

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 2, 2007

PRESENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Chari; Professor Mark Huibregtse, Vice Chair; Mary Lou Bates, Michael Casey, Deb Hall, Ann Henderson, Pat Oles, Jeff Segrave, Justin Sipher, Sue Van Hook, Michael West; Mehmet Odekon, Barbara McDonough; Mary Cogan, Sue Bender; Jonathan Brestoff; Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Susan Kress, Muriel Poston, Adam Cupples.

1. Review of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of October 12, 2007 were approved with one minor correction. Specifically, in item two (Retiree Health Care), the sixth bullet in the second set of bulleted items, the final paragraph should read as follows: "It was noted that savings from this adjustment would go into the College's budget and would be available to **support other priorities including academic programs, new initiatives, etc.**"

2. Report from Board of Trustees Meetings

President Glotzbach reported on the following items from the Board of Trustees meetings held on campus October 25-26, 2007:

- The Board unanimously voted to name John J. P. Howley '80 to be chair-elect of the Board of Trustees. Sue Thomas, current board chair, will complete her sixth year as chair in May and, pursuant to College by-laws, must step down at that time. President Glotzbach expressed his enthusiasm for Mr. Howley's election. Mr. Howley will be the first male Skidmore graduate to chair the Board of Trustees.
- The Board voted to proceed with construction of the Zankel Music Building and to continue working aggressively to complete funding for the building (currently estimated at \$32.5 million) and the endowment for operations and programming (currently estimated at \$12 million).
- The Board's Special Programs Committee received and discussed the report from the Special Programs Study Group.
- The Academic Affairs Committee reviewed the current draft of college policies being considered as part of the revision to the *Faculty Handbook* Part Six.
- The Board heard two interesting presentations. The first focused on the *Molecules That Matter* exhibit at the Tang as a way of considering what is required to mount an exhibition of this nature. The Board also heard a presentation from Professor Grace Burton on the first-year reading selection, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*.

- The Audit Committee received an unqualified report from the College's external auditors, meaning that there were no irregularities or follow-up work required. This report included, at the College's request, a special look at our financial aid policies to ensure that the College is complying with all applicable regulations, as well as a review of the College's handling of federal financial aid funds. In accepting the unqualified report from the external auditors, the Audit Committee expressed praise for the work of Vice President Mike West and his staff. Vice President West, in turn, complimented the excellent work of Director of Financial Aid, Bob Shorb, and his staff.
- The Board welcomed two new members to its ranks: Terry Fulmer, Dean and Erline Perkins McGriff Professor, NYU School of Nursing; and Julie Traylor, a human rights activist and honorary Skidmore degree recipient.
- The Board approved an early-release budget item authorizing renovations for Wilmarth Hall.

3. Optimization Implementation

Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates introduced the discussion of Optimization Implementation. She reminded IPPC members that the College had previously agreed to establish a Net Fiscal Enrollment (NFE) of 2,280. She explained that NFE represents the average of the number of students who are on campus during the first and second semester. NFE does not represent the head count on campus at any time.

She then invited Ann Henderson, Registrar, to provide further information. Ms. Henderson reviewed a spreadsheet that was created help the College's "Numbers Group" compute the target enrollment each year. There are many factors that go into this computation, including the following:

- The current enrollment of each class.
- The three-year weighted average of retention by class. This figure has increased in each of the past three years.
- The number of transfer students targeted each year. Transfer students, although not a specific target for recruitment, do help the college to focus on certain priorities (e.g., increasing the number of science majors). The number of students wishing to transfer to Skidmore has also increased in recent years as the College has become more attractive.
- The number of students who are away each year. This number includes study abroad (a number which the College, in furtherance of Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*, hopes to

continue to increase); and students who are away on medical or personal leave (approximately 50 students per year for the past several years).

- The “summer melt” factor. This term represents the number of students who indicate that they will attend Skidmore but who later choose not to come. This number has fluctuated between 43 and 69 in recent years. The summer melt number is very difficult to predict because it depends on factors outside of Skidmore’s control, such as whether competitor schools go to their waitlists.

The spreadsheet allows the Numbers Group to make various assumptions and see how those assumptions would affect NFE over the next several years. The essential question is how quickly the College should attempt to reach an NFE of 2,280. Unpredictability in our admissions patterns can undermine relationships with high school guidance offices that are critical to the success of the Admissions Office; significant fluctuations in student population also make it difficult for the College to budget each year. It also was noted that the College’s diversity goals, the desire to have more students live on campus, and the desire to have more students study abroad all represent claims on the College’s financial resources.

