

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 31, 2020

PRESENT: Mary Lou Bates; Cerri Banks; Joerg Bibow; Grace Burton, Vice Chair; Abby Ciccarone '22; Greg Gerbi; Philip A. Glotzbach, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; Stephen Ives, Carolyn Lundy; Martin Mbugua; Jennifer Mueller; Kendrah Murphy; Donna Ng; Michael Orr; Joe Porter; David Robakidze '20; Levi Rogers; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling, Amy Tweedy, and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT: Sean Campbell.

The meeting was called to order at 10:33 a.m. by Chair President Glotzbach.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the December 13, 2019 Meeting

With no proposed changes, the minutes from the December 13, 2019 meeting were approved.

2. President's Report

President Glotzbach referenced four items related to the landscape surrounding admissions and financial aid:

- a) Admissions numbers for this year are starting to become available. We did well in Early Decision (ED) I – admitting slightly more students than last year (with a larger commitment to financial aid). Numbers for ED II are up slightly as well, and we also are slightly ahead of last year's application numbers for international students.
- b) We are seeing a decline in the overall number of applicants – relative to last year – for the first time in quite a few years. This will still be the third largest applicant pool in the history of the College. But we are down 7% from last year. Moreover, we are hearing that some other comparable schools are seeing declines as well.
- c) We, like our peers, are beginning to see the effects of a demographic shift that has been evident since 2010 of fewer domestic traditional college age students. Specifically, in 2010, 18.1 million undergraduate students were enrolled; in 2017, that number was 16.8 million – about a 7% decrease. And this trend will continue through the next decade.
- d) We are seeing a continuation of the trend from previous years with higher percentages of applicants requesting financial aid.

The bottom line is that over the coming years, we will be facing increasingly fierce competition for the students we need to enroll to maintain financial sustainability. We will need to do everything we possibly can do to increase our appeal to potential applicants. This is one reason why it was so important to move forward on the Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS). The Athletics Facilities project can be seen in this light as well. It will increase our appeal to a broad range of potential applicants – not just to varsity athletes but to students in general to whom fitness and health are important values.

3. Response to Athletic Facilities Petition

President Glotzbach thanked IPPC, the Skidmore community, and the authors of the petition for speaking up. The authors of the petition stated that they “are not opposed to the construction of new athletics facilities.” But they also stated their belief that the project could be improved if the Administration would “take their concerns seriously and act on them.” Furthermore they “bring forth this petition in the spirit of collegiality and look forward to opportunities to collaborate moving forward.” President Glotzbach affirmed that this project is indeed important for the future of the College and that we need to reframe this moment as one of collaboration and not conflict. He suggested that we are at our best when we collaborate and work together and reminded the committee that we have tried to create this reality with IPPC and in the community at large. President Glotzbach spoke to each of the issues regarding the athletics facilities petition submitted to IPPC:

a) Greenberg Child Care Center

President Glotzbach noted that it is clear from comments in the IPPC, in the community meetings, and in the petition brought forth that the Greenberg Child Care Center (GCCC) represents an important value for a substantial portion of our community. He recognized that the potential disruption during the Athletics facilities construction has raised concerns. President Glotzbach stated that the President’s Cabinet is willing to work with IPPC and the Greenberg Center staff – with whom they have been in conversation – to explore the possibility of moving the Center to another location on campus. The Center is a benefit, and in this time of significant budgetary challenges, we need to examine all our benefits carefully to determine which are most important and how they should be funded. We do need to understand that if we make the decision to relocate the Center, there will be costs. We are working now to explore possibilities and understand better the costs involved. We also need to understand that the GCCC operates at a deficit – approximately \$200K per year – and we will need to consider whether there are ways to reduce that cost.

b) Athletic Facilities Project

President Glotzbach reminded IPPC members that the athletic facilities project is part of Goal IV of the *Strategic Plan* and that planning for this project has been underway since 2010 – planning that included input from students and others. But in 2016 the plans were shelved due to concerns over costs. Last February, the Board convened an Athletics Working Group with the goal of developing new and more affordable plans. This work resulted in a new proposal request (RFP) to several design/build firms. The Athletics Council was notified of this work. Work progressed quicker than anticipated over the summer. IPPC discussed the project in September. The governance committee chairs were informed in September at the Shared Governance Breakfast. The project was then mentioned at two Community Meetings and at a November 25, 2019 Open Forum called for this purpose. Moving forward, we will provide additional opportunities for comment this spring – including comments from current students. Fundraising efforts are ongoing. We are still working to determine if we have sufficient one-time capital funding.

c) Sustainability

President Glotzbach reported that the Athletics Facilities project architects were charged to include as many sustainability features as possible in the design (within budgetary constraints). The architects informed us that the return on investment (ROI) for including additional

sustainability investments in the Athletics Building – Phase I – (primarily, solar and geo-thermal) would not be attractive. However, we are doing additional research into this issue and plan to share the resulting data with the Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS) and IPPC, when it becomes available. As we look strategically at Skidmore’s commitment to environmental sustainability, it is important that we keep focused on a central question: What represents the best allocation of scarce resources to achieve the greatest gain in campus sustainability? We need to ensure that we are getting the best sustainability return for our scarce resources. Concern was also expressed around the involvement – or lack of involvement – by the CSS in the planning of this project. Last fall, we asked the CSS to research other colleges to determine what guidelines they have in place for designing building projects – with the end of proposing a set of guidelines that would help us as we move forward with future building projects. This is a much more strategic role for the CSS to play, as opposed to being involved in individual projects.

