

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2021**

PRESENT: Cerri Banks; Mary Lou Bates; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; Marta Brunner; Marc C. Conner, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; Carolyn Lundy; Donna Ng; Melanie Nolan '23; Diane O'Connor; Michael Orr; Feryaz Ocakli; Joe Porter; Levi Rogers; Mark Rye; Casey Schofield; Kurt Smemo; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling; Amy Tweedy; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT: Rachael Borthwick '21.

GUESTS: Director of Sustainability for Academic Affairs Mark Youndt; Campus Master Planning Task Force Co-Chair Director of Facilities Dan Rodecker and Co-Chair Associate Dean of the Faculty for Infrastructure and Faculty Affairs Pat Fehling; IPPC Healthcare Working Group Co-Chair Timothy Harper.

The meeting was held via Zoom and called to order at 10:33 a.m. by Chair President Conner.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the March 5, 2021 Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of March 5, 2021. With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the March 5, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.**

2. Campus Sustainability Plan Midpoint Review 2015-2020

IPPC Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS) Chair Levi Rogers presented a midpoint review of the *2015-2025 Campus Sustainability Plan*. He stated that in 2015 the College endorsed a challenging 10-year Plan comprised of sustainability goals in five focus areas: energy, food, waste, lands and grounds, and engagement. The CSS committed to a midpoint review process that would ensure that the goals remained in alignment with community values.

CSS Chair Rogers provided an overview of sustainability trends, efforts made to date, and projections and recommendations for sustainability efforts and future working groups. He stated that the College has a lot to celebrate in terms of the progress made, but that it is important to remember that as our campus population and building footprint continue to grow that we simultaneously need to grow our goals of reducing consumption and resources. Chair Rogers cited that since 2015 the campus population has increased over 12% and that the campus square footage has increased over 38%.

Chair Rogers stated that we are within striking distance of meeting our energy sustainability goals, but that this projection is dependent, in part, upon the progress and impact of the large-scale renewable energy project. Skidmore has seen improvement across the board in energy sustainability, particularly in our reduction of greenhouse gases for which data shows a 52% reduction from our normalized 2000 baseline. He noted that we have only seen a 1% increase in electricity use per student, which is truly remarkable. He thanked the Facilities Department for all of the hard work members have done to improve the efficiency of our campus.

Chair Rogers remarked that the College has put a tremendous amount of resources into working to advance our sustainable food efforts. To achieve our food sustainability goals, we will need to leverage our sustainable food purchasing opportunities across product categories and analyze our purchasing data to better inform our sustainable food decisions. Our sustainable waste goals will need some additional work as to diversion rates and the management of our waste streams in order to achieve our waste conversion rate goals. Chair Rogers noted that the waste conservation rate for the Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS) is 51%. This surpasses the 50% diversionary rate that was set for special projects.

Skidmore's lands and grounds goal centers on creating a comprehensive lands and management plan for undeveloped land. The college is currently engaged in this plan and many land conservation efforts are underway. There has been great progress made to develop a 13-mile hiking trail and with the ongoing management and protection of the North Woods property. Chair Rogers noted that the College owns over 1500 acres of property and that 80% is undeveloped. He stated that the Campus Master Planning project will allow Skidmore to be thoughtful and intentional in the stewardship of College land. Chair Rogers reported that we continue to make progress on sustainability engagement goals. The College continues to offer multiple platforms and community events for engagement, including student and faculty research, and the development and integration of the living lab into student coursework.

CSS Chair Rogers recommended that the College continue to encourage future working groups to develop annual defined action plans. He encouraged the formation of designated groups to achieve a collective sense of engagement and responsibility and to embrace the possibility of adding additional focus areas such as water as we work toward 2025. He suggested considering restructuring CSS to include decision makers and experts in the various focus areas of the plan. He remarked that CSS needs to continue to engage with the community to ensure the Plan aligns with the values and goals of our collective members.

