

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 3, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Cerri Banks, Joerg Bibow; Grace Burton, Vice Chair; Sean Campbell; Abby Ciccarone '22; Greg Gerbi; Philip A. Glotzbach, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; 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; Peter von Allmen; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

**ABSENT: None.**

**GUESTS:** President-Elect Marc Conner; 2020-2021 IPPC Members: SGA President-Elect Rachael Borthwick '21; SGA Vice President-Elect for Financial Affairs Melanie Nolan '23; Professor and Chair of Psychology Mark Rye; Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies and Sciences Kurt Smemo; Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science Feryaz Ocakli; Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) Co-Chair and College Librarian Marta Brunner; Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Chair and Associate Professor of Psychology Casey Schofield; 2020-2021 Academic Planning Working Group Members (APWG): Associate Dean of the Faculty Pat Fehling; Associate Professor and Director of Sustainability and Environmental Studies and Sciences Karen Kellogg; Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy Pete Murray; Associate Professor of Social Work Pat Oles; Professor & Chair of Physics Mary Odekon; and Associate Professor of Art Sarah Sweeney.

**The meeting was held via Zoom** and called to order at 11:02 a.m. by Chair President Glotzbach.

It was noted that the draft meeting minutes from the May 19, 2020 IPPC meeting will be brought forth for approval at the June 18, 2020 IPPC meeting.

President Glotzbach welcomed all new members, President-Elect Marc Conner, and guests from Human Resources. He thanked the Class of 2020 Commencement Working Group for their tremendous effort in pulling together an outstanding virtual commencement, and he offered a special thank-you to IPPC member Jenni Mueller, as the faculty commencement speaker, and to David Robakidze '20 for graduating.

President Glotzbach reminded IPPC that the advice, comments, and recommendations from the group are invaluable as we move forward with decision-making processes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The President then asked for a moment of silence to honor the recent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. He acknowledged that everyone is struggling with the recent events of these African American citizens that have gripped our nation. These deaths come on top of continuing to negotiate the pandemic. He stated that he has been in consistent

contact with colleagues from the New York Six Liberal Arts Consortium (NY6), and commented that they are grappling with the complex issues with reopening our communities.

### **1. Draft Skidmore College Reopening Safety Action Plan with Human Resources**

Human Resources Consultant Sara Delaney Vero and Human Resources Associate Director Dwayne Zuhlke presented a draft of the Reopening Safety Action Plan. In accordance with Governor Cuomo's "New York Forward" reopening plan, the recommendations issued by Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and state and local health authorities the College has developed a Safety Action Plan (the "Plan"). It was noted that higher education administration falls under Phase 2 of the "New York Forward" reopening plan, while full campus reopening currently falls under Phase 4. The cornerstone of the Plan is the health and safety of employees and other community members.

HR presented the general content of the Plan, covering employees in Phase 2, which included preparing the campus for reopening, preparing and maintaining safe workspaces and premises, cleaning and safety protocols, and space and non-essential travel restrictions. In addition, the Plan outlines the steps that individuals can take in order to promote the health and safety of the campus community by continuing to adopt good hygiene practices, social distancing, and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). The Plan also outlines the processes for daily health screening, the action plan for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, and COVID-19 policies.

IPPC members responded to the presentation with several questions and suggestions. Members questioned the thinking behind the proposed requirement to have employees remain on campus during breaks and lunch. HR replied that they are open to have this shift from a requirement to a recommendation or making it optional, and that they will clarify this in the next version. It was asked if the six-foot social distancing guideline could be extended further for those building areas that lack sufficient air circulation. Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng responded that Facilities is mapping every building on campus and noting the air circulation functions currently in place. Based on these findings, recommendations for exact spacing will be determined. IPPC members suggested that specific language be added regarding conference travel guidelines. In addition, it was recommended that the appeals process for continuing to work remotely when asked to return to campus be very clear and include specific steps one must take in order to make an appeal.