One IPPC member asked if the College had a housing strategy to deal with the larger number of students on campus. Dean Pat Oles noted that the opening of Northwoods Apartments had an immediate (and even greater than expected) impact on how many students wanted to remain on campus. It is possible that in designing the Scribner Village replacement, the College will add 100 to 200 new beds— *not* to add more students to the entering class, but to house greater numbers of returning students.

Finally, IPPC discussed the ways in which financial aid policies affect the admissions picture. Many families are choosing to file a form known as the “E-FAP” (Early Financial Aid Planning form) to get a sense of what a financial aid package might look like. It was also noted that many colleges nationally are increasing their reliance on merit aid, which has a very negative effect on dollars available for need-based aid. President Glotzbach stated that Skidmore has only a very small number of merit-based scholarships; the College remains committed to its focus on need-based financial aid.

One faculty member noted that while moving to a lower NFE creates one type of pressure on the College’s budget, enrollment beyond the College’s targeted class sizes has a negative effect on class size and faculty resources.

Based on all of these factors, the Numbers Group currently recommends that the Admissions Office recruit an entering class of 620 students (+/- 15) for on-campus, plus an additional 36 students for London.

4. Retiree Health Care

Vice President Mike West shared with the IPPC the report that he had made to the Board of Trustees' Budget and Finance Committee. That report included the summary of concerns that had been expressed in the IPPC's Budget and Finance Subcommittee. Member of IPPC expressed appreciation to Mr. West for sharing the full extent of the concerns.

The next steps will be presentations on campus, including a presentation at the Faculty Meeting on November 2nd and Open Community Meetings on November 5th and 6th. Mr. West indicated that he would continue to emphasize that no decisions have been made regarding employees in the "middle group."

Co-chair Mark Huibregtse referred committee members to an e-mail message that was sent by President Glotzbach and him yesterday. He indicated that the e-mail was a partial response to a request by the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) that IPPC issue an "out report" at the Faculty Meeting. The message points people to information that is available on the IPPC website.

A question was raised as to how those units staffing current searches should answer questions regarding the retiree health care benefit. Mr. West indicated that a proper response would be to state that the retiree health care benefit is currently under review. Finally, a suggestion was made that newer hires might postpone (or might have postponed) contributing to retirement in light of the retiree health care benefit. Mr. West indicated that the Budget and Finance Subcommittee has had preliminary discussions regarding a voluntary match for a retiree health care benefit; no recommendations have yet been made. In general, however, the College is hoping to improve its orientation programs to help new hires begin planning for their long-term health and financial future at an earlier stage.

5. Other Reports

Campus Environment Committee: Plans are progressing with the *Focus the Nation* event scheduled for January 31st. Various Skidmore community members are participating in "Step It Up," another climate change program. Candidates for Saratoga Springs elected offices will take part in a forum focusing on the environment this Saturday. CEC has been working on a new GIS map of all Skidmore employee addresses to assist with the carpooling effort. There has been renewed interest among students in asking the College to participate in the President's Climate Commitment; this matter has been referred to the Student Affairs Subcommittee of IPPC. This year's Honors Forum, *Shades of Gray*, will have an environmental focus. An energy conservation competition is underway in the residence halls, and November 12 -16 is National Recycling Week. All of these initiatives demonstrate the great success in weaving *Focus the Nation* throughout the College's activities. Moreover, all of these initiatives help to advance Goal III of the *Strategic Plan*, whose focus is responsible citizenship.

Student Parking: SGA President Jon Brestoff indicated that there is some interest in reviewing student parking policies. The appropriate place for that discussion would be the Student Affairs Subcommittee of IPPC.

Special Programs Study Group: Interim Dean of Special Programs Jeff Segrave encouraged IPPC members to review the Special Programs Study Group report, which he distributed earlier this week. The report will be forwarded later today to various campus governance committees, and will be distributed next week to faculty and staff at large. Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan Kress and Dean Segrave will spend the months of November and December listening to campus responses. The report will be the subject of discussion at IPPC later in the year.

IGUTF Sunset: President Glotzbach noted that at the Intercultural and Global Understanding Task Force meeting earlier that day, there was discussion about the future of the Task Force, which is scheduled to sunset this year. This matter will also be the subject of a future IPPC discussion. President Glotzbach noted that one possibility that has been mentioned would be to reform the Task Force as a subcommittee of IPPC analogous to the Campus Environment Committee. The CEC has a seat at IPPC, but also undertakes numerous initiatives and functions somewhat independently of IPPC (on non-policy matters) in collaboration with other groups on campus.

Minutes prepared by Barbara Krause, Secretary. Please notify of any changes.