

## Weyerhaeuser Boardroom

November 29, 2022. 12:00 PM CST



MACALESTER COLLEGE  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT

### Legislative Body Meeting Minutes

---

[Land Acknowledgment](#) (We are on Indigenous land) ~ *Austin* ~ 2 minutes

#### **Introductions** ~ *Bobbie*

Let's all go around and say our names, positions, and pronouns

\*Introductions from the LB\*

#### **Senior Leadership Questions/Discussion** ~ *MCSG Members* ~ 50 minutes

Bobbie

- Happy we get to have this conversation
- Not often the case that MCSG gets the opportunity to speak to the President and DOS
- We're so grateful
- We'd love to hear an intro from both of you
- First question: what is your role as President and how does this fit into short term and long term goals for the college?

President Rivera

- Because there are students here from all different years, some of what I'm going to say is repetitive
- This is my third year at Mac, in some ways it feels like my first because we were not operating in a customary way
- We were doing things in a strange way which meant SLT was not interacting with students as much
- This year we've been doing things in a customary way
- First year we've had a full house for opening convocation

- I'm still learning is the point...Macalester and the role of President
- Before here, I was at Case Western in Ohio and two others before that
- I'm originally from NYC, raised in Spanish speaking home
- I totally believe in higher education as lifechanging
- I enjoy my job because I'm making that opportunity available to other people
- Education has been really important for my family
- When I'm faced with challenges at the college, I think of some of my own experience in college and getting the support
- The role of president at a small liberal arts college is different than a larger university
- Role of president is chief executive officer of the campus
- I'm responsible for all functions of the college but the scale is small enough that I can be at events (sporting events, poetry slams)
- I generally enjoy those activities more than sitting in meetings
- Me and my partner have adopted the Mac community
- We arrived 4 days after George Floyd's murder
- It was the part of the pandemic where we didn't know how the virus was transmitted and there was no vaccine
- We could only interact with people through zoom
- Campus feels different now than then
- Being able to be in person for meeting is a positive sign of progress
- Job of the president is to provide leadership for students, faculty/staff/employees, to raise visibility and reputation of Mac around the world (because it affects the value of the degree you get here), foster connections, etc
- I manage the SLT including Dr. Coquemont who has service lines below them
- Board of Trustees is my boss
- BOT is in charge of stewardship and governance - making sure rules are being followed
- My job is day-to-day operation
- I'll stop there

Austin

- Reminding everyone to respect speaking order and respectful of the time

Joel

- This is a question for all of SLT, Dr. Rivera you touched on community events but what steps are you taking to increase transparency between students and SLT?

President Rivera

- I feel like virtually everything we do involve engagement with constituencies including students
- I and SLT engage in formal ways with student government and informal ways all the time
- Bobbie serves on President Advisory Council that is a closed space where there's a free exchange of ideas and concerns between FAC, AAC, etc
- Very inclusive way we ran the strategic planning process - inviting all students at every step of the process to give input on things to change etc
- If you have specific questions... another example would be the board mixer... let me know

Dr. Coquemont

- One of the great things President Rivera has done has been hiring me
- It's kind of like surgery where there's a doctor but the nurse does the daily care
- I'm kinda like the nurse on the daily care but there's always communication with my colleagues and the president
- Trying to be more student focused and student centered

Austin

- Three minutes for follow up

Joel

- I also want to ask specifically about the SLT meeting following the sit-in last year and if that's going to continue?

Dr. Coquemont

- Had a meeting today on how to get formal and informal feedback
- Right now there's a lot of formal committees and that's great because it allows for a sustained relationship but you have to apply
- One of the things we talked with Bobbie was talking about are the methods of the ways of interacting still working
- Maybe we need a mixed bag of formal and informal
- Executive Board meets 12-1 on Monday and SLT ends meeting at 12
  - Maybe having lunches would be good
- Making sure there's a variety of ways and times as things come up in the semester

Emma

- What do you see as student's role in process of shared governance and your relationship with MCSG now and in the future?

