

MassArt Board of Trustees
Executive Committee
September 14, 2018, 11:15 am to 12:45 pm, Alumni Room

MINUTES

Trustee members present: Pamela Parisi (Chair), Elisa Hamilton, David Lee, Peter Nessen, Jan Saragoni, Linda Snyder. David Nelson (Ex Officio)

Other trustees present: Hazel Afamefuna

Trustees absent: none

Also participating: Maureen Keefe, Lyssa Palu-ay, Kymberly Pinder, and Susana Segat (Board Secretary)

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Reports – RESCHEDULED for 1/25/18 Meeting

Campus Health Update: a comprehensive overview of student well-being on campus, including yearly reports

Other Business

Adjournment

Call to Order

Chair Parisi called the meeting to order at 11:20am and reviewed the agendas.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the September 14, 2018 committee meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the October 12, 2018 special executive committee meeting on the audit.

Follow-up to BOT Roundtable on Arming

Chair Parisi mentioned that some informational documents had been sent to trustees the night before this meeting. With the understanding that not all trustees had had a chance to read them, she opened the floor for questions. Trustees discussed the email from a faculty member and the memo from the JEDI committee.

Chair Parisi stated that the goal of this meeting would be to determine what, if anything, to recommend the trustees at their November 27th meeting. Trustees discussed the most recent shooting in Chicago; whether it would be advantageous to have people who knew the community be the first on the scene and whether CPO's who wear a police uniform appear to be armed, even if they are not carrying a weapon. President Nelson said that MassArt is the only college not armed in the Colleges of the Fenway group and that Emerson College is not armed. He said that the Boston Police commissioner had recommended arming, the attorney general has not weighed in, and the Board of Higher Education has issued a mandate in either of their studies. President Nelson noted that liability goes both ways and that the available data is inconclusive and not well recorded. He urged trustees to vote their conscience, as this issue is not about liability. He pointed to some research by the FBI about the frequency and appropriateness of police force.

Trustees discussed how the campus is split: no matter what is approved, half of the community would feel less safe. Trustees asked for more input on what measures the college would take to unite the campus (how would the college allow all to feel safe, no matter the vote), including communications and awareness of the decision. VP Keefe added that a Campus Safety committee would be created, regardless of the outcome of the vote. Trustees discussed the importance of trainings, including implicit bias and community policing; the importance of hiring, and whether not being armed is a career disadvantage; and the possibility of sending ISO's to the academy for training also. Trustees agreed that they would feel most comfortable knowing all that would be in place as a condition of a vote.

President Nelson described the CPO staffing levels. He agreed that two major reasons for arming have been 1) the potential response time in case of a crisis and 2) that our responders would know our community members. He talked about the strengths and weaknesses of current training philosophies. MassArt has not had active shooter

training yet, and he expects that this type of training would be done in tandem with the Boston Police. Trustees discussed how best to frame the question they would forward to the full board, including how to specify the 'if/then' contingencies.

Trustees asked President Nelson for his advise. He provided the following comments:

- *The BHE, after the Virginia Tech campus shooting, requested we examine campus safety.*
- *Two of our campus unions, AFSCME and APA, made a request on behalf of police officers to the executive committee that the officers be armed.*
- *Three studies have since been commissioned for MassArt, and disappointingly all seemed to start with the premise that arming is of course safer. "Of course we're safer armed" is not an argument. It is an assumption.*
- *When first asked about this in Spring 2016, my response was that I'm open to being persuaded about what's best for the campus. I meant that. Some of have made assumptions about what my view "must be" (on both sides), but I have maintained to this day that I want to be persuaded by the best arguments.*
- *I sadly note that in our community, those who have opposed the idea of arming have too often relied on spurious information and misrepresentation of facts, along with unacceptable disrespect toward members of our community in public safety. That brought more heat than light. My recommendation is in no way moved by people who act in that way, and I expect better of our community.*
- *Unfortunately, arming with non-lethal weapons seems not to be a currently viable option because of MA law (can't carry a taser without a revolver). Perhaps we should work to get the law changed, but that's not the answer for our current decision.*
- *This conversation began after a campus shooting at Virginia Tech. We could name a long list of active shooter situations before and since, including another school shooting at Parkland last February.*
- *We could also name incidents of armed university police officers using deadly force. Samuel Dubose, who was unarmed, was killed by a University of Cincinnati police officer during a traffic stop in 2015. Scout Schultz, student president of an LGBT campus group, was killed by a Georgia Tech police officer on campus in 2017. Both incidents have been widely criticized as inappropriate use of lethal force.*
- *We are all too aware of the disproportionate shooting of people of color by police officers around the country. That is an uncomfortable fact, but it is a fact.*

So that's our current context. And I'm no longer "new" and I think I have some clearer insights into the decision at hand and for the future of the college. So for the trustees who are carefully asking, What should we do?

