

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 26-57

BOARD DATE: May 19, 2026

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the April 23, 2026 recommendation of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Board of Trustees to appoint **Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson** as President of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Such appointment shall be effective on or about July 1, 2026, and is approved subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms and Conditions of Appointment, and subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 5/19/2026.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

Background

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) is a coordinating board, with some governing authority, over the public higher education system. Among the BHE's governing functions are its statutory responsibilities to approve the appointment and removal of, and set the compensation for, the president of each state university and community college within the public higher education system. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(q) and 21.

In furtherance of these legislative requirements, and consistent with the BHE's responsibility to establish overall goals in order to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education in the Commonwealth, to establish coordination between and among institutions, and to resolve conflicts of policies or operations, the BHE issued guidelines and procedures for the search, selection, appointment and removal of the chief executive officers at state universities and community colleges. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(c) and (u). [BHE Presidential Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal Guidelines \(2013\)](#). The BHE Presidential Guidelines establish minimum procedural expectations for Board of Trustees conducting presidential searches, delegate to the Commissioner the authority to act on behalf of the BHE as specified therein, and include several touchpoints between local Board of Trustee Chairs and the Commissioner to ensure that the Presidential search process is being conducted consistent with the BHE and the Commissioner's expectations.

The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) Board of Trustees initiated the search process for the next President of MCLA in September of 2025 and conducted the search with the assistance of search consultants at WittKieffer. As required under state law and the BHE's implementing guidelines, the Commissioner appointed a voting member to the search committee, Nicole Johnson, who serves as the Department of Higher Education's Director of Board and Community Relations. Director Johnson participated in the development of the position profile, the selection and interviews of semi-finalist candidates, and the search committee deliberations and decisions to recommend final candidates for public interviews. (The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Presidential Position Profile may be accessed through the following link: [position posting, MCLA webpage](#))

The search committee selected and advanced four finalists to the MCLA Board of Trustees for on-campus interviews and consideration. The four candidates participated in MCLA Board of Trustee interviews and campus visits during the weeks of April 6th and April 13th. During that time, the BHE was extended an opportunity to interview all four

candidates, as required by the BHE Presidential Guidelines. The Commissioner and BHE Member Dr. Lisa Battaglini engaged in this procedural touchpoint and interviewed all four candidates on behalf of the BHE.

On April 23, 2026, the MCLA Board of Trustees unanimously voted to recommend Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson to the BHE for approval and appointment, subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment. M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

The Commissioner has received and reviewed the MCLA Board of Trustee's recommendation, along with all supporting materials, and has determined that the submittal is complete and the search was conducted in alignment with the BHE Presidential Guidelines. Accordingly, the Commissioner is forwarding the recommendation to the BHE for consideration and formal action.

Attachments to BHE 26-57:

57a_ Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson Presidential Search Cover Letter

57b_ Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson Resume (CV)

57c_ Summary of Search Process

57d_ Terms of Appointment Letter_ Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson

57e_ Letter from MCLA Chair Lord to Commissioner Ortega