President Rivera

- One of the tricky things is there's a difference between sharing responsibility and transparency

- I may have info that may lead me to make a different decision because something may be more complicated than what meets the eye
- An example is the strategic planning process website has every draft and idea with suggestion boxes
  - As opposed to curating information in a way that is obscure
- My responsibility is to be honest, engage, and listen
- Early in the pandemic, there were strong opinions on whether we should have a vaccine requirement
  - People were lobbying me for different opinions → student groups wanted to kick people out if they didn't get a vaccine
- In the end I had to make a decision
- Shared governance is about the opportunity to make input but there are some things where I just have to make the decision

Emmanuel

- Thank you for being here, Dr. Rivera and Dr. Coquemont
- Specifically in terms of transparency we've touched on the sit-in but I want to know about the issues concerning international students specifically study away, financial aid, and housing

President Rivera

- SLT has been looking at ways to address student concerns generally and some of the concerns with international students
- Those concerns have overlapped a little with the strategic planning process
- I don't want to conflate things that shouldn't be conflated
- The coffee break that we had last November that turned into a sit-in addressed some of what SLT was looking at
- Some issues deal with housing, some with belonging
- Tomorrow I will be meeting with Bobbie and some international students about these issues
- Dr. Coquemont has been working on international students and the whole student body with food insecurity and a variety of other questions that cause challenges for the international students as well as the whole student body

Dr. Coquemont

- A full time employee was added to ISP last year
- Some of this because of the pandemic has been paused
- But we're bringing back ISP friends program to make it safer and more expansive
- Also benchmarking with other institutions
- As well as thinking about problems that other institutions are handling
  - How does the way they creatively thought about serve us?

- We have alumni and faculty and staff who have been international students to make connections between current international students and those who have been in that situation
- How do we continue to preserve the great things and keep things in mind

President Rivera

- We've also hired more mental health counseling
- Generally speaking adding personnel to tend to wellbeing of students

Dr. Coquemont

- Most students getting health insurance also need information and education on how to navigate US systems of healthcare
- We have increased time for the position to do all the things in the background and some counseling
- Also renegotiating relationship with them saying we have international students or BIPOC or the other identities that diversify our student body
- We know that we can't just have a one of everyone → avoiding tokenizing
- If someone has someone they want to use not on health insurance, we work with them to make it happen
- This has directly impacted folks with marginalized identities

Austin

- Study away, financial aid, and housing
- What is college doing particularly?

President Rivera

- The provost is working on a group that will work on making study away options more available to international students
- For financial aid, there have been conversations around loan eligibility
- It's very complicated, let me just say
- I have concerns that it's not completely transparent how financial aid packages get put together
- Domestic vs international students face different financial aid problems
- For example international students cannot get federal loans
- If you're a domestic student, you're given a loan, work study, etc
- International students do not have federally subsidized loans available to them so the college uses their money to give international students loans
- There's then a gap between state of need for the student and what's in their pocket
- We then have an equity gap between domestic and international students
- Question of financial aid is really complicated and we're trying to think of different ways to help that
- Winter housing specifically?

Bobbie

- I think that come from year round housing

Dr. Coquemont

- We recognize who is able to study away and who isn't
- Another part of our roles is fundraising to preserve the privacy of those conversations
- Provost and I were just meeting about scholarships for international students to study away
- We do see this and we care and we're working on it
- For winter housing, have I told this group what we're doing this winter?

Bobbie

- I think we wondering about the long term plan?

President Rivera

- Strategic planning addresses how we can use the campus for the whole year (summer, etc)
- Not looking at this in a reactive way but a more global way → do we want to operate as a year round campus?
  - We would need more staffing
  - We could move to this model but would require changes

Dr. Coquemont

- It's not just we're waiting
- Kyle Flowers and I have collected information from parent institutions (where the money comes from, etc)
- Looking at model of what it could look like and what things would need to change
- Sometimes you don't see an immediate impact but it's not because we don't see the work

President Rivera

- If we choose to take something that we usually pay for 9 months and make it 12 months we'd have to raise tuition, cut back on something, or use philanthropy
- Might make people happy to live in the summer but not to raise tuition
- When we struggle to make a decision, trying to determine all the consequences

Dr. Coquemont

- Is money better equipped for winter housing or study away?
- We can't have 15 first priorities

Tristan

- I hope that you were both able to read the macweekly article on all-gender housing?
- How do you plan to address this short term and long term?

Dr. Coquemont

- We've been working with Alina Wong to have next fall reverse the model where people can request gender specific housing
- President Rivera doesn't get to toot her own horn
- She is such a passionate advocate for this
- That's the tone of the SLT
- We want to recognize and value student's identities
- I want you to know that we have a leader that's driving us in all these ways
- I'd love to talk one on one
- We're working primarily with departments but close to wanting student feedback

Tristan

- I'd love to touch base off line
- Is there any active plan that you'd like to share about bathrooms?

