

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 20, 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: Melanie Nolan'23.

GUESTS: Associate Dean of Student Affairs for Health and Wellness Julia Routbort.

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

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the November 6, 2020 Meeting.

A request for a qualifying word correction was made to the draft meeting minutes of November 6, 2020. With no other proposed changes, the **minutes from the November 6, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.**

2. President's Report

President Conner referenced the email to the community of November 18, "[Student Meetings - Key Takeaways and Immediate Action Steps](#)," where he outlined what he has learned from conversations with students. The President commented on the success of the student meetings while noting that they were difficult conversations. He explained that he actively listened and that the topics covered with students varied immensely. The President affirmed moving forward together to formulate next steps while being conscious that ongoing listening and communication is needed during these challenging times. The President asked for counsel, feedback, and suggestions from IPPC.

Considerable discussion ensued. An IPPC member recommended that there are a number of faculty and staff who have expertise on institutional bias and racism who might contribute and suggested we consider compensating individuals who step forward and engage in this work. Another IPPC member agreed that the idea of compensation is valid, but worried about precedent setting whereas compensation is expected for community work. IPPC members voiced concern over past bias trainings and subsequent mixed impacts.

The Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) Co-Chair and College Librarian Marta Brunner stated CIGU met recently to discuss the immediate action steps outlined in the November 18 email. CIGU supports action and is eager to further understand the call for anti-bias training. Moreover, CIGU noted the importance of trainings being meaningful and effective. CIGU Co-Chair and Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork asked IPPC to further connect these student conversations to the recent survey data CIGU presented on bias, discrimination, harassment, and hate. President Conner applauded the efforts of CIGU. He stated students have made it clear they want more training for more individuals in our community.

An IPPC member commented how the new Deputy Chief Diversity Officer/Center Director and the Director of the Office of Student Diversity Programs positions will be able to contribute to these conversations and work. IPPC suggested we allocate resources from inside the institution as a first priority for the specific institutional work that we are being called to do, and then supplement with outside resources. President Conner referenced our recent membership with the University of Southern California (USC) Race and Equity Center's Liberal Arts College Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA) as a founding participant. He stated this outside resource can complement and add additional perspective to the work that needs to be done. An IPPC member stated we need to build bridges and connect the work that has already happened with the work that needs to occur, emphasizing that student voice is central to our efforts.

IPPC members raised the significance of getting to the root causes of bias and the importance of having these behaviors stop. Members noted the requirement of training versus an opt-in approach. Members also considered our process of reporting bias and discrimination and highlighted ensuring that students and employees feel able to report, and trust in the process. An IPPC member commented there needs to be an understanding that everything that is reported does not necessarily rise to an incident of bias. Moreover, the feedback loop needs to be clear in terms of outcomes and sanctions, including public responses, personnel matters (employees), and conduct (students). We need to think about the multi-distributive ways that we can manage these issues, feedback we can provide, and ultimately communicate these actions to the community. It was acknowledged that pro-active prevention is useful.

President Conner applauded the work the community has engaged in and signaled his appreciation of the suggestions brought forth by IPPC as we move toward implementation of our action steps. He suggested that there are three prongs of work needed to be accomplished: anti-racism and anti-bias training, addressing safety in our community, and reviewing communication/expression/social media discourse. IPPC members thanked President Conner for engaging with and actively listening to student concerns, and for calling the community together to act upon these concerns.

3. Winter/Spring/Summer Planning

Associate Dean of Student Affairs for Health and Wellness Julia Routbort provided an update on COVID-19 cases and quarantines since the communications to the Skidmore Community of November 15, "[COVID-19: Heightened precautions, modified operations](#)" and November 16, "[COVID-19: All learning now online, additional coronavirus testing available](#)." She reported the COVID-19 dashboard is up to date. There are 126 students in quarantine and all of the current quarantine beds are filled at this time. She emphasized spaces will open up as students come out of quarantine and leave campus for winter break.

Associate Dean Routbort stressed that students do not test out of quarantine. She stated 20 to 30 students will need to quarantine at Skidmore over the Thanksgiving break and there are plans in place to support these students. Students are taking quarantine very seriously and being very responsible. Quarantine is much harder than isolation for students due to the uncertainty of their situation. A quarantine mentor guides students through the process of quarantining on-campus and completing their quarantine at home if applicable. Skidmore does not require a negative test prior to departure from campus, but encourages students to test before they leave. Health

Services anticipates there will be some additional positive tests this week. There is currently a 24-hour delay on testing due to caseloads. Skidmore's positivity rate is still below 3%. The Saratoga Department of Public Health has officially turned over the managing and tracking of student cases to Skidmore due to the rising number of cases in Saratoga County.

