

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2008

PRESENT: Professor Sue Bender, Vice Chair; Mary Lou Bates, Rochelle Calhoun, Michael Casey, Winston Grady-Willis, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress, Kim Marsella, Dan Nathan, Muriel Poston, Jeff Segrave, Justin Sipher, Michael West, Mark Huibregtse, Barbara McDonough, Mary Cogan; Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Jackie Shydowski.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of September 12, 2008 were approved as distributed, with the notation that Winston Grady-Willis was in attendance on that date.

2. Strategic Action Agenda 08-09

A revised version of the Strategic Action Agenda for 08-09 was distributed in advance of the meeting. The revised draft reflects discussion at the previous IPPC meeting as well as other edits made by President Glotzbach, primarily in response to a conversation with Trustee John Humphrey, Chair of the Board's Strategic Planning Committee. IPPC members offered no additional comments. The current draft will be shared with the Board of Trustees later this month.

3. IPPC Membership – Faculty Positions

Professor John Brueggemann, Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee, has advised that the special willingness-to-serve call issued this fall yielded no faculty members willing to serve on IPPC (the one-year vacancy created by Roy Rotheim's deferral for the current year) or on the IPPC Student Affairs Subcommittee. This is the second consecutive year without faculty representation on the Student Affairs Subcommittee. It also was noted that only one faculty member has expressed a willingness to run for the IPPC faculty vacancy that will open at the end of this year. FEC is reviewing the matter to try to understand the causes. Vice Chair Sue Bender indicated that Professor Brueggemann should be invited to an IPPC meeting in the future to discuss faculty participation.

4. Current Economic Condition

Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike West began this conversation by noting that the country is in a very serious, historically significant economic downturn. Among the areas of College operations likely to be affected are retention of current students, recruiting of new students, fundraising, and the amount of income generated through investments, primarily the endowment. Notwithstanding these challenges, Skidmore stands in a relatively strong position, and Mr. West expects that we will balance the budget in the current year (taking into account over-enrollment funds and a \$900,000 contingency). But, projecting beyond the current year, budgets will be

difficult. The President's Cabinet has already held preliminary conversations and will continue those conversations in consultation with the IPPC (including its Budget and Finance Committee).

In closing his comments, Vice President West noted that Cabinet members recognize the effect that the economic downturn is having on our own community members—employees and their families as well as students and their families.

Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates then gave an update on the admissions picture. She noted that although it is still very early, applications and the number of campus visits are down compared to this time last year. The Admissions staff is continuing to travel and has had good turnouts at those visits. She expects, however, that the number of applications will drop from the record number received last year.

Vice Chair Bender then opened the floor for discussion. Comments included the following:

- Uncertainties about family financial circumstances will likely lead to greater uncertainty in Admissions. For example, some students may apply to even more colleges and might, therefore, have more choices. On the other hand, some students may not apply at all, or may not apply Early Decision if family circumstances are uncertain.
- While the market clearly will affect Skidmore and our peer institutions alike, the difficult financial situation does create the opportunity for Skidmore to identify ways to distinguish our unique strengths.
- The Financial Aid Office has not seen any significant increase in requests for mid-year adjustments to financial aid.
- For the past several years, the Admissions Office has erred on the side of admitting a smaller class (in order to gradually get down to the 2280 NFE target). Will we need to tweak that strategy this year?
- It was noted that we should expect more uncertainty in terms of students requesting leaves and applying for study abroad.
- Given the report from Vice President West, Skidmore is in the position of having time to think, talk, and act wisely in planning for future years.
- Vice President West reiterated the message from President Glotzbach—namely, that although the situation is serious, President Glotzbach is committed to maintaining Skidmore's forward momentum. This will require tough decisions, but he is confident in the College's capability to make those decisions wisely.
- In response to a question, it was noted that the College does have resources to make some adjustments to financial aid if there are requests in the spring. It was noted that over-enrollment funds help to provide this capability, but the College is planning to reduce its over-enrollment funds as it moves toward the 2280 NFE implementation.

