

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

October 2, 2015

10:30 a.m.

PRESENT: April Bernard; Joerg Bibow; Beau Breslin; Paul Calhoun; Michael Casey; Gail Cummings-Danson; Bill Duffy; Julia Elstein '17; Tim Harper, Vice Chair; Michelle Hubbs, James Kennelly; Kathy Kinnin; Kris Leggiero; Levi Rogers; Joseph Stankovich; Charles Tetelman '16; Debra Townsend; Michael West; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT: Mary Lou W. Bates; President Philip A. Glotzbach, Chair; and Denise Smith.

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Tim Harper called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes from September 25, 2015

IPPC **approved** the meeting Minutes from September 25, 2015, pending one revision in item 3. **IPPC Annual Report**, noting that both Joerg Bibow *and Natalie Taylor* prepared the 2014-2015 IPPC Annual Report.

3. President's Message, "Incident of Alleged Fraud," September 28, 2015

To update the Committee, Vice President for Finance & Administration Michael West read the following statement from the NYS Police, dated September 29,

"On September 28th the State Police in Malta arrested 47 year old Clifford L. Williams of Nassau, NY for Grand larceny in the second degree and two counts of Falsifying business records in the first degree.

He is accused of stealing over \$258,000 worth of assorted electronic items from Skidmore College from 2011 to 2015 while he was employed there by ordering and purchasing the items for the campus using a college credit card and then removing them to his home where he retained possession of them. Williams then manipulated school business and purchase records to conceal the thefts.

Williams was arraigned in the City of Saratoga Springs Court and was released on his own recognizance.

He is scheduled to reappear in the City of Saratoga Springs Court on October 8th, 2015."

Vice President West could not comment further as it is an ongoing investigation, but noted that next week, a communication will be sent reminding the campus community of the Code of Conduct, the Conflict of Interest, and the Whistleblower Policy. He also noted that changes to internal purchasing processes are being considered and policies updated.

4. Benefits Update

Vice President West informed the Committee that, regarding the changes to the Employee Pension Investment Options reported on earlier, the transitions and transfers within TIAA-CREF and Vanguard seem to have gone smoothly overall, with just one employee requesting additional assistance.

Regarding changes to Employee Healthcare Benefits, Vice President West noted that a communication was sent from Human Resources Director Barbara Beck. Staff members from HR are meeting with employees in various areas of the College within the coming weeks to review the plans, benefits and costs, and changes, and to answer questions. V.P. West also provided the following information:

The College is adjusting our healthcare plans to:

- address increasingly dynamic national health care trends that are driving up costs for providers and participants, with estimated national trends showing increases of 6% - 10% for health care, 11% for pharmacy, and 19% for specialty drugs;
- help keep costs and future increases more manageable for both employees and the College;
- add college-subsidized dental plans with upgrade options (providing employees with the ability to obtain affordable dental care based on their needs); and
- offer a more comprehensive wellness program that will expand over the next few years and be available to all Skidmore employees, regardless of the plan they choose.

Mr. West commented that MVP has a large network of regional and national primary care providers, along with options for specialists and hospitals expanded through their partnership with Cigna. MVP offered the College a very good match of networks for hospital and physicians to those who used services (99% for hospitals, 95% for physicians, 98% composite rate), a well recognized (in the marketplace) third-party administrator, and the most competitive price.

Mr. West then reported on the two health insurance plans (both administered by MVP):

- Skidmore College Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) Medical Plan, and
- Skidmore College Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) Medical Plan (which is very similar to the current HMO plans but with an enhanced network.)

Employees enrolled in either plan will see a cost sharing increase of 3% or less over this year's rates. He then reviewed the different rates for the various plans and noted that this information will be posted on the College HR website shortly.

Concerning the distribution of benefit information, Mr. West reminded members that the plan year starts January 1st. Open enrollment starts in about a month – on November 9th and continues to November 25th.