Director of Sustainability for Academic Affairs Mark Youndt thanked Chair Rogers for the presentation, adding that CSS has done very well in areas where specific goals were set where CSS had the ability to effect change. He thanked the community for their efforts and reminded everyone to consider these goals holistically from a benefits perspective. President Conner echoed these remarks and asked people to think creatively in how Campus Master Planning can feed into sustainability work and planning. IPPC Vice Chair Joerg Bibow asked if the presentation could be made available to IPPC members. Chair Rogers responded that once the full report is compiled and approved by CSS it will be shared with President's Cabinet and the IPPC.

3. Campus Master Planning Update

Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer and Campus Master Plan Steering Committee member Donna Ng, Campus Master Plan Task Force Co-Chairs Associate Dean of the Faculty for Infrastructure and Faculty Affairs Pat Fehling and Director of Facilities Dan Rodecker provided a Campus Master Planning update. VP Ng stated that the Steering Committee met recently and that the Committee will hold an open session on April 5 to educate the community on campus master planning and invite people into the process. President Conner will be joined by Ayers Saint Gross (ASG) to offer this education session with plenty of time for questions and answers. VP Ng noted that we are in the process of developing a Campus Master

Planning website that will incorporate information regarding the education session and updates from the Steering Committee and Task Force.

Task Force Co-Chair Fehling reported that the Task Force membership is now in place with Maria Bideiwy '24 as the Task Force student member and Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork as the Diversity member. Co-Chair Fehling commented on the upcoming departure of Levi Rogers and noted that Sustainability Coordinator for Student Programming Jennifer Natyzak will serve as the Sustainability member. The Task Force is in the process of coordinating focus groups that will be held at the end of April.

Task Force Co-Chair Dan Rodecker added that the Task Force is working to gather documentation, data, and project plans, and he thanked IPPC member Carolyn Lundy for managing the Task Force meeting schedule. An IPPC member inquired about sharing documentation with the Task Force or ASG, both of which were encouraged. President Conner remarked on the importance of the Campus Master Planning process, stating that he is appreciative of the work of both the Search Committee and the Task Force.

4. Healthcare Working Group Update

IPPC Healthcare Working Group (HWG) Co-Chairs VP Ng and Associate Professor of Management & Business Timothy Harper presented an update on the work of the HWG which has been tasked with making recommendations to address rising healthcare costs. The recommendations will be based on many factors, including information collected from online focus groups and the survey, feedback received, projected cost analysis, benchmark data, and risk management assessments. HWG recommendations will be presented to the IPPC at its next meeting, on April 9, with the HWG present to discuss each of the recommendations.

Co-Chair Harper explained that a prioritized set of criteria will be developed and used by the HWG, noting that collaboration and transparency remain at the core of the decision-making process. He remarked that the HWG will work to try and balance employee satisfaction with employee preferences, while looking at both from an institutional and employee perspective. Co-Chair Harper commented that long term structural issues with the healthcare budget and cost shifting versus cost savings will also factor into the recommendations that will be developed.

An IPPC member stated that the Skidmore community needs to be aware that many external forces are at play in regards to healthcare in our nation and that Skidmore is making a good faith effort to try and combat these rising costs for both the institution and its employees. An IPPC member asked if the HWG collected any benchmark data from peer institutions. VP Ng replied that information was collected on healthcare plan design, but not on healthcare cost salary structures. Clarification was sought around the structural changes that are being potentially explored to the healthcare plan and the cost data surrounding these changes. VP Ng replied that the College will consider past cost data, but that recommendations will focus primarily on cost analysis moving forward. A certain amount of cost assumptions will need to be made and a range, not an exact figure, will be developed to assist with the healthcare recommendations.

