

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 18, 2020

PRESENT: Cerri Banks; Mary Lou Bates; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; Rachael Borthwick '21; Marta Brunner; Marc C. Conner, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; Carolyn Lundy; Martin Mbugua; Donna Ng; Michael Orr; Joe Porter; Levi Rogers; Mark Rye; Casey Schofield; Kurt Smemo; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling; Amy Tweedy; Peter von Allmen; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT: None.

GUESTS: Interim Human Resources Director Sarah Delaney Vero.

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

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the September 4, 2020 Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of September 4, 2020. With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the September 4, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.**

2. President's Report

President Conner thanked Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng for putting together the financial fundamentals session two weeks ago prior to our last committee meeting, and to all committee members who were able to attend. He noted we can revisit financial terminology and related questions throughout the year.

He reflected on the first official meeting of this academic year two weeks ago and how we are going to proceed as a committee, with our external facilitator John F. McKnight's guidance, reflecting on the work that is done together. He noted the collaborative work that is done within IPPC, emphasis on communication, and the work that is done to guide the College according to institutional needs. There will be tough issues and topics that the committee will be talking about throughout this year. The committee needs to be courageous enough to risk making mistakes, whether speaking on race, diversity, healthcare, retirement, or other topics. Each member of the committee is here to support one another while discussing these difficult topics.

Many members have noted they would like to know if agenda items are coming to the committee for consultation or endorsement, and why. Moving forward, this will be made clear during each meeting in what capacity they are seeking to engage the committee. He thanked the committee for sharing their bios, which has made it easier for him to get to know everyone but also for us to know each other better.

The Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) is developing a shared document on community norms, he asked CIGU Co-Chairs Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua C. Woodfork and College Librarian Marta Brunner to share this with committee when it is finalized. This could be something the committee implements in the weeks ahead. VP Woodfork spoke about the practices that CIGU is implementing. CIGU has agreed to use "ouch" or "pause" when they feel someone has violated the ground rules or

community norms. The meeting is then paused and they check in with person who raised concern to understand what happened. This practice will allow members to know there are safeguards in place, aiming for inclusive processes in place for engagement.

President Conner provides an update on Skidmore's fall opening progress. Week 4 finished by completing over 12,000 tests. There have been three positive COVID-19 cases, with one positive case last week that led to four quarantines. He noted the quick identification and contact tracing with no spread of the virus, a testament to Skidmore's system.

He reflected on the first monthly campus-wide staff meeting that occurred two weeks ago. The staff are appreciative of the meeting, communication and information sharing. The main concern brought forward was job security. During the faculty meeting, the main focus of questions were on the Racial Justice Initiative and course evaluations.

The College is in the middle of a search for two diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) positions. These positions were created by collapsing four positions into two. Trustee Linda Jackson-Chalmers '73 will be the chair for the new Board of Trustees DEI committee.

Lastly, there will be significant programming surrounding the 2020 election. President Conner has asked groups on campus to channel information and offerings on election-related programs to the office of Communications and Marketing, which is developing a web portal.

3. Anti-Harassment and EEO Policies and Procedures: Donna Ng and Sarah Vero

President Conner noted that these changes are mandated by Federal Law and welcomed Interim Human Resources Director Sarah Delaney Vero to provide an overview. Director Vero began with an overview of three major changes to Title IX Policies and Procedures. These policies now apply to faculty and staff, the changes align with New York State Human Rights Law, and finally the changes align with the college's DEI goals and best practices. The only change that was made to the introduction was to include race, including traits historically associated with race, as a protected status.

Director Vero noted that there are changes to the summary statements of the policy. The College has updated obligations regarding workplace accommodations to pregnancy related conditions, religious beliefs, victims of domestic violence, sex offenses or stalking. The next change is an expansion of the scope of policies, this will include independent contractors as a protected category. Finally, the definition of harassment was updated to align with NYS Law and to include the legal definition of retaliation.

Director Vero stated the College seeks to align staff Equal Employment Opportunity Policies and Procedures with those of the faculty by prohibiting consensual sexual relationships between faculty and students when there is no formal authority over the student. This change is not required by law and has been presented to the faculty with no push back to date.

The Policy on Anti-Harassment has been updated to align the definition with NYS Human Rights Law. Director Vero notes there are updates to the timeframe a complaint may be made, removing the 60-day limit. This should encourage individuals to come forward. The changes to

the informal complaint policy procedure will shift the burden of bringing a formal complaint to the College rather than the complainant.