Considerable discussion ensued regarding President Glotzbach’s remarks and the petition. Members thanked President Glotzbach for listening to the concerns raised in the petition and all the work in progress to be responsive. IPPC members stated that they were appreciative of President Glotzbach’s addressing the concerns regarding the GCCC. A few members stated that they believe that the GCCC should be moved sooner rather than later. In response to a question regarding GCCS’s operating deficit, Vice President for Finance and Administration & Treasurer Donna Ng explained that we charge a market rate for daycare at GCCC. We comply with the teacher:student ratios that all daycare centers must follow under New York State law. It is an expensive enterprise, and it does represent a benefit to our employees (who are able to take advantage of it). VP Ng suggested that we can perhaps look at this benefit package for possible adjustments.

IPPC agrees that the Athletic Facilities project is important and that we need to be mindful about our process moving forward, ensuring trust with the community. Members raised the point that student input in the Athletic Center is important. Student Government Association (SGA) Vice President for Financial Affairs Abby Ciccarone ’22 voiced that students never received an official communication about the Athletic Facilities update nor did the communication regarding the November 25th Open Forum go out to students. Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs Cerri Banks stated that she recently worked with the SGA leaders to develop a Spring communication plan that is currently in place and the administration has done what the SGA has asked us to do. Dean Banks stated that the Athletic Facilities project updates are posted in the SGA meetings minutes and in the Students Affairs Department meeting minutes. Dean Banks conceded that it is a big challenge to develop a long-term cohesive student response as students graduate.

There was recognition that IPPC members have continued to ask that sustainability measures remain at the forefront of this project. Chair of the Campus Sustainability Subcommittee Levi Rogers inquired about the exact criteria for how we measure ROI as it relates to this project, past projects, and future sustainability efforts. President Glotzbach responded that we are doing additional research on the ROI for this project and hope to share more information (with IPPC and the CSS) shortly. He also noted that we need to consider our larger sustainability efforts as a whole (for example, the large renewable-energy project that the College may join and that would significantly reduce our overall carbon footprint).

Moving forward, there was agreement that we need to continue to have community conversations that engage the entire community. We need to be responsive to the petitioners and to the Skidmore Community, take suggestions, and hear what people have to say. Work remains to be done on a number of fronts regarding this project, and so more information will be forthcoming in due course. President Glotzbach plans to make additional comments and provide opportunities for continuing dialogue for the community at large and at upcoming Faculty Meetings.

4. Cambridge Hill Partners Consultants and Steering Group

President Glotzbach thanked those who stepped forward and were appointed by him and Vice Chair Burton to serve on the IPPC steering group for Cambridge Hill Partners: Michael Orr, Martin Mbugua, Grace Burton, Joerg Bibow, Michelle Hubbs, and Abby Ciccarone.

IPPC met with Cambridge Hill Partners (CHP) by video conference to discuss the proposed work plan. Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr stated that the steering group met with CHP in January to develop the work plan. The IPPC, President's Cabinet, President Glotzbach (and in terms of future execution of plans – President-elect Conner) all have a role to play in the work plan. CHP stated that it is essential that a well thought out work plan be in place in order for the project to be engaging and successful. The plan needs to encompass clarity around the budget, the process, who is going to make what decisions, and what preliminary work needs to happen before the budget is brought forth to the Board of Trustees. CHP will assist us in framing and constructing the conversations. A message that is concise and consistent needs to be sent to the community shortly.

IPPC and CHP raised several framing questions and points, including the following:

- We now need to focus on the requirements needed to move ahead and get the work done;
- Roles need to be clearly aligned and understood;
- We will need to be clear about the information that we know and about what we do not know;
- What is the financial framework of the institution?
- What are the potential pressure points that we may encounter as we move forward?
- What elements does the budget comprise, and how does the college budget work? What goes into the revenue side, what goes into the operating side, and why is this an issue?
- We need to develop a communication plan and a timeline for the plan. CHP will work with our communication and marketing team to ensure that all communications are prompt and appropriate.

Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork thanked CHP and the steering group for the work done thus far. VP Woodfork suggested that the upcoming February 7 or February 28 Faculty Meetings, early March Community Meetings, divisional meetings, and the *Skidmore Weekly Bulletin* could be used as a vehicle for communication. Dean Orr replied that this was possible for updates.

IPPC members noted the substantial time commitment this engagement with CHP will take and the need to balance this with other agenda items and Spring semester work.

5. Call for Agenda Items

- a) Oracle Update (bumped from our 12/13/19 meeting agenda);
- b) Religious Observance Policy (returning from 12/13/19 meeting)

6. Other Business

No other business was brought forward.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Please inform the President's Office of any changes to these minutes