Dr. Coquemont

- I got a petition on needing more all-gender bathrooms
- I'm curious if there are more things like that that can be done right now
- Also thinking about RA's who would need gender specific housing
- Not a lot of places are doing it yet so we're trying to work with current data

President Rivera

- Is it clear by what we're saying with flipping the model?
- Exception would be someone who needs all-gender housing

Ellen

- I'm an RA myself and I know that my compensation has increased
- PB, OLs, MCSG, RA's what are the next steps for student compensation?

Dr. Coquemont

- One of the things going into this conversation is prioritization
- Another thing we've been looking at is what do the roles encompass
- Trying to move some of RA responsibilities to professional staff
- Patricia Langer and I have been working on that
- Do we want to look at one position first or other ones all together?
- There's a lot of other positions besides the ones that come to the forefront
- MCSG is representatives and is not traditional that we all get paid: this is unpopular
- If you're going to meet during lunch, you should have lunch
- We're hoping to prepare you for what comes after college
- There's sometimes there's things you do work for that you don't get paid
- Balancing voluntary leadership vs paid leadership

Academic life ~ 20 minutes Dr. Rivera - Any questions for students? ~ 5 minutes

Willow

- Process for hiring tenured track professors? Equity in this process?

President Rivera

- I don't have the budget in my head right now
- Our faculty governance model empowers elected faculty serving on a committee to review proposals to get an allocation for a faculty member
  - Based on data
- Departments sometimes need allocations
- Committee of faculty looks at demand of classes, budgets, requests for allocations, and comes up with list of how many tenured track professors the college needs and in what departments
- Searches are conducted and people are hired
- If you're interested in this, go to the floor where the provost and president's office are and you'll see posters on the wall with tenured track faculty classes
- The posters tell you a story about what the faculty looks like at Mac and how it's changing
- Principles of equity and inclusion have been emphasized
- Domestic faculty of color and international faculty has been high
- Going to change the face of professors at Mac
- Non-tenured track professors are different
  - Hiring people to fill gaps
  - Also some long-term non-tenured track
- You had a representative in the room, Joel do you feel like you could share some of this info with MCSG?

Joel

- EPAG asked us to step out

President Rivera

- If you would like, I can ask the Provost to come talk to MCSG about hiring process
- What do you need from SLT that you feel like you're not getting?

Dr. Coquemont

- I need you in my life Austin to tell me when to stop talking all the time
- President Rivera is such a fun, caring human
- SLT laughs madly or is dealing with something so complex
- You don't get to see this here, but President Rivera has a great sense of humor
- This feels like an inquisition
- I want you to know we're funny, and I'm corny I know

Cooper



- I would like more opportunities for MCSG and the wider student body to talk to you
- The general student body
- More opportunities to talk to you and get to know you as actual people

Emma

- I would just add
- After last year's sit-in there had been promises to continue to conversations
- Continuing those types of conversations and having those spaces that would avoid bigger things

President Rivera

- If you want us to try again with coffee and bagels we can, but it wasn't clear to me that would work
- My personal experience is smaller groups works better
- I'm totally open if students say they want it

Mariah

- Most important thing to make it informal
- Obviously zoom made it more formal
- Maybe weekly coffee and donuts so that it'll be a smaller group

Joel

- Some kind of aggregating from the various work groups would be helpful
- Students don't understand what these bodies are and what they do
- I know there's work going on with MacDaily but hearing these updates would be helpful

Austin

- Vote to extend the meeting five minutes
- 18 yes
- 2 no
- No abstentions

President Rivera

- My main question is what do you know that we should hear and what do we need to address?
- As long as my schedule works, I'm happy to come
- Any forum that involves students and SLT is more successful when in partnership with students instead of top down
- We sometimes get it wrong
- If MCSG wants to work with me to host coffee breaks or lunches with students we can easily do that
- Things that we come up with together are going to be better than what I come up with unilaterally

*Question List:* [☰ SL Question List/Sign-Up](#)

**Committee Updates** ~ *Committee Members* ~ 2 minutes

**Cabinet Updates** ~ *Cabinet Members* ~ 2 minutes

**Announcements** ~ 4 minutes

- Kagin Help- Mariah
  - [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScMKKRwD-6sxZnh6UyWcRcSTK0kyQ98u2MyZtHSVGwJvTDcTA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScMKKRwD-6sxZnh6UyWcRcSTK0kyQ98u2MyZtHSVGwJvTDcTA/viewform?usp=sf_link)
  - Extra hands needed
  - Google form on the agenda
  - We need setting up, coat check, taking down help

Bobbie

- We're going to take a picture
- It's also my takeover day so we're going to take a selfie