

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 4, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Cerri Banks; Mary Lou Bates; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; 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:** Rachael Borthwick '21 and Melanie Nolan '23.

**GUESTS:** IPPC Healthcare Working Group Co-Chair Timothy Harper.

**The meeting was held via Zoom** and called to order at 10:31 a.m. by Chair President Conner.

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the November 20, 2020 Meeting.**

Because of the Thanksgiving Break, it was noted that the draft meeting minutes from the November 20, 2020 IPPC meeting will be brought forth for approval at our next meeting.

**2. President's Report**

President Conner provided an update on the Collyer Vice President for Advancement search and reported that the search committee has been finalized and includes: student member Nicole Wong '21, staff member Opportunity Program Assistant Director of Student Support and Advocacy Sade Moore, President's Cabinet member Vice President for Communications and Marketing Martin Mbugua, and faculty member Professor of Political Science Beau Breslin. For assistance populating the committee, President Conner thanked the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), the Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC), the Student Government Association (SGA), and Human Resources for their time and collaboration. The search committee will begin work with the search firm Isaacson, Miller in December 2020. In February and March of 2021, the committee hopes to review top candidates, and subsequently bring them to campus, completing the hiring process in late spring. The President is confident that Skidmore will be able to attract a small pool of top qualified candidates from which to choose.

**3. IPPC Healthcare Working Group Update**

Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer and IPPC Healthcare Working Group (HWG) Co-Chair Donna Ng and HWG Co-Chair Timothy Harper presented an update on the work of the HWG which has been tasked with making recommendations to address rising healthcare costs. Co-Chairs Ng and Harper reviewed the group's proposed strategy on continuing to gather community input. The HWG recommended a combination of online focus groups and a community survey. The online focus groups and community survey will provide an opportunity to educate participants on healthcare terminology and practices, deliver more in-depth information through the use of polls combined with open-ended questions, and provide a means of input for survey questions. Employees will be able to participate via smartphone, tablet, or computer. Results will be analyzed by demographic group (faculty, staff, salary group, etc.). The survey tool will focus on gathering the maximum amount of information with questions developed and designed to give actionable data. An

online cloud-based survey application will be used with participants being able to complete the survey at their convenience. The survey tool will be asynchronous.

Co-Chairs Ng and Harper reviewed the activity implementation and timeline. The group has already completed the online focus group tools. Focus groups will begin to meet in December and work to complete the survey questions, inform the Skidmore community of the context of the work, and alert the community that feedback will be solicited in February 2021. January - March 2021 will include the IPPC HWG meeting as needed, focus group and HWG work, the survey distributed to the community to be completed over a two-week period, survey data to be analyzed by the HWG, and high-level information shared with the community. In April, the HWG will present to IPPC, communicate the final recommendations to the community, and develop a recommended change management plan.

IPPC members responded that it is important the Skidmore community is made aware that changes to the current healthcare insurance plan will involve tradeoffs and that this is made apparent with inclusion of open-ended and actionable questions within the survey. Members emphasized the need to ensure the community is engaged in consideration of plan preferences. It was suggested that healthcare is very personal and therefore it is essential that we are sensitive to these issues.

IPPC members commented that the work of the HWG has been solid and that they sincerely appreciate all the work the group has accomplished to date, including educating the community, broadening community knowledge regarding healthcare terminology, and providing open and direct communication. IPPC members remarked that it is critical that the HWG continues this work, communicate the need to reduce the growth rate of the healthcare insurance expense in the College's operating budget, and make clear that the community understands that the existing healthcare plan cost structure cannot be sustained. President Conner remarked that the work of HWG has been exemplary.

#### **4. Winter/Spring/Summer Planning**

President Conner stated spring planning is moving forward assuming the same health conditions. At this time, there are approximately 30 students who are planning to study abroad in the spring. The on-campus pre-quarantine group will likely be comprised of 500-600 students. These students will be brought back approximately one week prior to the start of classes. He stated we will streamline and simplify a concise set of health and safety guidelines for the spring semester while being cognizant of the national landscape and remaining subject to state law and action. The President remarked that the health and safety of the Skidmore community will continue to be the cornerstone of all of our decision making and actions. He emphasized he will continue to offer timely and transparent communication as planning progresses.

The President explained that revenue anticipated with summer 2021 is being challenged as nearly all the external camps and conferences that typically come to the Skidmore campus have cancelled their summer registrations. He commented there is some potential to have some summer programming on campus such as student research, in-person summer classes, and academic institutes.