Here are what I find to be the best arguments for arming:

- *Arming campus police officers may decrease response time to armed intruder incident.*
- *Our campus police are more likely to be familiar with our facilities than outside officers from the Boston PD.*
- *Our campus police are more likely to be familiar with members of our community than outside officers.*
- *Our campus police officers may be targeted by an armed intruder, and they can better defend themselves if they are armed.*

Here are what I find to be the best arguments against arming:

- *Arming campus police officers increases our risk of inappropriate use of lethal force.*
- *We have an increasingly diverse community, in which part of our population - students, faculty, and staff (reported in campus surveys) - are significantly uncomfortable with armed police.*
- *We have abiding concerns about the quality of police training as it relates to bias. (It isn't good enough for police to self-police their bias.)*
- *We remain with questions about the quality of available firearms training, de-escalation training, and active shooter training.*

Additional points I believe are worth noting:

- *The request to arm comes out of a desire to protect ourselves from an active shooter, who data shows us is most likely to be a white male, while the people who most fear armed police are people of color. This seems yet another injustice.*
- *Arming officers makes some community members feel safer while making other community members anxious and nervous in significant ways.*
- *We have a laundry list of active shooter incident with multiple victims where armed public safety officers were on duty.*
- *We must weigh the tension and anxiety on campus and the increased risk of accidental/inappropriate shootings against the (relatively low though extremely unsettling) probability of an active shooter.*
- *We should consider the neighboring resources already at hand, including the Boston PD (and their tactical forces) who can be on our campus within five minutes.*

Weighing those realities within our present context, I conclude that it is not only unnecessary but unwise to change our current policy.

- *Nothing compels me to believe that our campus will be safer on a daily basis, in the routine course of events, with armed officers.*
- *In extenuating circumstances, the Boston Police Department is our neighbor.*
- *If we are to make the argument that an armed police force that knows the community is safer, then before arming we would have to insure our police force does in fact know our community.*
- *If campus police feel unsafe because they are uniformed, what if they weren't uniformed?*
- *If non-lethal weapons are a good alternative, perhaps we should in fact lobby to get the MA law changed.*
- *In the end, I am not convinced that changing our practice of many years makes us safer. That is the bar that needed to be cleared, and in my view we haven't done so.*
- *I recommend that the executive committee, with whom the initial union request was made, vote not to arm.*

Further, I recommend the following:

- *Complete previously approved list, maybe accelerating the pace.*
- *Start the committee Maureen has proposed to cultivate cultural improvements and, then*
- *Further recommendations as appropriate*
- *Immediately scan proposals from CSWG to ensure the priorities are solid, including Kennedy concerns, continue to improve 'front door' and settle in active shooter training process for the campus.*

Trustees discussed the importance of trainings. They agreed that the ultimate goal is to have a safe campus, which means committing to the resources and personnel necessary: the vote would be based on how to make the campus safe, which is not an issue limited to arming. President Nelson said he would provide trustees with an "if/then" proposal for arming and not-arming. He noted that our strategies for hiring would also have to be re-conceived.

Asking for an informal sense of the room, Chair Parisi noted that there were a couple of members leaning toward arming, as long as there was enhanced training; one member leaning away from arming, on the theory that we need to do everything else first; and a couple of members being undecided, one toward and one away from arming.

Trustees discussed whether it would be possible to provide 'enhanced training'. Provost Pinder noted that most of the conversation seemed to be a reaction to an active shooter situation, making a highly unlikely incident drive the discussion. President Nelson committed to creating a campus safety committee, and noted that no trustee motion was needed to implement this action. He added that he would: review the vote from last spring at the next executive committee meeting, and annually thereafter; implement active shooter basic training; draft out "if/then" scenarios; and provide implicit bias training for trustees so they may better know what we are teaching our employees. Trustees discussed whether to schedule another meeting before the next executive committee meeting and decided against it.

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

President Nelson thanked Strategic Planning Committee co-vice chair Marc Holland for being present at this meeting. He distributed a one-page summary of the four strategic planning initiatives and samples of what the first year would look like. He confirmed that the plan was fully fundable and that the foundation for ensuring accountability was being put in place. Trustees discussed the good quality of the plan and thanked all who participated in its creation.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the MassArt Strategic Plan 2018-2023 and to move it forward to the full board for its approval at their next regular meeting.

Reports : Campus Health Update – a comprehensive overview of student well-being on campus, including yearly reports

Rescheduled for the January 25, 2018 meeting.

Other business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

On a motion duly made and seconded at 1:25pm, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn.

Documents provided:

Notice of meeting; agenda; revised agenda; minutes 10/12/18, 10/2/18 and 9/14/18; Chief Farley memo on arming; AICAD armed and unarmed schools; community colleges armed and unarmed; feedback on arming from Professor Shales; JEDI committee memo on arming; survey summary on arming; MassArt strategic plan 2018 with appendices;