

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 20, 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.

**The meeting was held via Zoom** and called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Chair President Glotzbach.

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the February 28, 2020 Meeting**

A recommendation was made for a correction to the draft meeting minutes of February 28, 2020. Agenda item 4: HEDS Diversity and Equity Climate Survey Findings. Language in paragraph seven was updated from HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium) to CHWG (Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding HEDS Working Group), after which the **meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

**2. COVID-19 Updates and Discussion**

Several topics of discussion surrounding the College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic were brought forth:

a) Dates

President Glotzbach recognized that we have upcoming important community events and that we will need to make decisions as to whether or not they can occur as scheduled, including May's Commencement and Reunion. We have yet to determine the status of these events. We will follow guidance from public health experts and the federal and state governments. As mandates and conditions unfold, we will address these events and consider ways to engage key stakeholders.

b) Budget

Vice President for Finance and Administration & Treasurer Donna Ng offered an update regarding the management of COVID-19 and its impact on the budget. With students moving to remote learning off-campus, we will issue refunds for students' room and board charges. The refunds, which add up to several million dollars, will have a direct impact on the current operating budget. This is a significant unexpected challenge, and the Office of Finance and Administration (F&A) will be asking for assistance from budget managers in reducing overall College expenses for the remainder of this fiscal year. VP Ng stated that with the commitment and support of the Skidmore community, we can realize savings in supplies and services expenses to partially offset the amount of several million dollars in room and board refunds. We understand that the allocated budget is, at least to a significant extent, used for spending that supports and advances the College's priorities and is viewed as essential in general. But the exceptional circumstances in which we find ourselves require that we prioritize expenses and

identify critical needs. Thus, F&A will be asking budget managers to suspend all nonessential spending from now through May 31, 2020, the end of the fiscal year. F&A will develop a process to enable budget managers to adjust their current operating budgets to reflect these savings.

Once again, our community needs to work together now more than ever to support each other and do our part to ensure that Skidmore remains financially strong and well-positioned for the future. The success of this process depends on the understanding and support of the College community.

VP Ng also shared information from the Office of Human Resources in response to Governor Cuomo's issuing executive order 202.6, which requires employers to reduce the in-person workforce at any work location by 75% no later than 8 p.m. on March 20, with exceptions for certain categories of services. In the midst of sharing the context of the mandate implications on the Skidmore Community, VP Ng received an "updated" mandate from the Governor's Office. New York State issued a new executive order that **requires all "non-essential" workers to work remotely, beginning at 8 p.m. Sunday, March 22, and extending through April 17.** The order does not apply to "essential businesses," including grocery stores, banks, pharmacies, wine and spirits stores, and other companies critical to public health and safety. It is part of the state's efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

In compliance with the order, except for certain functions, all members of the Skidmore faculty and staff will be required to work remotely, if possible, for the duration of the order. Employees who are able to telecommute are expected to continue their important work serving our students and stakeholders remotely. To the extent possible, we encourage faculty, staff, and supervisors to think creatively about work, such as special projects that may be done remotely.

Several IPPC members brought forth questions regarding the new mandate issued by Governor Cuomo. President Glotzbach and VP Ng responded that the President's Cabinet will meet directly following IPPC to draft a memo to the community outlining the measures needed to implement the new mandate. The health and wellbeing of our community are our top concerns. There are employees who absolutely have to be on campus to support the students that have been granted permission to stay. At this time, we cannot determine what summer operations or fall 2020 is going to look like.

#### c) Student Concerns/Petition

Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs Cerri Banks responded to the recent student concerns over the College's response to COVID-19 and the student petition that was shared with IPPC. Dean Banks and Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr co-chair the College's COVID-19 Working Group, which, she reports, is making the best decisions they can for the Skidmore community and prioritizing students' needs. Dean Banks acknowledged that many difficult choices have been required.

In response to concerns raised in the student petition regarding students' applications to remain on campus, Dean Banks outlined the process. The Office of Student Affairs formed a group to review each individual student application on a case-by-case basis, because such a review

allowed for maximum attention to individual needs. Dean Banks outlined the criteria utilized to evaluate applications. She noted that the group is aware that this process created anxiety and fear, and Dean Banks apologized, recognizing that she and her colleagues were very sorry for the emotional toll the wait created for some students. There will be just under 200 students remaining on campus at this time, noting that the process is fluid and numbers may change.

