

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 5, 2021

PRESENT: 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; Feryaz Ocakli; Joe Porter; Levi Rogers; Mark Rye; Casey Schofield; Kurt Smemo; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling; Amy Tweedy; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT: Cerri Banks and Melanie Nolan '23.

GUESTS: Campus Master Planning Task Force: Director of Facilities Dan Rodecker, Co-Chair; Associate Dean of the Faculty for Infrastructure and Faculty Affairs Pat Fehling, Co-Chair; Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of Athletics Gail Cummings-Danson; Assistant Professor of Psychology Erica Wojcik; and Professor of Management & Business Mark Youndt. Ayers Saint Gross (ASG) Design Firm: Kevin Peterson; Sarah Wright; Amber Wendland; and Eli Shanklin. Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS) members: Director of Facilities Dan Rodecker; Director of Sustainability for Academic Affairs Mark Youndt; and Project Manager, Facilities Paul Lundberg; Diane O'Connor, Communications and Marketing's Director of News and Internal Relations.

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 February 12, 2021 Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of February 12, 2021. With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the February 12, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.**

2. Campus Master Planning Firm Presentation

President Conner welcomed the members of Campus Master Planning Task Force. In addition to those listed as guests, the Campus Master Planning Task Force also includes Director of Sustainability Programs and Assessment Levi Rogers, Institutional Effectiveness Specialist Amy Tweedy, and Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork until another member representing diversity is selected. A student member is still being determined. President Conner noted that the campus master planning process was initiated in the fall semester by informing the community and the Board of Trustees and requesting proposals from professional firms. He announced the selection of the planning firm Ayers Saint Gross (ASG). The selection process began in mid-December with a request for information from 13 firms, six firms interviewed, and two finalists interviewed by both the Steering Committee and Task Force. The President reminded IPPC that the Master Plan Steering Committee is comprised of all members of the President's Cabinet and IPPC Vice Chair Joerg Bibow.

Campus master planning work will begin immediately with the goal of having a completed Plan presented to the Board of Trustees in May 2022. The President thanked everyone for their role in helping to select a professional firm. He then formally charged the Campus Master Plan Steering Committee and Task Force, including these remarks: *The week-in, week-out work will be led by the Task Force which will have the important role of coordinating conversations with different*

campus groups, helping to connect the process with constituency input and interests, and contributing their own expertise and perspective on campus needs and priorities. Thinking broadly across all campus needs and perspectives will be of great help in this work. The partnership on this important project, and in particular helping to foster the collaboration and communication that will be central to this project, will be of particular value. The work will be inclusive of all constituencies, and data-driven, with a commitment to preserving the culture of the College while preparing Skidmore for its aspirational future.

Members of ASG then joined IPPC for a presentation regarding their process to engage with the Skidmore Community in creating the next campus master plan. ASG is a 170-person, internationally recognized architecture and planning firm focused on higher education. The firm has worked with more than 200 colleges and universities around the world including Swarthmore College and Colby College. ASG provided an overview of their flexible approach in working collaboratively with all constituents to create a welcoming campus that enhances the student experience, while taking into account our value propositions, our strategic initiatives, our diverse set of learners and changing demographics—all with an emphasis on sustainability, and economic and social stewardship. ASG is looking forward to engaging in a robust process with Skidmore to build and create a vision for the entire campus that is enforced and supported by the campus community. ASG will provide a set of priority projects overlaid with capital spending budgets. The master plan developed will lay out a flexible vision for campus development that will guide the campus over the next five, ten, and even twenty years.

An IPPC member inquired about the approach in determining whether a building is renovated or demolished. ASG member Kevin Peterson responded that as part of the assessment phase of planning the condition of our facilities and how well these facilities are supporting our academic programs will be examined. The goal is to try and preserve and leverage as much of our existing assets as possible, and use existing infrastructure as we work and overlay sustainability with construction. An IPPC member stated that some college constituents have engaged in specific building master planning exercises in the past and asked if ASG would find this type of information useful. Peterson replied that they often find value in examining and building on past planning and then determining with the community if the material still resonates and is relevant. President Conner added that this would apply to current projects that are in various phases of planning such as the Athletic Facilities and the Jonsson Tower residential life projects. He thanked ASG for their time and stated that we are looking forward to engaging with the ASG team as we embark on this ambitious and important work.

3. Sustainable Construction and Renovation Policy

President Conner welcomed representatives of the Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS), an IPPC subcommittee. CSS was asked in November 2019 to develop a building policy related to sustainability that would provide the College with guidelines and minimum building standards to consider when designing major building projects on campus. CSS brought forth for discussion a draft of the Sustainable Construction and Renovation Policy which was recently reviewed by the President's Cabinet.

CSS Chair Levi Rogers outlined the key features of the policy that was developed with the unanimous support of all CSS members and a Building Policy Working Group. To develop ideas

for Skidmore’s Sustainable Construction and Renovation Policy, the Building Policy Working Group researched building polices at peer and aspirant institutions and considered the criteria for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifications. The proposed policy is comprised of four sections:

- 1) Policy for new construction of \$5M: Construction will be LEED certified to LEED silver standards at minimum;
- 2) Policy for construction under \$5M and renovations over \$2M: Construction will be carried out to be LEED silver standards, but will not be required to be LEED certified;
- 3) Standards and guidelines for materials or components to be used in all projects regardless of scale or size; and
- 4) Additional discretionary strategies and investments for project teams to consider.