IPPC thanked HR for the work they have done thus far in drafting the Plan and being open to feedback. HR will continue to revise the draft Plan as guidance from the state is received. They are looking at collaborating with Campus Safety and Facilities to support the community in carrying out the safety guidelines set forth, specifically for assistance in providing PPE to employees. In terms of a safety action plan for students, HR stated that they are awaiting guidelines from the state before incorporating those guidelines into this Plan.

An IPPC member asked about enforcement of the Plan's guidelines. President Glotzbach echoed HR and reiterated that it is a shared responsibility to maintain a safe environment for oneself and one's fellow community members. Supervisors will be tasked with being the "eyes and ears" on

the ground, but if necessary, they will be encouraged to consult with HR. President Glotzbach added that we remain in a health pandemic, and he called upon everyone to take the health and safety of the community seriously. He stated that if anyone had any additional questions or suggestions regarding the draft of the Plan to please email Human Resources Associate Director Dwayne Zuhlke and copy Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork.

## **2. 2020-2021 Academic Planning Working Group (APWG) Report and Recommendations Discussion with APWG members**

President Glotzbach then welcomed members of the Academic Planning Working Group (APWG) for a discussion of the group's report and recommendations. APWG had been charged with examining the possibility that Skidmore would be unable to reopen in the fall in the normal manner, and to identify options for how we could offer high-quality educational programs for our students under a variety of possible scenarios. In collaboration with the President's Cabinet and other bodies as appropriate (including faculty governance committees), the group was responsible for developing a proposed timeline for institutional decision-making and to submit its preliminary findings and recommendations to the President's Cabinet by June 1, 2020.

Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr briefly outlined the work of the group and their resulting recommendations. Dean Orr stressed the group worked extensively with faculty Program Chairs and Directors and had consulted with the COVID-19 Working Group, the Registrar, Student Academic Services, the Office of Academic Advising, President-Elect Marc Conner, and the chairs of governance committees, including the Faculty Executive Committee, the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning, the Curriculum Committee, and the Appointments and Tenure Committee. The group also surveyed faculty and students regarding their respective experiences of remote instruction in the latter half of the spring 2020 term, as well as faculty and student plans, concerns, and preferences for the fall semester.

In its work, APWG took as a fundamental presupposition that, prior to the resumption of any on-campus in-person instruction, Skidmore will have developed and fully implemented a requisite scale a health and safety plan that is consistent with all applicable state, local, and federal public health guidelines regarding diagnostic and serology testing, contact tracing, facilities cleaning, social distancing, quarantine capacity, shelter-in-place protocols, plexiglass barriers, etc.

Student Government Association Vice President for Financial Affairs Abby Ciccarone '22 asked that the APWG in tandem with Residential Life, clearly communicate the upcoming housing selection process and accompanying deadlines. SGA VP Ciccarone also suggested that there be a clear set of polices for the standardization of grading and attendance polices for on-line and in-person classes. In addition, she recommended that that Department Chairs have some latitude for adjusting major and minor requirements as to allow for greater flexibility, especially for juniors and seniors, many of whom have previously mapped out the four years of required coursework. Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs Cerri Banks replied that they have postponed the housing selection process and that she will provide additional communications to the student body. Dean Orr stated that the CEPP had begun discussing the

need to clarify best practices and guidelines for online and in-person class instruction and associated parameters.

IPPC members suggested that the process for applying to stay on campus in the fall for students in exceptional circumstances be very clearly spelled out. Dean Banks replied that the process for the fall will most likely be very similar to the process that was in place this past spring. That being said, she encouraged IPPC members to notify Student Affairs if they encounter any student who needs assistance. An IPPC member asked how various groups on campus, such as the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and the APWG, could continue to be involved in academic planning. Dean Orr stated that he had begun discussing with the chair of FEC the idea of creating an advisory group of faculty and students to assist with the development of implementation plans over the summer and that it was essential to involve faculty, staff, and students in planning.