IPPC Vice Chair Bibow remarked that the feedback received from the Skidmore community regarding their preferences could work as a foundation to inform the decision making of the

HWG as they develop a set of recommendations. He stated that determining cost structures while paying attention to the community preferences could foster accountability and trust in the process. Co-Chair Harper replied that the complexity of each of the community preferences will also need to be taken into account as well as any potential disparities. The community preferences layered with short and/or long term scenarios while factoring in healthcare costs will all need to be given consideration. President Conner added that the challenge is how to keep rising health costs sustainable while implementing a structure to distribute healthcare increases across the whole institution. This is a challenge not only to Skidmore, but to higher education in general. The President stated his appreciation for the time and engagement the HWG has given to this enormous task.

5. Spring/Summer/Fall Planning

VP Ng provided an update regarding summer planning, stating that Skidmore will continue to monitor health guidance as the number of students on campus for the summer is solidified. She noted the recent announcement that Skidmore will be hosting Camp Northwoods and sports camps this summer. Registration numbers will help to determine the number of faculty and staff that will be needed on campus to support these students and programs and the accompanying safety and testing protocols. It is anticipated that forward-facing positions that interact with students on a regular basis will have separate summer guidance compared with positions that are non-student interacting.

VP Ng noted that the focus has been on summer planning but that there are still many questions being worked through for the fall. Human Resources is working on guidance based on student numbers, testing capabilities, ever-changing health guidance, and vaccination distribution. An IPPC member asked if thought has been given to staggering the number of employees returning to campus for the fall semester. VP Ng replied that consideration will be given to this model of transitioning employees back to campus. President Conner remarked that the spring semester COVID-19 positivity rates continue to remain low and that Skidmore's COVID-19 dashboard statistics are exceedingly low compared to other campuses that have instituted similar protocols. He added that Skidmore is working to get a count of the number of students that have received the COVID-19 vaccine due to employment on campus or other approved reasons.

Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates provided an Admissions update. She stated that regular admission decisions have been sent and that Admissions is hoping to enroll approximately 50% of the upcoming class through regular decision. VP Bates commented that modified outdoor campus tours consistent with all COVID-19 protocols have resumed for admitted students. She stated that Admissions data reflects that 10% of regular decision admits have been to campus. While this percentage is far below Skidmore's percentages from previous years, it is similar to our peer institutions. She stated that in collaboration with Communications and Marketing, a robust suite of virtual offerings to targeted admitted students has been developed. These offerings included the Filene Music virtual music competition and a repeat of the highly successful Friday afternoon faculty academic showcase that will continue through the end of April. Skidmore's admissions deadline is May 1. VP Bates thanked everyone for their time and effort in helping to enroll this year's class. President Conner stated his appreciation of the creativity with Admissions programming that Skidmore has displayed in response to the challenges brought forth by COVID-19.

Communications and Marketing Director of News and Internal Relations Diane O'Connor provided an update on Commencement 2021. Skidmore is planning to host an in-person Commencement on May 22 for students that will follow all health and safety protocols that have been outlined by New York State. Plans to engage remote students are being developed. Unfortunately due to New York State restrictions, families and friends will not be able to attend the ceremony exercises. Skidmore anticipates a limited number of faculty and staff will be in attendance. Given these restrictions, a very robust online component to enhance the event is being planned, which will include a live stream hosted on the Skidmore website homepage. Innovative ways to encourage engagement among families, friends, students, and viewers are being explored. The location of commencement is yet to be determined with multiple plans being consecutively developed dependent on New York State guidance.

6. President's Report

President Conner provided an update on the search process for two of the vacant President's Cabinet roles. He stated the search for the Collyer Vice President for Advancement search is on track. The search committee will be reviewing all of the candidates and then moving into April, the semi-finalist interviews will occur. A mid-May announcement appointment is anticipated.

The Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs search committee has been finalized and the committee has met with the search firm, Storbeck Search. The advertising of the position has begun and it is anticipated that in late April or early May semi-finalist interviews will commence with an appointment announcement by late June.

7. Call for Agenda Items

No new agenda items were raised.

8. Other Business

President Conner thanked departing Director of Sustainability Programs and Assessment Levi Rogers for his service and all he has done for Skidmore. IPPC members virtually expressed thanks and goodbye.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

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