

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 30, 2009

PRESENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Chair; Professor Sue Bender, Vice Chair; Mary Lou Bates, Michael Casey, Winston Grady-Willis, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress, Erica Fuller, Dan Nathan, Muriel Poston, Jeff Segrave, Justin Sipher, Michael West, Mark Huibregtse, Barbara McDonough, Phyllis Roth, Jackie Shydowski, Alex Stark, Mary Cogan; Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Rochelle Calhoun.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of December 19, 2008 were approved with one minor correction.

2. UWW – Proposed Joint CEPP-IPPC Motion

Professor Dan Nathan, Chair of the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP), presented a motion that was developed by CEPP. CEPP is eager to have IPPC join with it to present a joint motion; if IPPC is amenable, Professor Nathan also will share the motion with the Curriculum Committee and with the UWW Committee for possible additional input. He expressed CEPP's preference that this motion go to the faculty at its meeting on February 6, 2009. For that to happen, IPPC and CEPP must work quickly to finalize the motion and rationale.

Noting the institutional significance of this decision, Professor Nathan reported that CEPP had taken an actual vote on the draft motion. The vote was unanimous in support of the proposed motion and rationale.

Before discussing the proposal for a joint motion from CEPP and IPPC, President Glotzbach first asked IPPC members to review the consensus, reflected in the minutes from the previous meeting, indicating that IPPC does not support the proposed new program described in the UWW Working Group final report. Echoing CEPP's sense of the importance of decisions related to UWW, President Glotzbach asked for a vote to affirm the foregoing reference in the minutes. IPPC members voted unanimously to indicate their lack of support for the proposed new program. There were no abstentions.

President Glotzbach next turned the group's attention to the proposal for a joint CEPP-IPPC motion. He asked that the group first consider the text of the proposed motion itself – namely:

MOVED: That the faculty recommend to the administration that Skidmore terminate its University Without Walls (UWW) program, and that the process of termination extend for a reasonable period of transition to allow currently enrolled students to complete their degree requirements.

Discussion related to the text of the proposed included the following:

- The additional work done by the UWW Working Group over the summer ensured transparency, provided additional information, and enhanced the integrity of the decision-making process.
- One member, while expressing support for the notion of a joint resolution, asked whether it would set a precedent that might constrain various elements of the shared governance system in the future. Members agreed that the precedent, while perhaps a model to be considered again, does not constitute an imperative in the future.
- Before calling for a vote on the motion, President Glotzbach noted that considering whether to dismantle a longstanding program always represents a difficult and sad moment. He reiterated his commitment, in the event that the program is terminated, to celebrate the successes of UWW; to honor the students, faculty, and staff associated with the program; and to explore other options that would allow Skidmore employees to take residential courses in order to make progress toward a degree. President Glotzbach also expressed his sincere appreciation for the careful and excellent work led by Jeff Segrave, Jim Kennelly, the summer UWW Working Group, CEPP, and others who have considered the future of UWW.

Calling for a vote, members of IPPC voted unanimously, without objection or abstention, to support the motion to terminate UWW as drafted by CEPP, and to join with CEPP in bringing a joint motion to the faculty floor on February 6th.

President Glotzbach then asked IPPC to turn its attention to the proposed rationale. Again, Professor Nathan expressed his view that CEPP would be open to revising the current language in order to present a rationale that is acceptable to both CEPP and IPPC. Comments regarding the rationale included the following:

- There is some worry that references to various concerns about the UWW program could cause unintended harm to those associated with the program.
- Some members felt that a concept of “less is more” might pertain to the language of the rationale. Others expressed the opinion that it is important to state clearly the reasons supporting the recommendation to close the program.
- CEPP and IPPC should consider what other supporting documentation might be provided with the motion. Interim Dean of Special Programs Jeff Segrave shared

two handouts. The first is a summary of various approvals at the time UWW was established, confirming that the program was approved on the condition that it be self-supporting. The second document summarizes the recent studies of the UWW program (2006-09). It was suggested that these documents might be referenced in the rationale, but not incorporated verbatim.

