

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 16, 2009**

PRESENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Chair; Professor Adrienne Zuerner, Vice Chair; Rochelle Calhoun, Michael Casey, Winston Grady-Willis, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress, Muriel Poston, Jeff Segrave, Justin Sipher, Michael West, Mary Cogan, Tim Harper, Raina Bretan, James Welsh, Hugh Foley, and Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Mary Lou Bates, Kim Marsella, Erica Bastress-Dukehart, and Ann Petruzzelli.

GUEST: Sarah Goodwin

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the October 2, 2009 meeting were approved with one minor correction.

**2. Assessment: Goals for Student Learning and Development**

Professor Sarah Goodwin attended the meeting in her role as Faculty Assessment Coordinator. Her objective in presenting the “Goals for Student Learning and Development” is to inform IPPC of the process and substance related to the assessment document. She noted that the Assessment Steering Committee already has received some feedback that will result in changes to the document. That group has been working closely with the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning, chaired by Professor Erica Bastress-Dukehart. It was noted that although Professor Bastress-Dukehart was not able to attend today’s IPPC meeting, she supports Professor Goodwin’s presentation of the materials and discussion by IPPC.

Professor Goodwin then invited questions and comments regarding the assessment document. Feedback included the following:

- In response to a question about the meaning of “intellectual humility,” Professor Goodwin noted that this item has been the subject of considerable discussion and some disagreement. The Assessment Steering Committee intends the phrase to convey a readiness to embark with humility upon a path of lifelong learning. Some faculty members, however, believe that it is important for students to take pride in what they do know and not to adopt too passive an attitude. Professor Goodwin acknowledged that further work would be required by faculty members in order to determine what evidence might be required to demonstrate achievement of this goal.
- Other comments related to the concept of “intellectual humility” included the suggestion that student presentations at Academic Festival (including student comments about how much more they have to learn) could be evidence that would support this goal. It was suggested that the phrase could be interpreted along the lines of fallibility – the

recognition that one could be wrong about beliefs currently held. It was suggested that lifelong learners must both be passionate about their beliefs and aware that those beliefs could be abandoned based on new evidence or thinking.

- It was suggested that the assessment goals should address the ability of students to understand and learn in a digitally rich environment, including the ability to navigate and make judgments about the reliability of the abundance of digital information, as well as the ability to learn successfully on line. Professor Goodwin responded that the assessment learning goals are very compressed and are broad enough to encompass many ideas that are not specifically visible. This is intentional, given that a liberal arts education is, by definition, very broad. She suggested that the goals under Section II (Intellectual Skills) could encompass digital learning.
- Another IPPC member suggested that other evidence of the desired intellectual skills could include the ability to work in teams (which might also be encompassed under Section IV - Transformation – “Develop an enduring disposition to learn”).
- One member expressed appreciation for the several references to applied learning in the assessment document, noting that this concept fits well with Skidmore’s tradition of mind and hand. It also was noted, however, that finding ways to measure success related to that objective remains a challenge.
- In response to a suggestion that the document focuses on intellectual development and less on wellness and related ideas expressed in the *Strategic Plan*, Professor Goodwin suggested two places where those concepts are addressed: Section IV, bullet 3 (“habits of mind and body”) and Section III, bullet 3 (“Develop practical competencies for managing a personal and professional life”).
- It was noted that the Dean of Student Affairs and Associate Dean of Student Affairs met with the Assessment Steering Committee. Dean of Student Affairs Rochelle Calhoun shared her view that the assessment document expresses an appropriate balance between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, noting her philosophy that the role of Student Affairs must be viewed as supporting the overall academic experience. She suggested that various offices across campus will need to figure out exactly where they fit in the context of the assessment document. Professor Goodwin reported that the Assessment Steering Committee’s conversation with Deans Calhoun and Karp had been very helpful.

President Glotzbach then asked how Professor Goodwin wished to proceed. Professor Goodwin suggested that once changes have been made, the Assessment Steering Committee and CEPP would welcome the endorsement of IPPC if IPPC felt that was appropriate. Beyond that, she hopes that IPPC members will be informed readers of the document and will be in a position to help other members of the community understand the document, referring questions to the Assessment Steering Committee as appropriate.

In closing, Professor Goodwin noted that our Middle States accreditation requires that the College have learning goals at every level, including the institutional level. She hopes that the

faculty will have a discussion as a “committee of the whole” during the November Faculty Meeting so that the document can be finalized and brought to a vote by the faculty.

### **3. Student Information System**

President Glotzbach invited Justin Sipher, Chief Information Officer, and Ann Henderson, Registrar and Director of Institutional Research, to update IPPC members on the recommendation for replacement of the College’s student information system. A confidential memorandum outlining the recommendation was distributed to IPPC members in advance of the meeting. President Glotzbach emphasized that due to the sensitive nature of ongoing contract negotiations, the memo and today’s discussion must be held in strictest confidence.

