with potential employers.

Vice President Keefe noted that, given the limited amount of time left in the meeting, the State University Internship Incentive program will be discussed on a later agenda.

As the meeting had run over time, Chair Korn asked to continue this agenda item at the next meeting.

### **New Business**

There was no new business presented to the committee.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Korn adjourned the meeting at 10:19am.