- A question was raised regarding language that the vote last spring occurred in the context of a “clear understanding” that UWW cannot continue as is. Since the vote last spring did not actually address that point, does this language confuse the matter? It was suggested that in order to clarify this point, the rationale might include references to the faculty minutes and to language in the charge.
- It was agreed that a “wordsmithing” group would be constituted to develop the rationale. This group will include Dan Nathan, Susan Bender, Phyllis Roth, Mary Cogan, Susan Kress, and Jeff Segrave. Members of CEPP will be invited to join the group, which will need to meet early on Monday morning in order to develop a rationale for presentation to the faculty meeting on February 6. Any comments on the proposed rationale should be provided to Dan Nathan by noon on Sunday, February 1. Any IPPC member who wishes to attend the drafting meeting was invited to do so.

Members then discussed briefly the open meetings that would be held in conjunction with the joint resolution. As required by the *Faculty Handbook*, CEPP will host an open informational meeting for the faculty sometime between February 6 and February 27. A consensus also emerged that IPPC should host an open forum for all members of the community during that same time frame. It was agreed that Susan Bender and Dan Nathan would co-chair the open forum; the two of them will coordinate scheduling of that event with Liz Bourque in the President’s Office.

3. FY ’10 Budget Update

Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike West reported that some published announcements are providing a better sense how other institutions are approaching tuition increases. He believes that a 3.9% increase in our comprehensive fee is still a reasonable target. Financial Aid concerns remain important. The markets continue to be volatile, with January being a difficult month. Although final numbers are not yet available, preliminary valuations suggest that our endowment as of December 31, 2008, stands at \$227 million. That represents a decrease of approximately 23% from last year – better than the S&P 500 decline of 37%, but nevertheless a substantial decline in value from the endowment’s previous high of approximately \$292 million.

Budgets for services and supplies are due to the budget office on February 2, 2009, with the exception of academic budgets, which are due on February 11. Capital budgets are due by February 13. The strategic hiring freeze and the savings anticipated as a result

of it are very challenging. Mr. West emphasized that if we are not able to attain the savings from the strategic freeze, we will need to make up that difference elsewhere.

Various pieces of public legislation indicate that state and federal money may be made available for “shovel-ready” projects. Skidmore projects that might be eligible for such funding include the Saisselin Art Building and residence hall renovations.

Mr. West emphasized that the “smoothing technique” of our endowment spending formula, together with the decrease in Annual Fund giving, will make budgets for 2011 and succeeding years extremely challenging. While the current budget planning parameters are reasonable, they do not represent worst-case scenarios. It also was suggested that, as was the case following 9/11, the negative impact for the College could lag a year and be greater in 2010 than in 2009.

4. Savings Suggestion Report

Justin Sipher reported that he, Mary Cogan, and Barbara Krause have reviewed all responses received as a result of the President’s invitation to make saving suggestions. Approximately 100 responses reflecting approximately 150 ideas have been received. A spreadsheet forwarding the text of all submissions was distributed in advance of the meeting. The identities of those who chose to include their names were not included on the IPPC handout. Mr. Sipher noted that in some cases – e.g., the idea of canceling the holiday party this year – the time had passed to consider the suggestion. Vice President Michael Casey noted, as an aside, that attendance at the holiday party this year was about the same as last year, that we went forward with the event this year in part because of financial commitments had already been made, and that this event is especially important for certain constituencies within the Skidmore Community.

IPPC then discussed how and what to report back to the community. It was agreed that the same group of three individuals would draft a summary statement describing clusters of certain ideas. One member cautioned that the report not convey a sense that “themes” have emerged in cases where a suggestion has been offered by one or even a couple of individuals.

It was agreed that the suggestion box (both electronic and actual) should remain open for now. Another round of suggestions might be prompted once the summary is produced.

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