

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 29, 2008

PRESENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Chair; Professor Mark Huibregtse, Vice Chair; Mary Lou Bates, Michael Casey, Deb Hall, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress, Pat Oles, Muriel Poston, Justin Sipher, Michael West; Mehmet Odekon, Barbara McDonough; Mary Cogan; Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Jeff Segrave, Sue VanHook, Sue Bender, Jonathan Brestoff, Adam Cupples.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of February 15, 2008 were approved with one typographical correction.

2. Optimization: Recommendation to Study Final Phase

As previously reported by Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike West, the IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance has recommended that a task force be constituted to study the final question raised during 2005-06 – namely, whether the College's student body size (Net Fiscal Enrollment) should be increased by 100 students. Mr. West emphasized that this recommendation does not come with any predetermined notion of whether the answer to that question should be affirmative or negative. The Subcommittee, however, cited several reasons for its recommendation. First, the work remains outstanding. Second, it makes sense to consider this question in light of likely future budgetary challenges, especially with respect to financial aid. Finally, the College is planning for the replacement of Scribner Village; that planning process also suggests it would be wise to consider the optimization question at this time.

IPPC members then discussed whether it makes sense to engage in this work at the current time. Reasons for doing the work, in addition to those cited by the Budget and Finance Subcommittee, include the impact the answer to the question would have on budget planning, that the information would provide a benchmark for current numbers and space, and the question of whether Skidmore has something special to offer the world and therefore should be offering it to more very well-qualified students.

Concerns about undertaking the study at this time included work load issues (President Glotzbach noted his desire that the study, if undertaken, should not interfere with previously identified work that must be completed this academic year), and the serious concern about available academic space on campus. Several people expressed concern about a possible perception that the College's response to budgetary challenges would be to increase student enrollment.

The group agreed that it would not decide the question today. It did discuss, however, what offices should be represented if a task force were constituted. Those offices would include the Registrar/Institutional Research, Admissions, Finance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, faculty representatives (2), support staff, and a student.

The group also noted several changes that have taken place on campus since the work that was completed in the spring of 2006. Those changes include completion of the Campus Plan, the significance of financial aid as a budgetary parameter, the closing of Moore Hall and the opening of Northwoods Apartments, increasing numbers of students studying abroad, and improved numbers from the Admissions Office (increase in applications, increase in yield, and increase in retention).

Finally, it was noted that the current over-enrollment figures are more than half-way toward adding an extra hundred students. The IPPC will make a decision on this recommendation in the near future.

3. Other Reports

President Glotzbach noted that Rochelle Calhoun has been named the College's next Dean of Student Affairs. She will succeed Pat Oles, who has provided exemplary service to the College in this role for ten years.

President Glotzbach also reported that the Board of Trustees and the College's senior administration have recently returned from a retreat which focused on the meaning of Creative Thought and broad issues related to higher education. The Board also considered its process for appointing the next Board Chair and approved several action items (tenure and promotion, budget parameters, and early release of capital items). Retiree health care was not discussed at this set of meetings.

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