Mr. West concluded with two important points. He apologized to those faculty, staff, and families who have experienced concern as a result of the announcement of the upcoming healthcare changes this week. He also apologized to President Glotzbach, President's Cabinet, Human Resources Director Barbara Beck, and members of IPPC for harm caused. He pledged to work more closely with the IPPC Budget & Finance Subcommittee and the full IPPC on these and similar matters in the future.

He noted that we will be sharing additional information and details regarding these changes in the weeks ahead, and there will be informational meetings over the next month and one half. The initial message was intended to inform faculty and staff of the major changes. Our intention has been and continues to be to help employees understand and deal with the changes.

Committee members asked for clarification related to the timeline of the process involved with Healthcare Benefits, provided both their feedback on improving the process, and also expressed their appreciation to their colleagues whose area of expertise is relied on to make these important decisions. It was noted that providing information too early in the process without enough available details could cause confusion. Discussion of past practices related to a Benefits Committee occurred with concerns expressed by a faculty member as to whether the results were commensurate with the time and effort it was necessary to invest in that activity.

It was also noted that the message informing employees of changes to health insurance was received differently among various groups on campus.

5. Open Discussion

Vice Chair Harper suggested that item #4 on the Agenda, the next *Strategic Plan*, be tabled until the next meeting when President Glotzbach is present and instead offered to open up the meeting to allow for a discussion on issues that have surfaced on campus regarding campus climate, sexual and gender-based misconduct, recent Cabinet appointments, and process. He encouraged everyone in the room to share their concerns or questions, and following are some of the comments expressed, much around the issue of communication on campus:

- Addition of two new V.P.'s somehow dilutes the DOF/AA voice on President's Cabinet and at the College in general, yet Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs explained that Academic considerations always drive the conversation; Vice President Breslin acknowledged fault for not communicating better to faculty in this area, yet he thinks that more voices around the President's Cabinet table provide a more informed outcome and better decision-making;
- There is a false assumption on campus that "once you have heard something, then everyone else has heard it as well";
- At one level, we want to talk about everything, and on the other hand, how do we reduce the number of committees and demands on our time?
- Skidmore is becoming much more corporate; how does it square with our internal mission?

- Tell people what external pressures (compliance, reaccreditation, law, financial, media, social trends, changing demographics) are instead of not explaining them; and, yet, people can worry with too many details;
- Emphasize all of the positive initiatives taking place on campus (including balanced budget, admissions numbers, faculty hires, richness of summer programs); perhaps with all of these other initiatives taking place, Academic Affairs may, at times, be overshadowed; we all benefit from the success of other areas across campus; is there a way to graphically represent how the various areas of campus connect? This will help with fostering collaboration and transparency. How does this relate to “integrative learning” and the General Education curriculum review?
- Some decisions are slowed because of communication, and possibly to the detriment of moving a decision forward;
- There seem to be silos of communication across campus; not as many moments to bring people together to communicate, which might impact morale;
- Students expressed concern that in the President’s recent email about the alleged employee theft on campus, there was no mention of the recent sexual assaults; Interim Dean of Students and Vice President of Student Affairs Gail Cummings-Danson noted that she, as Title IX Coordinator, should have sent out a communication and will do so shortly;
- What is the best way for students to receive communications? When students see the sexual assault alerts on campus, are they then discussed in classes or in safe places for conversation, or are students left wondering about next steps? A review of what is an “alert” versus a “notification” should be discussed as part of the larger communications conversations, as there is a fine line between what can and cannot be said. It was also noted that the messages will never be perfect as some messages are received by individuals in different ways, but it was acknowledged that improvements can be made in our campus communications; it is also important for managers to see if their staff members have questions when communications are sent; Interim Vice President of Communications and Marketing Debra Townsend noted that she and Vice President Cummings-Danson will be meeting with Campus Safety shortly to review our messaging.
- Regarding IPPC, clarification is needed as to what is confidential within the meeting discussions and what can be discussed more openly among committee members’ peers. Committee members asked if they should be role advocates or how they share and receive information.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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