A committee member asked if there is protection over harassment regarding political beliefs given the current political climate. Director Vero explained that there is protection over freedom of expression and the ability to participate in political activities, but not harassment under existing law. Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr noted that he and Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Chair Casey Schofield need to have a conversation on how to make faculty aware of these changes at a faculty meeting.

4. Fiscal Year 20 Results

Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng stated that the IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance met on September 17, 2020 to review the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 actual results. The FY '20 audit was completed and reviewed by the Trustees' Audit and Risk Management Committee. VP Ng noted the FY '20 actual results above the line showed revenue at \$159.4 million with expenditures at \$157.1 million, resulting in an operating surplus of \$2.3 million. There were 71 over enrolled students, providing a total below the line operating surplus of \$5.2 million. The College did not take \$360,000 from the endowment to support campaign related expenses because of the surplus. The primary line item that contributed to the \$2.3 million of underspending in employee benefits. The major reason for this was lower medical claims because of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. The second reason was due to the CARES Act FICA Tax Credit from the IRS that was provided to organizations that continued to pay employees during the period when there was no work for them. VP Ng noted the overspending for services and supplies was because of COVID-19.

FEC Chair Schofield asked in light of the savings could VP Ng speak to the process of determining sabbatical enhancement. Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr explained that sabbatical enhancement funds rely on this fiscal year not savings on the outcome of the previous fiscal year. VP Ng agreed, noting that the surplus from FY '20 cannot offset a future operating expense. In the past, this surplus has been allocated to fund capital expenditures so it will not impact the operating budget. With the pandemic impacting our spending, VP Woodfork proposed being as transparent as possible as to where surplus money is utilized and why so the community is aware. President Conner congratulated VP Ng on a successful audit which is a significant achievement. Vice Chair Joerg Bibow noted the staff furloughs presented a challenge to staff morale but not to staff members' finances; while the removal of sabbatical enhancement would be a significant financial hit for a very small group of faculty. He asked if there are savings that could be found across the board without affecting one group specifically. President Conner agreed that he would like to have equitable adjustments across the board whenever possible.

5. Spring Semester 2020

President Conner asked the President's Cabinet begin thinking about this several weeks ago. It is assumed that the conditions that applied in the fall will also apply in the spring. One point that has been made is how to reach out to staff, students and faculty to get input on specifics that may be improved for the Winter Break, Spring semester, and next Summer. Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr stated the Academic Calendar for the Spring

has been finalized. There has been overwhelming support to eliminate Spring Break due to current health concerns, along with beginning the semester a week later. The Spring semester will begin on Tuesday, February 2nd with one day free of classes, most likely a Tuesday to discourage travel, during the middle of the semester. There will be no change to the end of the calendar.

President Conner noted there will be fewer policy changes for Spring semester since so many are already in place. He believes testing may be faster and more plentiful in the spring. College Librarian Brunner asked if campus will be opening up business after the break given the new start date for the semester. President Conner stated that now that the start date has been finalized, they can work backwards to finalize plans for other offices on campus.

Rachael Borthwick '21 inquired about outreach to the Class of 2021 in terms of the Spring semester and plans for Commencement. VP Woodfork explained that he cannot speak to outreach regarding Spring semester but noted that Commencement 2021 is on the radar, and that conversations with class leaders of the Class of 2021 and circling back with the Class of 2020 are both forthcoming. Institutional Effectiveness Specialist Amy Tweedy stated that she has been working with Student Affairs to reach out to students working remotely, OP, and International students in particular, to ensure they have everything they need for academic resources.

Vice Chair Bibow inquired about the more severe classroom restrictions we will have for the spring, noting faculty will need to plan soon. Dean Orr stated there winter weather will not allow the use of tents so we will need to look more widely at potential classroom space. There have been spaces in the library identified as classroom space. There have also been alternative spaces considered such as Wilson Chapel and Davis auditorium, which were unused this semester. The main issue will be the size of classes and which space will work best for each one.

College Librarian Brunner has met with the Summer Faculty Development Team and identified that people who have committed to an all in person class are finding it is a high-flex class because students need to continue the class but are unable to come in person. She noted this is something that is more likely to happen in the spring. Dean Banks stated her office is available to help in any way.

President Conner asked that the committee consider different ideas how to improve the spring semester in each area. He asked Rachael Borthwick '21 to bring student perspectives on the spring semester to a future meeting. President Conner thanked the committee for their work.

6. Call for Agenda Items

None.

7. Other Business

None.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

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