

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2011

PRESENT: Acting President Susan Kress; Hugh Foley, Vice Chair; Michael Casey, Mark Huibregtse, Bob Turner, Muriel Poston, Paty Rubio, Jeff Segrave, Justin Sipher, Michael West, Adrienne Zuerner, Gail Cummings-Danson, Denise Smith, Joseph Stankovich, Alexandra Stark, Jonathan Zeidan, and Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Mary Lou Bates, Rochelle Calhoun, Winston Grady-Willis, and Anne Petruzzelli.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the March 25, 2011 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

2. Budget Planning FY 12

Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike West distributed preliminary materials indicating the capital budget requests for FY 12. He noted that the initial requests far exceeded the amount of available funds and that the submissions shared with IPPC represent only the highest priorities brought forward by individual Cabinet members. Highlights of the proposed capital expenditures include the following:

- Renovation of Wait Hall including life safety improvements, roof replacement, heating improvements
- Start of multi-year project to replace the chilled water loop estimated in the range of \$3 - \$5 million
- HVAC improvements in science facilities to address immediate needs (none of this investment would be “stranded”); total project estimated in the range of \$7 - \$10 million
- Funding to implement the Student Information System (Oracle)
- Deferred maintenance

Mr. West reported that the current materials require approximately \$300,000 more in cuts to balance the capital budget. He noted that IPPC’s Budget and Finance Committee will review these materials at its next meeting and will bring a final proposal back to the full IPPC at the April 22 meeting.

Mr. West also reported that there is considerable pressure on the Facilities staff to complete work over the summer. The work on Filene and the Art Building is still in progress. The Scribner Village replacement, which actually consists of three separate projects, is underway; he remains optimistic that the three replacement buildings in the Northwoods complex will be available for occupancy in January 2012.

In response to a question, Mr. West confirmed that much of the capital budget in recent years has relied on over enrollment funds. When that money decreases, it will be even more important for the

College to set priorities for its capital projects. The most urgent priority, as always, will be to complete life safety projects and other deferred maintenance projects that represent necessary structural maintenance.

Moving to the budget for new initiatives, Mr. West noted that the list currently distributed is the same as the list circulated in January with one exception: there has been an increase in the line for financial aid for the sciences, a diversity initiative, which Cabinet believes should be funded for at least one more class. (Funding the initiative for one class constitutes a four-year commitment.)

IPPC members asked several questions related to the priority of the financial aid for the sciences initiative. Questions included whether the data support the success of the program and whether there are any other ways to achieve the goals of this initiative. It was noted that this initiative advances multiple strategic priorities (including science and diversity). Mr. West also noted, in the absence of Dean of Admissions Mary Lou Bates, that she believed this program to be imperative to achieve the College's Admissions goals.

Discussion then turned to the PDF funding indicated to support development of scientific literacy courses. There was considerable discussion around issues of the timing of this investment.

Professor Turner, in his capacity as Chair of CEPP, questioned the wisdom of allocating \$50,000 in PDF to fund pilot classes for the scientific literacy requirement. The CEPP Subcommittee on revising the culture centered inquiry requirement has developed a new proposal without any money. Second, he questioned whether the scientific literacy requirements are sufficiently developed to merit such an investment since the Scientific Literacy group did not meet at all in the fall and has only met three times in the spring semester. There also is no working paper or proposal about what the scientific literacy requirement would look like. Third, CEPP believes that initiatives which constitute significant educational policy change and originate outside the faculty governance system are likely to prove problematic. A new scientific literacy requirement would be a significant educational policy change. CEPP has not had any discussion or seen any proposal about what the scientific literacy requirement would look like (nor has the Science Planning Group). While acknowledging that the President should have complete discretion to allocate money from the PDF as he or she sees fit, Professor Turner stated it seemed a poor investment to fund pilot scientific literacy classes at this time.

Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs Muriel Poston noted that the intent of this investment is to propose scientific literacy guidelines that would then be forwarded to CEPP for consideration, revision, or modification as appropriate given the educational policy implications. The funding would be used for faculty development in considering the scientific literacy guidelines – i.e., attending conferences and workshops or inviting academic leaders from other institutions to visit Skidmore and lend their expertise, and that this work could potentially involve CEPP members. Acting Vice President Poston indicated that the current working group does not anticipate piloting courses until conversations with CEPP are completed.

Acting President Kress also clarified that the purpose of this investment would be to allow a group to help imagine what Goal One of the Science Vision would look like when implemented.

One member reminded the group that PDF monies are allocated at the President's discretion and asked, therefore, whether this conversation is within the purview of IPPC. Vice Chair Foley noted that

it seems appropriate for IPPC to consider this matter since initiatives funded with PDF money often migrate to the operating budget.

The discussion turned to a more general discussion of when significant faculty input is required prior to investing money in a particular new initiative. Some members believe it can be important to invest some amount of money to develop a proposal for the faculty's consideration; others felt it was important, particularly in the context of curricular development, to seek broad faculty input regarding initiatives before funds are invested.