- In response to a question, Vice President West confirmed that construction of the Zankel Music Building is moving forward as previously scheduled. The funding for the building is substantially complete, and the College is contractually obligated to move forward with that project.
- Other capital projects (major projects such as Scribner Village, the renovation of residence halls, and the Saisselin renovation, as well as small and medium-term projects) will be considered carefully. Planning for those projects will continue, and the Board may ultimately decide to approve them, but Cabinet will have to make careful decisions about which projects should move forward.
- For the past several years, the College has been funding approximately \$7.5 million per year on regular Capital Budget items from the Operating Budget. In the last four years, the College has also funded residence hall renovations, with much of that funding coming from over-enrollment revenue. Even with those expenditures, the College has not been able to keep up with deferred maintenance needs.
- The budget planning process will begin in the next 2 to 4 weeks. Recommendations for capital projects as well as other budget expenses will be subject to further discussion in the Cabinet, IPPC's Budget and Finance Subcommittee and, ultimately, by the full IPPC.

5. Facilities Planning Process

IPPC members received, in advance of the meeting, a draft document entitled "Proposed Major Capital Project Planning Process." This document includes a review of overarching considerations for the planning of capital projects, sets forth organizing concepts, and outlines the states of major capital project planning; appendices to the document set forth the charge to a proposed Space Planning Working Group as well as a Space Request Form. Vice Chair Bender opened the floor for discussion. Comments included the following:

- There was broad consensus that the organizing concepts make sense and are helpful. It was suggested that the reference to the *Strategic Plan* as a guide to decision-making is rather vague and that implementation in priority setting will be key.
- One member expressed concern about the amount of time that the President's Cabinet will devote to facilities planning.
- There was broad support for the concept, articulated in the document, that the College owns all campus space. At the same time, it was acknowledged that the concept represents a change for at least certain areas of local culture. There are many senses in which we want those who work in particular spaces to consider space as "their own" (e.g., to feel a sense of pride, to notice when the area needs care, etc.). The notion of sharing space with others has challenges in certain areas – e.g., lab spaces that must be adapted for different functions. Overall, IPPC viewed this as a delicate balance that decision makers should be aware of.

Conversation then turned to how and when this process would be implemented. President Glotzbach does intend to begin implementation this year. It was noted that if the Space Planning Working Group is viewed as an all-college committee, the *Faculty Handbook* indicates that the IPPC, the SGA, and FEC must all approve the process. Following a discussion, it was IPPC's consensus that the Space Planning Working Group should be constituted this year as a task force or pilot project to be formalized (with any adjustments as appropriate) at a later date. In response to a suggestion, a consensus emerged that a student should be added to the Space Planning Working Group membership. It was further noted that if the group has work over the summer, appropriate accommodations will need to be made for faculty and student members who are not necessarily on campus at that time.

6. Student Affairs Subcommittee Update

Dean Rochelle Calhoun briefed IPPC members on several items that will be discussed at the Student Affairs Subcommittee and later this year with the full IPPC. Those matters included the following:

Case-Ladd Task Force Report: A copy of the Case Center-Ladd Hall Task Force Final Report (May 2008) was circulated in advance of the meeting. [Secretary's note: Although the document is dated May 2008, it was not received until late July, 2008.] President Glotzbach has asked Dean Calhoun to play a coordinating role in considering the Task Force's recommendations and how to move forward. She has scheduled a meeting with Task Force members to hear from them directly and to outline an appropriate process. One aspect she will explore is the overarching consensus indicated by the Task Force that Case should be considered a common space, and what that means for the community. She invited anyone with questions, comments, or concerns to be in touch with her.

Scribner Village Replacement: Dean Calhoun has constituted a small working group to advance program planning for the Scribner Village replacement. That work will continue notwithstanding the challenging economic situation. One fundamental assumption is that the College's residential program gradually moves toward more autonomous living over the course of a student's four years at Skidmore. The working group has created a survey which will be distributed in the coming weeks. The working group will then have a public meeting to discuss the feedback.

Americans with Disabilities Act Review: Student Affairs is working with a consultant well-known in the field of disability accommodations to take a comprehensive look at how Skidmore supports those with disabilities. This work is supported by a gift from parents of a disabled student. The review will be conducted this semester and into the spring semester. The review is expected to help the College identify a long-range plan for addressing appropriate changes.

Student Affairs Subcommittee Agenda: The major topics expected to occupy the Student Affairs Subcommittee this semester are the Health Task Force Report (reviewing recommendations and deciding what follow-up is appropriate) and working with the Campus Environment Committee

to address posting and chalking concerns on campus. With respect to the latter item, it was suggested that the Student Affairs Subcommittee might want to involve appropriate people from Communications and Information Technology in order to assist the Subcommittee's deliberations.

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