

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

April 17, 2015

10:30 a.m.

PRESENT: President Philip A. Glotzbach, Chair; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; Addison Bennett '16; Beau Breslin; Paul Calhoun; Bill Duffy; Sarah Goodwin; Samuel Harris '15; Karen Kellogg; James Kennelly; Wendy Kercull; Kathy Kinnin; William Lewis; Ting Li; Dan Nathan; Joseph Stankovich; Michael West; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT: Mary Lou W. Bates; Barbara Black; Rochelle Calhoun; Michael Casey; Mehmet Odekon; and Viviana Rangil.

1. Minutes from April 3, 2015

IPPC approved the meeting Minutes from April 3, 2015.

President Glotzbach noted that today, April 17, 2015, is the last of three Accepted Candidates Days for students who were admitted to the Class of 2019. The other days were April 10 and 13. He thanked everyone who was involved in helping to enroll this entering first-year class.

He also mentioned that today was the Chittenden Falls micro-hydro plant ribbon-cutting ceremony, showcasing one of Skidmore's partnerships for sustainability. The ceremony will include a tour of the plant and will be attended by a busload of Skidmore students, faculty, staff, and trustees.

2. Task Force on Divestment Final Report

President Glotzbach thanked Task Force on Divestment (TFD) Chair Jim Kennelly and Vice Chair Karen Kellogg for their great work on this project, which has led to this *Final Report* being presented today. Chair Kennelly expressed his thanks to President Glotzbach for allowing the Task Force to conduct its business in this way, noting the time needed to think through this topic thoroughly. Members of the Task Force were charged to begin this process with an open mind and eventually developed a common understanding of the issues involved, which was expressed in the *Phase I Report*. A negotiation process ensued over the recommendations, and the Task Force came to a broad consensus behind the *Final Report*. The Task Force heard from many people. Task Force members came to understand that this issue required more than a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer to the divestment question. The Task Force considered the issue of climate change, political tactics, and symbolic action.

The *Final Report* does not call for complete and immediate divestment from fossil fuel holdings in the endowment, as was initially suggested in the students' petition and other calls. Through its recommendations, the *Final Report* presents a meaningful step in that direction. According to websites that track a list of schools that have officially "divested" the number has moved

from 15 to 27 from the time of the *Phase I Report* to the issuance of the *Final Report*. Vice Chair Kellogg explained that divestment to these schools includes a spectrum of activities, such as taking out their direct holdings, promises not to invest their direct holdings, etc. The *Final Report* includes six recommendations:

1. Skidmore College should make an explicit commitment that it will not purchase or hold any direct equity or debt issued by companies on the *Carbon Underground 200 List* in its direct holdings.
2. Reallocate approximately 4% of the endowment to fossil-free or sustainable and clean tech investment funds on a test basis, increasing this allocation over time if performance merits it; additionally, provide potential donors with the opportunity to direct their contributions to such fossil-free and sustainable investment choices.
3. Collaborate with comparable institutions of higher education to influence and/or accelerate the creation of high performance, professionally managed, fossil-free and/or sustainable portfolios that will generate acceptable “alphas” and more generally expand the universe of fossil-free and/or sustainable investment options that are available to Skidmore and other institutions.
4. Explicitly encourage our 40-50 investment managers to reduce or eliminate their holdings of fossil fuel investments to the greatest extent possible, consistent with financial realities and prudence, and clearly articulate to our investment managers our interest in moving towards a fossil-free portfolio.
5. Acknowledge the linkage between Skidmore’s investment portfolio and its institutional values, and amend Skidmore’s existing Investment Policy so that it incorporates these values.
6. If these recommendations are endorsed, they should be incorporated into the annual Strategic Action Agenda and a review of our progress in achieving them should be conducted on an annual basis by an appropriate group determined by the President.

IPPC discussed questions related to these recommendations. IPPC members noted that Skidmore’s larger sustainability efforts should be considered when thinking about divestment as a response to climate change. The reliance on the endowment to fund financial aid and other programs was underscored in terms of these recommendations representing a series of compromises. President Glotzbach expressed his sincere thanks to all members of the Task Force for its responsible work. The Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees and the full Board will discuss these recommendations, which are non-binding. The *Final Report* will be uploaded to the Task Force on Divestment’s website:

<http://www.skidmore.edu/divestment/>

3. CEPP/IPPC Joint Resolution Regarding MALS

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) asked IPPC to co-sponsor a joint motion to express gratitude to the people associated with MALS pending the vote by the Faculty to close the program. IPPC discussed changing the language to be even further expressive of gratitude to those associated with MALS. After discussion, IPPC unanimously voted to approve the IPPC-CEPP MALS resolution of appreciation to be forwarded to an upcoming Faculty Meeting pending the vote to close MALS.

Resolution

“Whereas those persons have served as directors, administrators, administrative assistants, advisors, students, and instructors in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Skidmore College have made a distinct contribution to the vitality, diversity, and intellectual life of the College over the last decade and a half.

Be it resolved that the Skidmore Faculty wishes to record its thanks for your service to this unique academic program.”

Chair of CEPP, Professor Bill Lewis, will let CEPP know that the Joint Resolution has been approved by IPPC and send it along to the Faculty.