Mr. Sipher then reviewed the process that has been going on for over one year to research and identify a system to replace the current student information system (Oracle). The College’s HR and Finance and Administration information systems will continue to be supported by Oracle.

IPPC members discussed various issues related to the recommended system, including functionality, cost, user interface, and implementation. Various members expressed concern that the implementation of a new system, especially in the context of the College’s current reduction-in-force planning, will place a strain on the ability of employees to do the implementation while continuing to perform their current work. The recommended vendor would provide certain consulting and training functions, but it was acknowledged that there is no plan to back-fill current work or to pay overtime in any significant way. In response to further questions, other information included the following:

- So far, the group working on this matter has focused on the “directional” decision – i.e., understanding the order-of-magnitude differences between options offered by various vendors. Once the College identifies which direction seems most favorable, the group will need to better understand the precise issues related to implementation.
- The group has looked at the ongoing business viability of various vendors as part of the process.
- One upside of the current difficult economy is that the proposed pricing for this change is significantly more favorable to the College than it would have been two years ago.
- If all aspects of the transition went precisely according to plan, students would experience the new system in April of 2012 for registration of fall 2012 courses.

Ms. Henderson expressed her appreciation for the great extent to which the process has involved consideration of concerns by the functional users. She noted that the group considering this change has been a very cohesive group. It was further noted that Admissions is a key user and supports the direction proposed in the recommendation.

The recommendation will be presented to the Board of Trustees during the October meeting. If approved, final contracts would be negotiated and then the community would be informed of the new vendor. Until that time, the information should be regarded as confidential.

#### **4. Strategic Action Agenda 09-10**

President Glotzbach reported that the Strategic Action Agenda 2009-10 has been finalized and is now posted on-line. He expressed his appreciation once again for the input of IPPC members who contributed in significant ways to improvement of the document.

President Glotzbach noted that the Strategic Action Agenda asks much of the community, particularly through the challenges laid out in Section Six. He invited thoughts about next steps for further consideration of the document.

It was noted that Community Meetings have been scheduled for November 3 and 4. One purpose of these meetings is to report on the Board of Trustee meetings, but they also would provide an opportunity to further discuss the Strategic Action Agenda. Other venues for discussion include the faculty meeting and the Student Government Association Senate meetings. Some concern was expressed that if the faculty were to hold a major discussion regarding the Student Learning Goals at its November 6 meeting, it would be difficult to hold a second substantive conversation on the Strategic Action Agenda challenges. It was suggested that faculty members could be encouraged to attend the Community Meetings on November 3 and 4. Although faculty members always are invited to those meetings, relatively few faculty members attend, because similar information is generally conveyed at the faculty meeting; it also was noted that a larger representation of faculty members at the Community Meetings could change the tenor of those meetings. It was suggested, however, that President Glotzbach could manage that concern by ensuring that non-faculty members are called upon. It also was suggested that he might allow questions in advance of the Community Meetings.

President Glotzbach will take these suggestions under consideration.

#### **6. Campus Town Hall Meetings**

IPPC reviewed once again the proposed structure and process for the campus Town Hall Meetings. Dates and times for six meetings have been identified, and a website for the campus Town Hall Meetings should be ready to “go live” early the week of October 19. President Glotzbach and Vice Chair Adrienne Zuerner have conferred and identified a preliminary list of potential meeting moderators. Once the moderators have been identified, the next step will be to identify table facilitators. Suggestions for the Town Hall Meetings included emphasizing that both the *Strategic Plan* and the Strategic Action Agenda 2009-10 Preamble will frame the discussion; a suggestion also was made to use a voicemail blast to encourage attendance.

The Committee then did a mini-exercise, thinking about the questions that will be posed and the types of responses that might be helpful. Examples of what we might do more of included more collaboration with alumni in the classroom, more collaboration between Student Affairs

and Academic Affairs, better use of technology and other campus efforts to recruit prospective students, and better mentoring of students regarding post-graduate opportunities. Examples of what we might do less of included e-mail (e-mail-free Friday), fewer events with a greater focus on community building, and less printing. Examples of what we might do differently included development of an all-College calendar.

President Glotzbach then invited IPPC to consider a subset of IPPC members who would serve as the Town Hall Meeting Synthesis Group. A proposed timeframe for this work was as follows:

- Campus Town Hall Meetings completed by November 2009.
- Draft interim report to IPPC on February 5, 2010, to the Board of Trustees at its February 25-26 meeting, and then to the community for feedback.
- Final Town Hall report to IPPC on April 30, to the Board of Trustees at its May 20-21 meeting, and then to the community.

The following individuals volunteered for the synthesis group: Rochelle Calhoun, Mary Cogan, Justin Sipher, and Adrienne Zuerner. President Glotzbach expressed his appreciation for their willingness to take on this work.

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