VP Ng provided a brief financial overview. She remarked that Skidmore is in fairly good shape for FY '21. The spring enrollment and housing picture is changing daily and firm numbers will not be known until the start of the semester. Testing expenses are estimated at a \$1.5M expense for the spring. We will model for contingency due to uncertainties. She stated that some deficits are anticipated, but that

these appear manageable in part through the use of contingency funds and savings gleaned from spending reductions in the supply and services budget, particularly in the areas of travel and entertainment. VP Ng commented that with the continued savings to the supplies and services budget for all of FY '21 we anticipate we will be on track for a balanced budget.

## **5. Campus Master Plan**

President Conner presented a draft summary and timeline of the Campus Master planning process. He stated the College will contract with a professional campus planning firm with extensive experience in higher education planning, and work with that firm over the next 12-18 months to develop a detailed, prioritized, and rationally planned understanding and projection of the present and future campus. Although the firm will not produce architectural details of particular projects, it will create a carefully rendered visual and modeled plan of the campus that will incorporate the collaborative input and thinking of our entire community. He stated that this collaborative process, involving every constituency over the next year, is in many ways the most important part of the process—how we get to the final plan is just as important as what the plan itself will ultimately contain. As the last master plan was completed in 2007, the President remarked it is a timely and necessary step for us to plan out the near- and long-term projects for our campus, and incorporate our key values such as diversity and inclusivity, wellness, access, and sustainability.

The President mapped out the general governance structure and timeline that will be implemented. The governance structure will include a Steering Committee, a Task Force, and a professional campus planning firm. He reviewed the membership and role of the Steering Committee and the Campus Master Plan Task Force. The Steering Committee and Task Force will work with the professional campus planning firm to provide the guiding principles, parameters and information needed to develop a robust process for wide-ranging community engagement and participation, and ultimately a master plan that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in May 2022. The Steering Committee and the Task Force will interview two or three master planner finalists and provide input to the President for his final selection of a campus master planning firm.

President Conner stated the review for proposals (RFP) is scheduled to be completed by late January 2021 with finalists selected by late February or early March 2021. Governance meetings will be slated to begin by early March 2021 and the Campus Master Plan completed by May 2022. Board of Trustees Chair Nancy Hamilton and Board member Jon Achenbaum will act as Board liaisons. The Board will receive regular updates beginning in February 2021 with the final Campus Master Plan approved by the full Board of Trustees at the May 2022 meeting. President Conner stated initial communications regarding this process will be announced at the Faculty and Staff meetings on December 4. He reemphasized the need to have a collaborative planning process as we move forward.

The President paused for feedback from IPPC about how to best involve the community in this process. IPPC members welcomed the move for the whole community to be involved and remarked that this process provided those who manage large facilities on-campus a framework from within to work. An IPPC member commented on the need for the vision of a new master plan and that this plan reflects the changing period of higher ed. They stated that it is vital that the Steering Committee, Task Force, and master planning firm weave diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and sustainability work into the plan and that an assessment of the expectations of the former master plan be reviewed in working with the campus master planning firm.

An IPPC member commented on the need to be cognizant of the cost of the master planning firm in light of the current financial campus climate. President Conner remarked that he is aware of this expense, it is a hard time for this sort of planning, but at the same time the need for these projects is not going away. IPPC members echoed these comments and stated that it is important that the community have knowledge of all the pieces of the individual work. IPPC members stated appreciation of the President's effort to begin connecting the community in this collaborative work.

## 6. Strategic Action Agenda

President Conner stated that we are just past the midpoint of Skidmore's current ten-year Strategic Plan, [\*Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore College 2015-2025\*](#). He remarked that President-Emeritus Glotzbach drafted a midpoint review that summarized our progress on that plan and described this moment of transition. That document was reviewed by President Conner and the President's Cabinet and now constitutes the Midpoint Strategic Plan Summary document. The President commented that the midpoint document demonstrates the substantial progress we have made on the *Strategic Plan*, showing multiple accomplishments and pointing towards remaining work by 2025.

The midpoint review also brings into relief how vibrant and applicable the *Strategic Plan* continues to be for Skidmore. The Plan, the result of a full community effort to determine the guiding strategic goals for Skidmore, remains a relevant and inspiring map for our present and future efforts. The four major categories of the plan remain impressively relevant: integrative learning, access, sustainability, and well-being. These are areas where Skidmore continues to seek achievement and improvement, and all our major programs and projects are well described in these goals.