Dean Banks stressed that any student approved to remain in on-campus housing would continue to have access to food, though because of Governor Cuomo's recent mandate regarding restaurant closings, Dining Services will only be able to prepare "take out" meals for students. The Office of Student Affairs understands that in some cases, the needs of students living in on-campus apartments without meal plans may be complicated by the loss of a work-study position. The Office of Student Affairs is working with F&A to address that issue.

Support from the Office of Student Academic Services (SAS) for international students has been ongoing, and they are diligently working with individual students to help address housing needs, on-and off-campus storage, Optional Practical Training (OPT), and travel issues. International students should continue to contact International Student and Scholar Advisors in SAS for assistance. Additionally, the Advancement Division is working with Student Government Association (SGA) representatives to figure out creative solutions for support, including helping to create a fund to support students who are most impacted by this sudden change.

Dean Banks stated that she appreciates that students are thinking of creative ways to help and support their peers who may be especially impacted by these changes. At the same time, we need to be thoughtful and considerate of any potential health, safety, and privacy risks and unintended consequences of financial support (e.g. taxing gifts, etc.). Collection of perishable food and clothing during a pandemic is a health and safety risk. Students, faculty, staff, families, and alumni all want to help, and we need to consolidate those resources effectively and distribute them fairly. For example, any decisions regarding financial support need to be part of the process, but at the same time we are unable to share private information about student finances.

Dean Banks recognized the efforts and feedback from SGA President David Robakidze '20, member of the COVID-19 Working Group, and SGA Vice President of Financial Affairs Abby Ciccarone '22. SGA President Robakidze '20 participated on the COVID-19 Working Group in the initial development of the processes and communications to students. At that time, speaking on behalf of the student body, SGA President Robakidze recommended that the COVID-19 Working Group approve all high-financial-need international and domestic student appeals to remain in on-campus housing. Dean Banks acknowledged that this has occurred. SGA President Robakidze also requested that all students approved to remain in on-campus apartments currently without meal plans would have access to work-study position options. Dean Banks acknowledged that while all students living on campus have access to food, they are still working on the work-study question.

SGA President Robakidze and SGA VP Ciccarone mentioned that students are concerned about life for those students remaining on campus, and students want clarification on the issues that these students are facing. From a student point of view, the communication process and the role

out of the information caused a great deal of student anxiety. Students felt “left out” of the loop and had concerns regarding knowing about all the decisions that were being made. Students truly believe that the intent is to support them, but they are dissatisfied with the communication.

Moving forward, it was agreed that we need to work on putting structures for better student communication in place. It was suggested that a one-page one FAQ to all students be developed. SGA President Robakidze and SGA VP Ciccarone will work with Dean Banks to draft the memo. Students would like to be able to communicate their concerns as well provide constructive feedback to the administration regarding decisions being made. Dean Banks will work with SGA Executive Vice President Shirleyka Hector '20, SGA President Robakidze and SGA VP Ciccarone to establish a weekly conference call. In addition, SGA President Robakidze will take the lead on the formation of a Student Life Group to facilitate communication.

President Glotzbach thanked SGA President Robakidze and SGA VP Ciccarone for the feedback presented to IPPC. He asked that student leaders please coordinate very closely with Dean Banks and the Office of Student Affairs and to direct any questions to them. President Glotzbach once again emphasized the unpresented and unsettling time that our community is facing. There is no one answer to the multitude of questions, scenarios, and potential repercussions to the Skidmore community. This is a time when it is even more important to take responsibility for our words and actions, and to do everything in our power, personally, to remain safe and to protect our community. The President and all members of IPPC encouraged everyone to support one another and demonstrate the generosity of spirit that characterizes the Skidmore community at its best. We can all do our part to promote an effective, educated, and compassionate response to this global crisis.

### **3. Athletics Facilities Project Continued**

President Glotzbach commented that the March 5 Open Forums were extremely well attended and thanked community members for showing up and expressing their view points and questions. With the COVID-19 crisis, this project continues to be paused. Planning documents and steps for moving the Greenberg Child Care Center to the Pine Cottage Annex are still underway, though we will need to determine if we have the funding to do this move.

### **4. Other Business**

President Glotzbach again thanked everyone for their tireless commitment to the Skidmore community in working through the evolving COVID-19 crisis. He encouraged everyone is stay safe and follow the protocols that have been laid out. Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork thanked VP Ng and Administrative Assistant Candace Scott for coordinating the IPPC meeting via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

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