

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 3, 2009

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

ABSENT: Mary Lou Bates, Rochelle Calhoun, Jeff Segrave, and Alex Stark.

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of March 20, 2009 were approved with minor corrections.

2. UWW Update

At the IPPC meeting on March 20, IPPC members offered thoughts on next steps related to the University Without Walls decision-making process. President Glotzbach expressed his appreciation for that feedback. Consistent with the suggestions, he (together with Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan Kress and Dean of Special Programs Jeff Segrave) met earlier in the morning (April 3, 2009) with the UWW staff to share his recommendation. President Glotzbach indicated that he would recommend to the Board of Trustees in May that the UWW program be closed. He shared a written statement communicating his decision, which he intends to distribute campus-wide this afternoon. President Glotzbach reported that the UWW staff accepted this news with sadness, yet with great professionalism. President Glotzbach further noted that he has directed Dean Segrave to explore ways in which the College might better facilitate access to degree-bearing courses for College employees once UWW is closed.

3. Community Meetings Update

President Glotzbach reported on the two community meetings that were held the previous day. He noted that he is trying to strike a balance between keeping the community informed and not getting ahead of IPPC discussions, especially conversations in the Budget and Finance Subcommittee. He then summarized the following as the most significant points conveyed during the community meetings:

- The President and Cabinet are actively engaged in planning for a variety of possible scenarios; in light of the uncertain times, however, the College will defer making decisions until they must be made. In the meantime, he will keep the community informed and will strive for a high level of transparency.
- The proposed comprehensive fee increase of 3.9% for FY'10 appears still to be within a reasonable range.

- In light of the significant projected deficits that would occur in the “out years” (FY ’11 and beyond), President Glotzbach expressed his belief that we must reconsider the previously stated operating goal of trying to reduce the current student enrollment (now at approximately 2,380 NFE) down to the target of 2,280 NFE. Moreover, moving the “over-enrollment” revenues above the line would allow the College to close the structural gap between revenues and expenses.
- Personnel costs represent approximately two-thirds of the College’s operating costs. Although the College has achieved savings through the current strategic hiring freeze, additional savings in personnel costs will be required in order to address projected deficits. No layoffs are anticipated for FY ’10, but all options – including a possible “reduction in force” – are under consideration for FY ’11 and beyond.
- Given the magnitude of projected deficits, President Glotzbach indicated that it is difficult to see how the College will be able to offer a 2% GSA in FY ’10 or ’11.

President Glotzbach emphasized that no decisions have been made yet on these points, and further input will be sought from IPPC’s Budget and Finance Subcommittee and the IPPC as a whole. In the meantime, he will continue to be forthright at community meetings and to share information about major decisions that are under consideration.

Comments in response to President Glotzbach’s summary included the following:

- With regard to enrollment targets, members were reminded that for the current year, the guidance to the Admissions office was to “miss high.”
- The College has managed the additional student count in recent years with adjunct faculty hires. If a decision is made to keep the student count at current levels at the same time we are reducing adjunct faculty appointments, the campus will feel different. It would be necessary, in that case, to look at caps on course enrollments.
- It was suggested that we have had a somewhat unrealistic goal of attempting to predict enrollment too precisely. It was suggested that a margin of +/- 30 students is reasonable in any year.
- Admissions and the Office of Institutional Research did elaborate yield projections this year. Notwithstanding that very good work, it is still very difficult to predict yield this year, in particular, with so many external variables.

Preliminary feedback suggests that employees are very appreciative of the President’s willingness to be open about the College’s current planning and to take questions on any subject.

4. Budget Update

Vice President West handed out two news articles describing the market situation in general and the market situation for higher education in particular. He also provided a summary of announced college and university comprehensive fee increases as well as several charts depicting the College's capital expenditures and depreciation funding.

Mr. West then distributed a document summarizing Cabinet conversations of budget assumptions for FY '10 to FY '14. The document showed the various alternatives considered by Cabinet and the Cabinet's current revised projections. He discussed in some detail the projections that have been revised since the Board considered the budget planning assumptions last October. Those items include changes related to the number of budgeted student enrollment, market appreciation, the endowed income "avail rate", the general salary adjustment (GSA), and further reductions in the services and supplies budget. With respect to GSA, he noted that further discussion will take place in Cabinet and within the Budget and Finance Subcommittee. Serious concern has been expressed for employees who earn at the low end of the pay scale, with a suggestion that we try to preserve some increase or provide a lump-sum payment to individuals earning below a certain threshold. Every decision represents a balancing act. In the end, when all of the budget assumptions are played out, that will determine the College's target for a likely reduction in force.

One IPPC member asked to what extent certain assumptions have been made – e.g., is there an assumption that a reduction in force is the last option? It was noted that the budget assumptions reflected in the handout implicitly makes this point by indicating that reductions in force are still to be determined. The College will make every effort to balance the various factors in a reasonable way in order to consider a reduction in force as the last reasonable alternative.

It was noted that we already have made decisions to reduce some contingent faculty positions and that, with respect to those positions, it feels very much like a reduction in force has already occurred. It was further noted that various hourly employees whose overtime pay has been significantly curtailed have also experienced a loss of income.

One member observed that part of the communication effort must be contextual information that helps Skidmore community members understand the choices the College must make. It was noted, for example, that other colleges and universities have already announced layoffs. In the end, IPPC members recognized that the current budget planning context requires an intricate balancing act, and that reasonable people may differ on what choices the College should make.

IPPC members support President Glotzbach's use of Mr. West's handout (showing "revised projections" of budget assumptions) in various campus conversations. Mr. West concluded by inviting IPPC members to contact him at any time with questions.

5. Other Reports and Updates

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SGA Update – Jackie Shydrowski reported that the “social contract emergency” document distributed by a couple of students who purported to sign on behalf of “the student body” has raised many issues. SGA was not aware of the document before it was sent, but they are working with the students to address some of the issues that were raised (e.g., the Student Bill of Rights and concerns about lighting in the Northwoods Apartments areas).

Time Magazine Article – The April 6, 2009 edition of *Time* magazine includes an article entitled “The Financial Aid Game” that focuses on Skidmore’s approach to financial aid. Several IPPC members expressed their sense that the article was very positive and thanked those who prepared for and hosted the reporter. Overall, the article conveys a sense that Skidmore is a thoughtful place and is weighing admissions and financial aid decisions very carefully.

President Glotzbach noted that there is always some risk in agreeing to host such a visit. He expressed regret with the suggestion in the final paragraph that diversity may be a casualty of the current economic climate; he rejects that implication and affirmed that the College is working very hard to sustain its recent progress related to diversity goals. President Glotzbach reported that a recent entry on a *Times Union* blog discussing the *Time* article included a very positive comment from a parent whose child had just been admitted to Skidmore and received a very generous financial aid offer. President Glotzbach concluded by reiterating his belief that Skidmore continues to offer a tremendous value and to provide exactly the type of education that students need in times of uncertainty.

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