

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2007

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

ABSENT: Mary Lou Bates and Michael Casey.

1. Review of Minutes

The IPPC reviewed minutes from its meeting of September 14, 2007. SGA President Jon Brestoff clarified that a comment he had made regarding student representation referred to IPPC, not to the Dean of Student Affairs search committee. In addition, he provided dates related to a student activity. With those corrections, the minutes were **approved**.

2. Retiree Health Care

Vice President Mike West reviewed prior discussions related to retiree health care in order to refresh returning members and to bring new members up to speed. Changes to auditing standards will require employers (including Skidmore) to adjust the way in which post-retirement benefits are accounted for on the College's balance sheet. Mr. West reviewed the financial challenges associated with these changes, including Skidmore's difficult situation relative to our peer and aspirant colleges.

Based on work done last year, current planning points toward a recommendation that all employees hired prior to April 1, 1999 would be "grandparented," while all employees hired after January 1, 2008 would likely have no plan-based retiree benefit. The dates could change somewhat, but the Budget & Finance Subcommittee is leaning toward these two parameters. The subcommittee is continuing its discussion of these preliminary proposed changes and then will devote its attention to how to address the middle group. The subcommittee will spend considerable effort on this topic over the coming weeks.

Questions and comments raised by IPPC members included how to recognize and analyze the cost that would be transferred to employees in the middle group; the number of employees who would be affected; concern about salary compression and how to manage that factor if some employees have the retiree health care benefit and others do not; questions about how to interpret the financial figures provided to IPPC members; and the observation that not all employees share equally in this benefit. Mr. West noted that the issue does present a significant financial challenge for the College and that members of the Board of Trustees – while very mindful of the College's history of lower salaries and more generous benefits – will expect the College to present a fiscally responsible plan for moving forward.

3. Campus Environment Committee Report

Sue Van Hook, Chair of the Campus Environment Committee (CEC) reported.

Focus the Nation is a national effort intended to engage students and faculty at all levels in an interdisciplinary discussion about global warming solutions. The project will culminate in a national teach-in scheduled for January 31, 2008. Professor Van Hook reviewed numerous Focus the Nation projects taking place at Skidmore. More information on the project can be obtained from the Skidmore web site.

For the second summer, students worked as stewards in the North Woods. While last summer's priority was on trails and maintenance, this summer's priority was on community outreach. A new brochure has been developed and community education programs were presented. Based on feedback from some of those meetings, the CEC is inclined to expand the trails on which dogs may be walked but to retain the requirement that dogs be on leash and that owners clean up after them.

Following discussion, it was the consensus of the group to support the following changes to guidelines previously endorsed: dogs will be allowed on all orange, blue, and red trails provided that they must be kept on leash and that owners must clean up after them. Further, IPPC supported the recommendation that CEC approach the Science Planning Group about conducting an Environmental Impact Statement.

It was noted that fire pits in the North Woods continue to be a concern. Other items on CEC's agenda for the coming year will include recycling, two-sided copying, and paper-reduction efforts.

Finally, it was reported that a search committee has been established to hire a sustainability coordinator for the College. The position will be funded for three years: two years with funds from an Educational Foundation of America grant and a third year with College funds. The search committee will begin working immediately.

4. Other Reports

Faculty Handbook Part Six – Vice President Susan Kress reported that a small group has been working to prepare a draft revision to Part Six of the *Faculty Handbook*, which sets forth the College's EEO policies and procedures. At the request of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), the working group will present articles 1-6 to the Faculty Meeting on October 5 for a discussion as "the committee of the whole." She noted that IPPC has not yet seen the draft articles; however, FEC, CAPT, and CAFR have seen those articles and several members of IPPC sit on those committees. The text being discussed is a work in progress, and the Faculty Meeting discussion will further inform the efforts of the working group. Part Six will be reviewed with IPPC at a later date.

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