She stated testing operations will continue over the winter break for students and employees, but at a reduced testing rate and scope. Testing days will be reduced to Monday and a half-day on Tuesday to accommodate the students who will remain on campus and those employees whose job responsibilities require them to work on campus over the break, and who are not exempt from the new testing scope. Our relationship with the Broad Institute will continue for the spring semester. The testing schedule for the spring semester will be weekly on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The Broad Institute has built-in extra test processing capacity for campuses experiencing outbreaks so in the event of increased cases at the start of the spring semester, we could add additional test capacity if recommended by Public Health.

Associate Dean Routbort stated this has been a rough semester for students and she thanked everyone for their support. The students have truly appreciated the level of support that Skidmore has provided. Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs Cerri Banks expressed appreciation of the outstanding work done by Associate Dean Routbort and the Health Services team in dealing with the pandemic, and being able to pivot and respond in a timely and concise manner as conditions and regulations changed. President Conner and the IPPC echoed these sentiments. The President stated Health Services is a trusted resource for the whole community and this is a huge testament to the great work they have accomplished this semester.

Dean Banks reported there will be approximately 70 students on-campus until December 5 and approximately 44 students on-campus over winter break. The on-campus stays are primarily international students and students with travel issues. Students will be provided meal cards via GrubHub. She reviewed the student testing and quarantine protocol recommendations for the start of the spring semester. The recommendations are based on current information and are subject to change depending upon the status of COVID-19 advisories as the spring semester approaches:

- Students returning from states other than within NY must be tested with a negative result before they return.
- Upon arrival to Skidmore with a negative result, students will go into quarantine for three days, be tested on day four and be cleared from quarantine after a negative result.
- Students who do not have access to a testing site prior to arrival will be mailed a test to avoid a 14-day required quarantine upon arrival to Skidmore.
- Returning International students who do not have access to a testing site or with the ability to receive a test via mail prior to arrival will need to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to Skidmore.

Dean Banks reviewed the recommended return dates for students based on the testing and quarantine protocols, and the start of the spring semester scheduled for February 2:

- January 17: any student who must quarantine for 14 days prior to the start of classes.

- January 22: any student who can be tested at home before arriving with a negative result.
- January 26: last day any student who can be tested at home with a negative result should arrive on campus in order to begin classes in person on February 2.

She reminded IPPC all protocols and date recommendations are subject to New York State governance and can change based on infection rates. The Dean of Student's Office is working on a new spring semester COVID-19 student pledge in partnership with a student working group. They are aware of the increase in student needs due to the decrease in outside student spaces, and will be looking at ways to meet those needs as the spring semester approaches. Dean Banks thanked Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng and her team for the support provided to Student Affairs during the fall semester.

4. Collyer Vice President for Advancement Update

President Conner provided an update on the search for the Collyer Vice President for Advancement. After interviewing four search consultant firms, Skidmore has decided to partner with the search firm of Isaacson, Miller. President Conner is currently working on formulating a search committee. He thanked Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Chair and Associate Professor of Psychology Casey Schofield for her work engaging faculty to serve in this process. Ground work for the search will begin in December and will include advertising the position. President Conner spoke to his enthusiasm and excitement surrounding the appointment of a new member of the President's Cabinet.

5. Review Spring Semester IPPC Meeting Dates

VP Woodfork reviewed the spring semester IPPC meeting dates with the first meeting being held on Friday, February 5, 2021 and the goal of holding two committee meetings per month. He stated we may bring IPPC together before February if there is a necessary consultative moment.

6. Call for Agenda Items

VP Ng announced that an overview of OKTA security systems, a complete identity cloud-based security solution being sourced by Skidmore, will be presented next IPPC meeting, December 4.

President Conner stated the Campus Master planning process will be discussed next meeting.

VP Ng stated the IPPC Healthcare Working Group (HWG) has meet twice. Next IPPC meeting, the IPPC HWG is ready to update IPPC on their progress. Co-Chair Tim Harper will join.

7. Other Business

VP Woodfork presented a brief overview of the recruitment prospectus for the Deputy Chief Diversity Officer/Center Director and the Director of the Office of Student Diversity Programs positions. He stated they are hoping for robust applicant pools and asked IPPC members to please broadly share the recruitment information with their networks. He thanked the Communications and Marketing team for their collaborative work on developing the prospectus.

Meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

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