

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 5, 2010**

PRESENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Chair; Professor Adrienne Zuerner, Vice Chair; Mary Lou Bates, Rochelle Calhoun, Michael Casey, Winston Grady-Willis, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress, Kim Marsella, Muriel Poston, Justin Sipher, Michael West, Mary Cogan, Susan Bender, Raina Bretan, James Welsh, Hugh Foley, Anne Petruzzelli, and Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Erica Bastress-Dukehart, Jeff Segrave.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the December 18, 2009 meeting were approved as distributed.

2. Admissions Update

Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates reported that after six consecutive years of increases in application numbers, we have a decrease for the second year in a row. Last year's applications were down approximately 14%; this year's applications are down by approximately 5-6%. We did receive over 6,000 applications for a class of 640 students on campus and 36 students in London. The number of students indicating that they will request financial aid is approximately 60%, similar to the figure at this time last year.

President Glotzbach noted that various changes in external circumstances will continue to pose Admissions as the College's greatest challenge. He expressed his appreciation for the good work of Dean Bates and her staff and noted that they will continue to explore ways to analyze and address the decrease in application numbers.

3. Synthesis Group Report

The preliminary report of the Town Hall Meeting Synthesis Group was distributed in advance of the meeting. President Glotzbach thanked members of the group for their work. He then invited questions and comments regarding the report. Feedback from IPPC members included the following:

- There was a question as to whether the concept of "institutional identity," initially identified as a major theme, was addressed in the report. The group indicated that the institutional identity concept was subsumed under the other major themes.
- It was noted that within the major themes, community members sometimes expressed inconsistent views (e.g., whether we should increase or decrease financial aid, the notion that the breadth of our curriculum is its strength vs. peoples' belief that the curriculum must be offered more efficiently, etc.).

- There was a conversation about whether external reviewers might be able to help the College see things about our operations that we are not able to see ourselves. It was noted that the NY Six Liberal Arts Consortium may provide an opportunity in that regard, as well as the next Middle States review that will occur in five years. It was further suggested, however, that while the College might gain helpful insights from external reviewers, it is also helpful if Skidmore people go to other campuses or confer with colleagues at conferences to understand different approaches on different campuses.
- In response to a question about how the external Town Hall Meetings fit with the on-campus feedback, President Glotzbach reported that transitions were a major theme at the off-campus meetings as well. He also noted that there was considerable affirmation for what the College does, as well as broad support for what might be called the “traditional liberal arts package” (e.g., small classes, relationships with faculty, etc.).

There was some discussion about Question Four of the charge, which asked the Synthesis Group to identify possible misperceptions reflected in the raw data. Professor Zuerner explained that the Synthesis Group had come to recognize that it did not have the expertise necessary to identify all misperceptions. The Synthesis Group, therefore, believes that Cabinet members are in a better position to review the raw data and decide if there are misperceptions that need to be addressed. It was agreed that it would be best not to list any misperceptions under Question Four, but instead, to explain that such items would be referred to Cabinet.

IPPC and the Synthesis Group agreed on the following as next steps:

1. The Synthesis Group will revise the Preliminary Report based on feedback received from IPPC.
2. The “Raw Data Report” and the Preliminary Report will be posted on the campus Town Hall Meeting website. Both will be password protected and open to comment from members of the Skidmore community only.
3. A deadline for providing feedback will be indicated by the Synthesis Group—a period of two to three weeks was suggested.
4. The Synthesis Group will receive the feedback and incorporate it into a final report which will be due to IPPC no later than April 15, 2010.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan Kress noted that she had recently reviewed the “Distillation Report” that was prepared in preparation for the College’s strategic planning effort in 2001. She noted that some directions indicated by the Town Hall Meetings are similar and other directions are new. It was agreed that the Distillation Report would be provided to the members of the Synthesis Group for informational purposes.

4. Budget Planning – Major Parameters

Vice President for Finance and Administration Michael West reported that some colleges are beginning to announce their comprehensive fee increases for FY '11. He also reported that Skidmore Trustees attending the Budget Workshop on January 28 supported the current planning directions. Most importantly, Trustees supported the administration's recommendation not to do a non-voluntary reduction in force. Finally, he noted that IPPC's Budget and Finance Subcommittee held a special meeting to review budget planning parameters. That group will have one more meeting and then will bring formal recommendations to the full IPPC. He anticipates that the recommended percentage increase in the comprehensive fee will be lower than projected last year. President Glotzbach, noting that budgets are a series of compromises among moving parts, confirmed that at this point, we continue to project no GSA for FY '11. At this point, the budget planning has placed a premium on trying to move Skidmore out of the top 15 "most expensive colleges" list (although he noted that moving down on that list is not totally within the College's control). The Board of Trustees will approve the major budget parameters at its February meeting and give final approval to the College budget in May.

5. Scribner Village Replacement Update

Dean of Student Affairs Rochelle Calhoun reported that program planning for the proposed Scribner Village replacement continues. As previously reported, the conceptual plans have moved from one large building to serve as the replacement to one traditional dorm with singles, doubles and quads, plus a smaller number of Scribner Village-like townhouses. This concept would allow the College to develop some "multi-class" living and to bring approximately 100 additional students back to campus. The architects are developing an approach to a health and wellness facility which could be presented as an add-on, although Dean Calhoun expressed her hope that it could be incorporated in the design and building of the initial new residence hall. The planning group has received very preliminary cost estimates from the architects, and those figures will be refined in the coming weeks. The College also has asked the architect for an explicit articulation of the sustainability elements incorporated in the design.

Dean Calhoun noted that this is not only an exciting building project, but a key to the College's strategic advancement. Additional public meetings on campus are anticipated in the spring. The College's internal consulting group, including the Sustainability Coordinator, will be convened in the coming weeks. Next steps would include development of floor layout plans, exterior design work, and finally, construction documents.

6. Other

Miscellaneous comments and announcements included the following:

- A member noted that community members have asked about the future use of Filene. President Glotzbach indicated that the decision is on his desk, and he is considering the matter.

- Men's and women's basketball are both having very successful seasons, with both teams currently in first place in the Liberty League. Hockey also is enjoying a successful season.
- President Glotzbach distributed an article by James Surowiecki entitled "Hanging Tough" that appeared in the New Yorker on April 20, 2009.
- The first public concert in the new Arthur Zankel Music Center will take place on Friday evening, February 5, 2010. There is great excitement surrounding this event, and those who wish to attend are encouraged to arrive early.
- Skidmore College will be featured on upcoming programs in the WAMC public radio series "The Best of our Knowledge," hosted by Glenn Busby. President Glotzbach and Professor Sarah Goodwin are featured in the first two pieces having to do with assessment and the cost of college.

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