

# MASSART

MassArt Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2024, 4-6pm

*Huntington Room*

**Trustees in attendance:** Trustees Saragoni, Giraldo, Korn, Young, Sherman, Bump, Bhattacharya and Nessen

**Trustees absent:** Chair Keane and Vice Chair Daren Bascome

## 1. Call to order

Trustee Saragoni called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm, chairing the meeting while Chair Keane and Vice Chair Bascome are away on travel.

## 2. Action Item: Approval of the minutes: June 11, 2024 & June 20, 2024

On a motion by Trustee Nessen and second by Trustee Sherman, it was then unanimously **VOTED: to approve the minutes from the June 11 and June 20, 2024 board meetings.**

## 3. Report of the President

President Grant shared that the Board of Higher Education had approved MassArt's Strategic Partnership Plan earlier the same day. It now goes before the Commonwealth's Education Secretary for final approval. She also shared that two of this year's AIGA Boston fellows are MassArt alums: Board Vice Chair Daren Bascome and Tammy Dayton.

President Grant covered campus improvements like refreshed student spaces; events such as the gathering with current and former trustees and foundation directors, The Art of Climate Action Panel with the Commonwealth's Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer, bowl making to support Haley House's Souper Bowl, Portfolio Day, and Constitution Day; and the new SGA Executive Board. *The Boston Globe* covered The Venerable Tenzin Yignyen's seventeenth sand mandala at MassArt.

Amanda Karr, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, and Brendan O'Bryan, Director of Government and Corporate relations gave an overview of MassArt's

presence at the Climate Beacon conference the week prior. It featured a selection of sustainability-focused works by four students and four alumni.

This is a part of a concerted effort of having MassArt show up and demonstrating the College's impact. In that vein, President Grant represented the College on the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce City to City trip to Toronto and tomorrow at the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod's Creative Exchange Conference.

#### **4. Report of the Chair**

Trustee Saragoni summarized this past year's Presidential Evaluation process, and the following thoughts on behalf of Chair Keane:

*"I am in awe of the commitment and energy Dr. Mary Grant brings to her job as President at MassArt. We are very lucky to be working with her during this critical time in the history of the college. Mary's creativity and skill is taking MassArt to a higher position within the community of higher educational institutions. She is a fierce advocate for MassArt and she will enable the college to receive the recognition we know it deserves. I am so proud to be working with her."*

On a motion by Trustee Korn, and a second by Trustee Saragoni, it was then unanimously **VOTED: to commend President Grant on her leadership.** The Board then gave President Grant a standing ovation.

##### **a. Report of the Student Trustee**

Student Trustee Jeffrey Young shared that the year was off to a fantastic start with new student orientation, with a great job by primers, and events such as the Involvement Fair. He also discussed working with Sodexo on communicating about changes for the new year and his desire to work on accessibility on campus.

#### **5. Reports of the Standing Committees**

##### **a. Administration & Finance Committee**

Trustee Nessen shared that Chief Human Resource Officer Carleen Thompson briefed the A&F Committee at its September 27 meeting on faculty hires, the latest faculty and staff orientation program, summer events and upcoming fall professional development and benefit events. A&F VP and CFO Robert Perry gave a summary of the FY24 Fiscal Operations and Budget and FY25 Fiscal Update.

**i. VOTE: To accept the FY24 Audit based on the review by the A&F Committee**

Trustee Nessen shared that at the Committee's Oct. 16 meeting, the A&F Committee voted favorably on the Audit for referral to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Nessen reminded the Board that the Foundation numbers are included in this audit although the Foundation operates separately from the college. The Foundation had no findings also achieving an unmodified audit.

David Dilulis took the Board through the required communications and shared that there were no material deficiencies and that Withum issued an unmodified opinion on the financial statements. The draft audit was completed by the statutory deadline and there were no findings; it achieved the highest rating an auditor can attest to.

President Grant acknowledged David's long service to the Commonwealth as an auditor and thanked Gina Spaziani for her excellent work on the audit and for her years of service to the Commonwealth and for her many contributions to MassArt. Gina will be retiring later in the fall and this is her last official committee meeting. Trustee Nessen also highlighted the work of the A&F team through the course of the Audit.

On a motion by Trustee Bump, and a second by Trustee Giraldo, it was then unanimously **VOTED: to accept the FY24 Audit based on the review by the A&F Committee.**

**b. Advancement Committee**

Trustee Saragoni shared that the Advancement Committee acknowledged the outstanding work of Amanda Karr and Emily Foster Day, who have put in an extraordinary amount of work this summer. They both discussed how their areas are approaching the Strategic Partnership Plan. Amanda also provided the Committee with Marketing and Communications updates, such as the new brand roll out, new signage, and the launch of internal communications platform MassArt Connect.