IPPC thanked the APWG for all the work that the group has done and recognized the effort that lay behind the report and recommendations. In response to a question from FEC Chair Kendrah Murphy about releasing the APWG report and recommendations, President Glotzbach thanked the group and explained that the document will be shared with the wider community at a future date once Cabinet has had the time to thoroughly review and digest the information provided by the APWG and consider the range of options. He reminded everyone of the mission of the College and that any decision about which option to pursue would likely need approval by the Board of Trustees. He asked that any additional questions or suggestions from IPPC members be directed to Dean Orr with copy to VP Woodfork.

### **3. Three Planning Streams:**

#### **a) 2020-2021 Academic Planning Working Group**

Dean Orr thanked all members of the Academic Planning Working Group (APWG). He stated that although APWG's work had been completed by the June 1 deadline, a considerable amount of academic planning remained to be done to get ready for the fall semester. Members of the APWG have offered to collaborate with other groups on campus to assist with the planning of the fall semester.

#### **b) Operations**

Dean Banks responded that the COVID-19 Working Group continues to work on the plans for implementation in the fall semester. The group is currently considering restructuring to ensure sufficient representation from across campus. She noted that a lot of planning needs to happen over the summer at a time when this type of work is not traditionally accomplished.

#### **c) Financial**

Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng stated that members of her team are in the process of working through various financial models that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented. One model projects a deficit of \$20M. This model assumes a tuition discount, but no decision has been made regarding such a discount at this time. Various expense levers will be evaluated if we do have a shortfall of this magnitude. IPPC members asked what would be the specific implications to faculty and staff, and in particular any current building projects such as the Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS), if the \$20M shortfall were realized. VP

Ng agreed that it is a huge number, but that capital funds that are used for building projects are not interchangeable with operating funds for expenditures. She noted that with a deficit that large, the Board would likely review cost-savings strategies. IPPC members inquired about using cash reserves to offset the shortfall. VP Ng suggested that the Board would have to decide what level of deficit the College would be prepared to accommodate in this way.

d) Comments from President-Elect Conner

President-Elect Conner offered a brief reflection regarding the topics discussed. He shared that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the complexities facing higher education are unparalleled. He thanked everyone for the working documents that were presented. The documents were thoughtful and well developed, and he is grateful for the time and effort that the groups have put forth. He commented that the documents were strong in terms of responding to where we are, at this point in time. He reiterated that the priority is the health and safety of the Skidmore community, while at the same time providing a top-notch liberal arts education in a residential setting. He asked that we be cognizant of worst-case scenarios. Everything is on the table—but we will not lose sight of the Skidmore mission while responding to the current crisis and looking at the future.

**4. Community Check-In Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

VP Woodfork spoke to the recent communication to the Skidmore Community reflecting on current national events and the murders of Black people. He asked that as we continue to imagine our Skidmore community reuniting that we consider how we can use our voices and actions to support each other. In that spirit, VP Woodfork shared that he and Associate Dean of Student Affairs Mariel Martin will host a virtual Community Check-In related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on Thursday, June 4 at 2:00 p.m. VP Woodfork encouraged all IPPC members to join this zoom event, but reminded everyone that it is an optional gathering so employees on furlough may attend at their discretion.

**5. Call for Agenda Items**

VP Woodfork confirmed that with this current group one additional IPPC meeting is scheduled for June 18 from 10:30am-noon. IPPC typically does not convene over the summer months, but given the extraordinary times, it was felt that IPPC needs to continue to meet. VP Woodfork suggested that we be mindful of when to disseminate information to the greater community as decisions are made. SGA VP Ciccarone added that community meetings specifically for students and parents are important, and to please be cognizant of scheduling these meetings as well.

**6. Other Business**

No other business was brought forth.

Meeting adjourned at 12:33 p.m.

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