Questions also were raised regarding the composition of the group that is developing the scientific literacy curriculum. Acting Vice President Poston noted that the Science Planning Group is comprised of chairs of the science departments; the Science Working Group developed the vision; and that the current working group, being coordinated by Mark Hofmann, includes Erica Bastress-Dukehart, Mark Youndt, and other faculty members who responded to a broad call to do this work.

Acting President Kress acknowledged that the discussion reveals an important governance conversation. Acting VPAA Poston noted that the conversation raises questions as to when CEPP should be involved and whether it is the primary avenue by which the faculty may engage in conversations regarding educational policy. Vice Chair Foley offered his opinion that before an initiative is funded, there should be an appropriate conversation within the governance system so that the proposed initiative has a clear "owner."

Acting President Kress noted the need to get the balance right. It is important that initiatives not get too far ahead of the governance system, but those working on curricular development might not know if an idea merits time in the governance system until some work has been done. The question then is whether some smaller allocation of new initiative funding should be established to support development of new initiatives early on.

Mr. West then turned to an update on the operating budget. He reported on comprehensive fee increases at our peer and aspirant institutions as well as some others colleges and universities. He also reported on the AAUP salary information that has recently become available. That information indicates that Skidmore has lost some ground in the ranks of the Full Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor.

In response to a question, Mr. West suggested that the Early Retirement Incentive Program probably had some effect this year on the AAUP survey results and that there may be a further effect next year, when all of the retirements are reflected. In response to another question about whether including data for our Management & Business and Economics faculty might skew the results, he noted that many schools in the comparison group have certain outliers. He explained that this is why it is important that our peer group have as many similarities to Skidmore as possible (e.g., Union and Trinity, who have similar outliers with their respective engineering programs).

It was noted that, like the comparison tables for comprehensive fees, there is great compression among the schools in our peer comparison group for faculty salaries.

Acting President Kress reminded IPPC members that the faculty salary pool is only a part of the College's total compensation picture. It also is important for the College to provide appropriate

compensation for Administrative Professional, Support Staff, and union employees. She noted that the College's total comprehensive compensation plan was placed on hold at the time of the recession, before the College had a chance to address staff salaries. In response to a question, Mr. West noted that the market and equity pool, when it can be built into the budget, does allow the College to address certain positions that may be being paid below market level.

Mr. West noted that a final decision on the "New Initiatives" budget will be sought at the next meeting.

3. Standards Of Business Conduct Policy

Barbara Krause provided a brief overview of the purpose and process that has resulted in presentation of the draft Standards of Business Conduct Policy. She noted that the document provided to IPPC actually consists of four separate policies:

1. Standards of Business Conduct Policy (new);
2. Conflict of Interest Policy (revised from current forms);
3. Conflict of Commitment Policy (largely new; some concepts reflected now in the *Faculty Handbook*);
4. Whistleblower Policy (new).

Because the Standards of Business Conduct Policy refers to the other three policies, all are attached to the Standards of Business Conduct Policy. Once approved, however, any one of the policies could be amended without reviewing the others.

Ms. Krause noted that with respect to the conflict policies, the existence of a conflict does not necessarily mean that an affected individual cannot engage in a particular activity or that the employee has done anything wrong. Rather, the existence of a real or potential conflict means that the issue must be disclosed and managed appropriately.

With respect to process, Ms. Krause noted that feedback has been received from President's Cabinet, the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), and the SGA Senate. The feedback from those groups is reflected in the documents distributed for review. In addition, the working group has requested feedback from Academic Staff. Early responses expressed concern that more time is needed to review the draft policy than can be devoted at the end of the semester. There also were questions raised as to whether the policy should appear in the *Faculty Handbook* – although FEC's advice is that while the working group should seek the "sense of the faculty" through a discussion at a Faculty Meeting, formal approval by the faculty is not required.

Questions and comments included the following:

- This policy is required by the current legal and regulatory environment in which the College operates.
- The policy will require an educational rollout.
- There was a question as to whether the VPAA or Dean of the Faculty should oversee the conflict of interest process for faculty. Ms. Krause noted that the policy as drafted assigns

responsibility for overseeing that disclosure process to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, although the VPAA certainly could delegate pieces of that process to other direct reports.

- Acting VPAA Poston noted that the Conflict of Commitment Policy is perhaps more important and may generate more conversation among faculty members.
- Members expressed support for a "frequently asked questions" document to educate people about the policy. It was noted that conversations at new employee orientations and work with department chairs and program directors also would be critical.

Ms. Krause noted again that the next steps include seeking the sense of the faculty and finalizing input from Academic Staff, as well as seeking legal review. She asked IPPC members to forward any feedback to her by Friday, April 22, 2011.

Acting President Kress thanked the members of the working group and asked that their names be included in the minutes. The working group membership includes Roy Rotheim, Denise Smith, Mike Thomas, Bill Tomlinson, and Barbara Krause (coordinator).

4. Other Business – SGA Elections

SGA President Alexandra Stark reported that Jonathan Zeidan has been elected SGA President for the coming academic year. IPPC members acknowledged this accomplishment with a warm round of applause.

Please notify Barbara Krause of any changes to these minutes.