4. Institutional Assessment Plan

Vice President for Academic Affairs Beau Breslin thanked Faculty Assessment Coordinator Professor Sarah Goodwin for her work along with Associate Director of Institutional Research for Assessment Lisa Christenson in crafting this Institutional Assessment Plan. Vice President Breslin mentioned that part of the goal in bringing this plan forward was to highlight that assessment has to continue in other divisions of the College beyond Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The Assessment Subcommittee of IPPC and CEPP have reviewed the Plan. Professor Goodwin noted that the faculty needs to own the assessment of student learning. Accreditation requirements also specify that various types of assessments need to be occurring throughout the institution. We need to be able to document that we are establishing goals in each of our areas, explain that we know whether or not we are meeting these goals, that we have evidence that we are meeting them, and if we are not meeting them that we are doing something about it. This work needs to be documented and tracked in ways that we have not historically done. The plan has been crafted to address the size of institution that we occupy and to recognize the flexibility necessary to achieve success. This document has been approved by CEPP, but it is owned by IPPC. The Assessment Subcommittee will ensure that the plan will be implemented annually and CEPP will ensure that the student learning piece is being implemented.

IPPC provided feedback on some minor points related to wording in the document. The larger point was made that the document still appears to focus on Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and that we might consider reflecting other areas of the College in a more in-depth manner. President Glotzbach thanked those who have worked on the document. IPPC asked that the Institutional Assessment Plan go to President’s Cabinet for review and then return to IPPC on May 1, 2015 for consideration of endorsement.

5. Middle States Reaccreditation Update

Vice President Breslin and Professor Goodwin, who are co-chairing our Middle States Steering Committee, updated IPPC on Skidmore’s efforts related to Middle States reaccreditation. Skidmore has elected to complete a selected-topics model for its self-study and chose “integrative learning” as its theme. There are five working groups for Middle States:

1. General Education Review and Reform
2. The FYE, the Sophomore Experience, and Beyond College
3. Physical and Digital Spaces for Integrative Learning
4. Diversity, Inclusion, and Integrative Learning
5. Responsible Communities: Civic Engagement, Sustainability, and Value Ethics.

The five working groups are engaged in writing their sections of the self-study, with drafts of their chapters/sections due Monday, April 20, 2015. Challenges ahead include stitching together the chapters from the working groups, achieving College-wide “buy-in” for the self-study document, building enthusiasm from the community around this process, and document-preparation work. Next steps in the process call for receipt of the next drafts by the co-chairs, review of the draft document by the steering committee, and appointment of the visiting team chair, who will then schedule and lead the team visit. By the beginning of the fall semester, we will have a completed draft of the self-study for the community to vet, and the documentation review will be fully prepared, with the supporting evidence for the compliance standard documents also ready for review. These three pieces will occur in early fall, and the team visit will happen in the spring.

Questions about the team chair and visiting team were fielded. Shortly, we expect the Middle States Commission to let us know who will serve as our team chair. As we approach the next steps, it will be important to connect our institutional planning efforts around Middle States Reaccreditation, the next *Strategic Plan*, and the General Education curriculum review, including having the Board of Trustees’ review the self-study draft during its October 2015 meeting. The goal is to finalize the self-study by mid-December 2015. More information on the Middle States Reaccreditation process may be found at its website:

<http://www.skidmore.edu/assessment/accreditation15-16/index.php>

6. Update on Budget for FY ’16 and New Initiatives

Vice President for Finance and Administration Michael West distributed to IPPC a listing of New Initiatives for inclusion in the FY 2016 budget. The original target for New Initiatives was set at \$500,000, and the recommendation the IPPC Budget and Finance Subcommittee is bringing forward includes requests totaling \$700,000, though the requests originally received from President’s Cabinet members totaled over \$3 million. The funding for the \$200,000 difference in the original target for New Initiatives to the current recommendation will come from negotiated savings on electricity and gas purchases. Vice President West provided a brief update on financial aid for the entering class (2019), explaining that we may be over our budgeted financial aid by approximately \$300,000, which translates into \$1.2 million over four years. Depending on enrollments for the first-year class, which need to be received by May 1, 2015, this figure could end up being lower or higher.

Based on the New Initiatives materials, questions were asked related to the following items: a proposed new tenure-track line in Academic Affairs and the start of HELIOS; two new positions in Finance and Administration, which includes hiring an investigator related to Title IX cases and someone related to support in managing services related to our Unions, employees

wellness initiatives, and health care reform; Student Services, including the learning specialist and student conduct support; and the comparative longitudinal growth of different areas of the College. IPPC unanimously endorsed the proposed budget for New Initiatives.

7. Next Strategic Plan Update

President Glotzbach distributed another draft of the next *Strategic Plan* and noted some of the differences in the draft, including the preamble. Student Government Association (SGA) President Addison Bennett noted his appreciation for the front piece's clarity about competition in higher education between Skidmore and our peers. Professor Lewis explained that he appreciated the diagnostic sort of format of Part II and suggested that we add our curriculum to the set of challenges where we need to consider differentiation.

SGA President Bennett asked about the “walk-away” price and concerns around the costs associated with attending Skidmore College and suggested that this part could be even more explicit in the draft. President Glotzbach noted that our commitment to financial aid next year is worth \$44.2 million and that we need to continue to grow this budget and rethink how we continue to operate to attract the students we need, in relation to our financial model. Our strong academic program must continue so we are able to attract the students we want and need.

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on Friday, May 1, 10:30-12:00 p.m. in Murray-Aikins Room 4.

Please notify the President's Office of any changes to these minutes.