The policy provides a checklist of requirements, guidelines, options, and opportunities for project teams to consider as they plan building and renovation projects and provides a framework of standards for construction and renovation across campus. CSS Chair Rogers thanked CSS members and extended his appreciation to Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng and Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Orr for their leadership and support throughout development of the policy. President Conner acknowledged the collaborative approach to formulating this policy and the clarity provided for future projects.

President Conner called on IPPC for feedback and discussion on the Policy. An IPPC member noted that the policy addressed accessibility and asked for clarification surrounding universal design compliance. CSS Chair Rogers replied that the policy is a “living” document, providing the opportunity for updates and amendments. An IPPC member asked if the policy requires modifications to existing structures to bring them into compliance with the policy, and if the Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS) building is LEED compliant. CSS Chair Rogers stated that the policy does not force a certain schedule for updates and renovations for existing structures, but rather ensures that when renovations are initiated, the policy guidelines will be incorporated into the design process. From a financial standpoint, the policy encourages us to think about lifecycle impacts and long term life cycle costs. VP Ng added that less expensive construction and renovation projects for existing structures would not be required to go through the LEED certification process due to the high administrative costs for seeking certification. CSS Chair Rogers stated that the CIS was built with LEED standards in mind and that it will go through the certification process when fully completed and become the College’s first LEED certified building. Facilities Project Manager and CSS member Paul Lundberg added that CIS is on target for a silver certification at a minimum.

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Chair and Associate Professor of Psychology Casey Schofield asked if policy compliance would be required for current outstanding projects such as the Athletic Facilities project. VP Ng replied that the policy will be applied only to new projects. She referenced two outstanding projects—the Athletics Facilities project, of which the design work has already been completed and then was paused due to COVID-19, and the five-year Jonsson Tower Renovation project. These projects would not be subject to the new Sustainable Construction and Renovation policy. She stated that modifications were made to the original Athletic Facilities design following input from CSS. Director of Facilities Dan Rodecker added

that both of these projects were designed with sustainability in mind. He cited the future use of a geothermal heating and cooling systems for these projects. President Conner remarked that the Athletic Facilities Project would be part of the campus master planning discussions. FEC Chair Schofield asked that the future roll out of the Athletic Facilities Project be collaborative, thoughtful, and sensitive to sustainability issues.

As the Sustainable Construction and Renovation Policy came to IPPC as a motion from CSS, it did not require a second. **IPPC unanimously voted to support the Sustainable Construction and Renovation Policy at Skidmore College.** President Conner thanked CSS for their work and noted his appreciation of the timing of the adoption of this policy, which will help guide the work of campus master planning.

4. President's Report

President Conner provided updates regarding summer planning within the context of ever-changing health and safety guidelines, and supporting the faculty and staff who will be on campus. He stated that we anticipate approximately 200 students on campus this summer, who will be attending in-class sessions and conducting research, as well as engaged in some summer employment. The President remarked on the importance of having some programming on campus, and the desirability of maintaining our usual staffing levels.

President Conner provided updates from the February 17-19 Board of Trustees meeting. A major theme of the virtual meetings was finances. The President stated the Board is aware of the financial challenges facing higher education institutions and that the Board acknowledged Skidmore's remarkable achievement of being on track to balance the budget for FY '21. This has been done through a combination of budget savings, a salary freeze, a hiring freeze, careful expenditures, and government relief. He stated a plenary talk was presented by economist of higher education David Feldman, who spoke to the relevant themes of discount rates and admission trends. An IPPC member asked if these themes might be useful background information for faculty in light of the discussions surrounding faculty-student ratios. President Conner replied that consideration could be given to this idea. IPPC members added that additional knowledge concerning Skidmore's investment and divestment strategies and endowment priorities would be welcome topics of discussion. VP Ng suggested that the IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance could pursue these topics and then share appropriate information with IPPC.

President Conner referenced the newly established ad hoc Board of Trustees committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). He stated the committee has set an ambitious agenda and has been collaborating with other Board committees centering upon DEI work and racial justice on campus. The Academic Affairs Board committee included a faculty panel that discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on pedagogy and teaching methods that was coordinated by Dean Orr and was very well received. The President mentioned that the midpoint *Strategic Plan* document and this year's *Strategic Action Agenda* (SAA) were discussed with the Board. He said conversations were held centering on the *Campus Master Plan* and the role of the Board in the campus master planning process. Board Members expressed eagerness for this project and hope that the October Board meetings will be in person on campus.

FEC Chair Schofield asked for an update on the search process for the three vacant President's Cabinet seats. President Conner replied that the search for the Collyer Vice President for Advancement search is on track. The President stated that he has been in regular contact with the search firm Isaacson Miller, and written updates have been sent to the search committee. The search committee is set to begin meeting in early April to consider the recommended candidates. The Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs search committee has been finalized and committee member names will be shared shortly. Storbeck Search has been selected as the firm to lead the search. The search committee will launch its work soon. The search for Vice President of Communications and Marketing is set to begin in late August. The search firm and search committee have yet to be determined. President Conner added that information on all three searches was shared with the Board of Trustees.

5. Call for Agenda Items

No new agenda items were raised.

6. Other Business

President Conner asked for a round of applause in appreciation for all that departing Vice President for Marketing and Communications Martin Mbugua has done for Skidmore. IPPC members virtually expressed thanks and goodbye.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

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