

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 15, 2019**

**PRESENT:** Cerri Banks; Mary Lou Bates; 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; Joseph Porter; David Robakidze '20; Levi Rogers; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling, Amy Tweedy; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

**ABSENT:** Sean Campbell.

The extended meeting (10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.) was called to order at 10:33 a.m. by Chair President Glotzbach.

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the November 1, 2019 Meeting**

With no proposed changes, the minutes from the November 1, 2019 meeting were approved.

**2. Budget and 5-Year Financial Update**

Vice President for Finance and Administration Donna Ng provided an update on the Fiscal Year (FY) '20, FY '21, and the five-year financial projections. For FY '20, our enrollment and retention models were on target, but we did not meet our financial aid spending target, which, in turn, is the primary factor for the above the line deficit. Carrying forward this financial aid figure to FY '21 is the primary reason for the projected deficit of \$6 million. The five-year financial model is based on our parameter of a 3.5% increase in our comprehensive fee (in line with our peers based on available data), a Skidmore fund 1% increase, (we are currently working on increasing the amount of this fund), an increase of 2.5% to wages, and a 7% increase in healthcare. With these parameters, our budget deficit is forecasted to continue to increase each fiscal year. The immediate goal is to balance the budget for FY '21 and then share and engage the community in five-year budget planning to eliminate the projected future deficits.

VP Ng provided options as to where we can start looking at ways to balance the FY '21 budget. Options included reviewing financial aid assumptions, reducing GSA, implementing a position hiring freeze, increasing growth for the Skidmore fund, etc. There is no one simple solution. Moving forward, we need to strategize on how we can reduce costs and increase revenues, while maintaining the core goals of the College. The Subcommittee on Budget and Finance and the IPPC will continue to work on financial sustainability plans. We are going to have to think creatively.

Vice President and Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates noted that we are currently seeing a decrease of 13% in our applicant pool. This is reflective of the overall trend with our peer institutions. We need to keep this data in mind as we plan.

**3. Proposed Consultants**

IPPC continued to review the idea of engaging a consulting firm to assist with financial sustainability conversations and planning. IPPC met with three consultants from the proposed consultant group Cambridge Hill Partners. Cambridge Hill Partners provided an overview of their approach, including delivering the framework, methodology, and requirements for success. The firm has the capacity to design a process that engages the whole community (students, staff, faculty, and the Board of Trustees). A general outline of the services, activities, and proposed

timing was presented. Use of an outside firm may provide the structure to ensure that all constituents are engaged and that everyone has a voice, bringing efficiency and capacity to the budget-planning process.

Cambridge Hill Partners led the IPPC through a brainstorming session. The question was asked: “What constitutes success?” IPPC responded with these elements:

- providing feedback on all ideas expressed,
- hearing from all groups campus-wide,
- educating the community,
- understanding the decision-making process,
- providing continuous updates and engagement,
- enabling the new President to be included,
- providing clarity,
- ensuring trust in the decision-making process.

Cambridge Hill Partners explained that their goal for the College would be to design a process that speaks to all of the expressed deliverables. The firm will need IPPC assistance in determining an inclusive process involving all stakeholders.

#### **4. Consultant Debrief and Decision**

After the presentation and discussion, the consultants were thanked for their time and excused. IPPC members continued discussing whether or not we should move forward with the hiring of Cambridge Hill Partners. Several questions and concerns were brought forth including:

Q: Can we obtain data regarding their success stories? Can we complete a reference check?

A: Yes. VP Ng will obtain reference check information and we will follow up.

Q: What is the reporting structure?

A: Cambridge Hill will report to the President’s Cabinet and continuously keep IPPC updated.

Q: How does engaging with Cambridge Hill Partners relate to the on-going healthcare discussions?

A: The processes will need to run in parallel. Healthcare needs to be incorporated in our planning this Spring. The consultants will assist us looking at the long-term prospects.

IPPC noted the pros and cons of engaging consultants. Members agreed that we need to be clear about associated costs, inclusivity, timeline, and processes for feedback. Additionally, we need to be intentional about including the new president in this process. This is an opportunity for the community to come together, to resolve the issue of future financial deficits, and speak to a new leader.

After thorough discussion, a vote was called. **IPPC voted unanimously to engage the consultants pending successful referencing.** VP Ng will obtain the reference list from Cambridge Hill Partners and President’s Cabinet will determine who completes the references. Once references are checked, the results will be shared with IPPC. If we move forward, Cambridge Hill Partners will return next meeting.

## 5. Student Wages

There was discussion regarding the student wage rate. An excerpt from the Student Wage Open forum was presented, and the recommendations of the IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance were reviewed:

“The IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance met on October 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the topic of minimum wage for students. The subcommittee noted that half of our NY6 peers already pay their student workers the state minimum wage (although they are not legally required to do so) and that Skidmore’s student worker program is significantly larger than that of any our peers. After discussion, the subcommittee decided to recommend to IPPC and the Cabinet that:

1. Effective June 1, 2020 (the start of the fiscal year 2021), the minimum wage paid for student work should be increased to \$11.80 per hour, the prevailing New York State minimum wage at that time.
2. During the intervening period, the Skidmore College student employment program should be reviewed, with attention paid to the following areas:
  - a. Planning for future changes to the student minimum wage as the NY minimum wage increases;
  - b. The merits of continuing a tiered wage scale structure for student work;
  - c. The categories of student work;
  - d. Possibly prioritizing the allocation of student employment based on student financial need.
3. Any other changes in the student employment program should be effective June 1, 2020 at the earliest.”

The process for future student wage rate changes, wage structure, and how students can be engaged in the process moving forward were all discussed. **IPPC voted unanimously to raise the student wage rate for FY ‘21 to the NYS minimum wage rate (at that time) of \$11.80 hour. This change will be effective June 1, 2020.**

## 6. Call for Agenda Items

- a) Updates on the proposed changes to Title IX procedures (requested by Dean of Students and Vice President of Student Affairs Cerri Banks).
- b) Continued discussion regarding the engagement of the consultant group Cambridge Hill Partners.
- c) Continued discussion regarding financial sustainability and the budget.

## 7. Other Business

It was reported that coffee is being sold in the Case Center that contains CBD and that an outside vendor was distributing samples. Finance and Administration will follow up.

Meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

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