In a typical year, we might engage in a longer process of planning for the current academic year and mapping our efforts precisely onto the ongoing *Strategic Plan*. But of course, this year is anything but typical. In this extraordinary season of COVID-19, we are well advised to focus in a laser-sharp way on five major institutional goals for 2020-21. Attaining these goals will require the full capacity of the College in the changed context of COVID-19 and all it enjoins upon us. In this focused effort, we are not in any way shifting from the current *Strategic Plan*, for in fact all five goals are fully consonant with that plan and emerge from it.

The following five goals constitute our guiding Strategic Action Agenda (SAA) for this year:

- 1) **Successful execution of the 2020-2021 academic year**, in terms of the 3 guiding principles we have articulated for negotiating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic: ensuring the health and safety of our entire community; delivering the full Skidmore education of an in-person, engaged, transformational learning experience; and preserving the fiscal strength of the College.
- 2) **Successful completion of the Racial Justice Initiative**, focusing on all 12 action goals of the Initiative that also will inform and strengthen our overarching Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work as a result.
- 3) **Successful completion of the Capital Campaign**, [\*Creating Our Future\*](#), which we have extended through December of 2020 with a revised aspirational goal of \$220 million, the largest campaign ever undertaken at Skidmore. In addition, we will search for and appoint a new Collyer Vice President of Advancement to guide our future advancement work.

- 4) Collaboratively formulate and begin implementing a **plan to address the structural budget deficit by realizing long-term budget savings**. This work will include aligning the student/faculty and student/staff ratios with our peer and aspirant schools and with our endowment capacity, as well as implementing changes to the College's healthcare plan and student employment program.
- 5) Begin a collaborative **Campus Master planning process** that will involve our entire community in guided discussions of near- and long-term future capital projects that will shape and define the Skidmore campus for the coming decade and more.

The President invited comments and suggestions. IPPC members stated we are at a moment where we have to make choices and we need to work together as a community to make these choices. An IPPC member stated that this SAA enables us to capture where we are and where we are going and suggested to link the SAA with the four pillars that have been previously presented to the community. It was suggested that additional clarity around budget savings be provided. President Conner responded that specifics are not known at this time due in part that this work will be collaborative in nature and not a pre-determined plan.

Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork asked that IPPC consider current priorities as well as community aspirations. He commented on the need to reflect upon what has passed its course, what we want to do in the future, and how we want to use those resources to achieve that vision. The pandemic has asked us to think in different ways outside of our normal context and we need to leverage that thinking moving forward. An IPPC member echoed these thoughts and stated that we cannot delay strategic planning, noting that deficit issues are out there and are not going away. President Conner reiterated his appreciation of the feedback provided by IPPC and noted that the SAA and midpoint document will be shared with the broader community next week.

## 7. Okta Security Systems

Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Dwane Sterling presented an overview of the Okta security system, a complete identity management cloud-based security solution being sourced by the College. He stated the system will allow for new flexibility with preferred and user names, multifactor authentication, and a more robust single sign-on. A recent security audit by the IT Department of approximately 120 random college accounts yielded 23 of these accounts being compromised. This data combined with rising phishing scams and cyber-attacks nationally warrants the need for a more robust security system.

CTO Sterling commented on the minimal impact on the front end that the implementation of the Okta system would have on users, while on the back end reaping major security benefits. The transition to the Okta system will begin in January 2021, in line with the roll-out of the new Financial and Human Resource Oracle modules. The Okta system will require users to set up a profile that includes a secondary email address, security questions and answers, and a security profile image. Current Skidmore user passwords would remain the same. Widespread dual factor authentication would take place March and April 2021. CTO Sterling explained that training will be available for employees.

VP Woodfork asked that offices be aware of the sensitivity around legal names, preferred names, and nicknames that are used across campus. IPPC thanked VP Ng and CTO Sterling for their work on the Okta system.

**8. Call for Agenda Items**

No new agenda items were raised.

**9. Other Business**

IPPC acknowledged their appreciation of the November 23 “Giving thanks to You” week that was declared by the President and the President’s Cabinet. Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr noted that faculty will have a separate appreciation event when the fall semester ends.

President Conner thanked Professor Peter von Allmen for representing CEPP on IPPC during this Fall semester. Professor Feryaz Ocakli will represent CEPP during the Spring semester.

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

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