**c. Executive Committee**

Trustee Saragoni shared that the Executive Committee received updates on the NECHE accreditation process and policy on official statements as well as briefings from Will Sabio and Lauren Wilshushen - both of whom are present and will be presenting to the full Board later in this meeting.

- i. **VOTE: To approve the new Massachusetts State Universities Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Title IX Plan (EO Plan), which replaces the 2018 (amended 2020) Massachusetts State Universities Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Affirmative Action Plan**

Will Sabio, Executive Director for Equal Opportunity and Title IX Coordinator, presented an overview of the new elements of the plan and his efforts to educate the campus about the new Plan and awareness of consent, which includes working with RA's on a poster campaign and how to work with their residents. He also discussed the various ways community members can report issues to him, reporting to his office versus to Public Safety, and how increased reporting can demonstrate the community's improved understanding of the process.

On a motion by Trustee Nessen and a second by Trustee Giraldo, it was then unanimously **VOTED: to approve the new Massachusetts State Universities Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Title IX Plan (EO Plan), which replaces the 2018 (amended 2020) Massachusetts State Universities Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Affirmative Action Plan.**

- ii. **Enrollment Briefing**

President Grant shared that the Board of Higher Education released a report on student success at its meeting today. MassArt (at 89%) and Mass Maritime Academy have the highest retention rates. MassArt's graduation rate has climbed to 69% from 66%. She stressed the importance of not only recruiting students, but supporting them through to Commencement. There was a brief discussion about MassArt's student success interventions, such as this Academic Year's launch of a student coaching program.

Lauren Wilshusen, Dean of Admissions and Enrollment Management, gave the Board an overview of the first-year class. She also presented the events, redesigned admissions materials, and pathways underpinning the Fall 2025 recruitment strategy. There were brief conversations about transfer students coming to MassArt from UMass Dartmouth, pathways to MassArt and an increase in community college enrollment, the consistency of MassArt's BIPOC numbers while they have declined at other institutions, international students and recruitment, and the impact of MassArt's increased entrepreneurship offerings on admissions.

#### **d. Academic & Student Affairs Committee**

Trustee Giraldo shared that Provost Molife informed the Committee that MassArt has welcomed 28 new part-time faculty and 23 new full-time faculty, as well as Mariah Doren, new Dean of Graduate Education and PCE. Dean of Students Jamie Costello also gave an introduction to new staff in Student Development and shared highlights from Student Orientation and briefed the Committee on the Right to Free Speech and Assembly Policy, which was compiled from existing policies, in cooperation with students and staff. JET Dean Lyssa Palu-ay shared that this year's Pathways programs included 30 Artward Bound students, and 137 students in the Academic Compass Program. Campus wide programs this fall have included the Engaging Across Differences series and visiting mandala artist the Venerable Tenzin Yiggyen.

##### **i. Presentation: Clery Report**

Public Safety Chief Deborah Crafts summarized the Clery Report. Crime statistics continue to be low, with no significant changes since last year.

#### **6. Presentation: Community Build**

Architecture Graduate Program Director and Professor Paul Hajian gave an overview of the Community Build Program, which began 15 years ago. It comes from the belief that knowing how to make work that benefits the community is equally important as knowing what to make and how to make it. Each project is different; he showed the construction of a performance center at Haley Pilot School in Roslindale and at Cabot Park in Newton.

Ava Wessels, a MArch Graduate Student participating in the Community Build Program, presented the most recent project, securing e-bike parking on campus. She took the Board through the site profile, user group selection, the design process, gathering input from the Longwood Collective e-bike repair technicians, and the various design elements.

There was a conversation about the design of the siding as both private, but with view to the outside and the potential addition of chargers. Paul and Ava also discussed the Community Build project solicitation, selection, funding, permitting, and the commitment of the students to the projects.

## **7. New Business**

There was no new business.

## **8. Adjournment**

Trustee Saragoni reminded trustees of the Alumni Biennial opening the following day, from 6-8pm. This year it is entitled "Looking Backward. Looking Forward" and features the work of over 50 alumni.

Trustee Saragoni adjourned the meeting at 6:17 pm.

### *Meeting Materials:*

- *June 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes*
- *June 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes*
- *President Evaluation Packet*
- *Audit*
- *MA State Universities Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Title IX Plan*
- *Summary of Changes: MA State Universities Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Title IX Plan*
- *Clery Report Memo*
- *Clery Report*
- *Meeting slide presentation*