

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 30, 2021**

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

**ABSENT:** Cerri Banks; Rachael Borthwick '21; and Melanie Nolan '23;

**GUESTS:** Director of Financial Aid Beth Post.

**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 April 9, 2021 Meeting.**

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of April 9, 2021. With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the April 9, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.**

**2. Student Employment Program Proposal**

Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates and Director of Financial Aid and Student Employment Working Group Chair Beth Post presented an overview and update of the Student Employment Program Proposal that was initially discussed by IPPC during the August 19, 2020 meeting. VP Bates explained that the Student Employment Working Group was formed in response to student push for the College to reevaluate the student wage structure for greater alignment with the New York State minimum wage and also to consider the climate for student workers. At the same time, based on a review of peer and aspirant programs, President's Cabinet requested suggestions for program changes that would result in savings for the College.

At the August 2020 meeting the working group recommended a two-tiered wage rate, one for regular student workers at \$11.80 per hour and another for student supervisors at \$12.55 per hour, and a bi-annual wage rate review process to be reviewed by the President's Cabinet. IPPC moved forward this proposal and the President's Cabinet subsequently approved it. VP Bates stated that the Student Employment Working Group has acted upon the recommendation in the proposal that updates be made to the *Student Employment Handbook* and she stated that the Financial Aid Office, which manages student employment, is open to receiving more edits and feedback. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office is coordinating with Human Resources to develop a training series specifically geared toward student workers and supervisors on topics such as hostile work environments, unconscious bias, and improving communication.

In their earlier proposal, the Student Employment Working Group also brought forth a recommended wage cap of \$2,400 per student. After considerable discussion of the wage cap during the August 2020 meeting, IPPC requested that the working group bring back a revised wage cap recommendation. VP Bates stated that the revised wage cap proposal has been recently reviewed and supported by President's Cabinet. The recommendation calls for a three-year

phasing of the earning cap beginning next academic year with full implementation in academic year 2023-2024. Rising sophomores, the Class 2025, and all subsequent entering classes would be subject to the wage cap. Current rising juniors and current rising sophomore international students would be exempt from the cap. The revised proposal includes flexibility for departments with exceptional needs to request additional student hours. The phasing will allow both students and supervisors to adjust to the change.

An IPPC member sought clarification surrounding international students due to their inability to work off campus. Director Post replied that full need international students would continue to have their financial needs met via grant assistance for tuition, fees, and room and board leaving the \$2,400 for personal expenses. She stated that the working group student representatives, who were also part of the Student Government Association (SGA), were instrumental in formulating the revised student wage cap recommendation. An IPPC member inquired about the wage cap and students working over the summer and during breaks. Director Post replied that working during the summer or over the January break is not considered student employment and therefore the wage cap would not apply to the wages earned during this time. She also clarified that students paid from external grant funds would not be subject to the wage cap for that work.

IPPC Vice Chair Joerg Bibow stated that the College should keep an eye on the potential future impact on departments (and other areas of the College) with students working fewer hours coupled with the downsizing of staff and faculty. Director Post stated that the objective of the wage cap is an overall reduction to the amount spent on student wages and that the three-year implementation will allow for adjustments to the ever-changing needs of departments and their employment of students. She added that feedback received from Dining Services this past year indicated that they had more student workers than needed. Financial Aid is aware that some student jobs are seen as non-productive in nature and that moving forward there may be some room to identify and reallocate hours to departments/offices where more hours might be needed. President Conner stated his appreciation of the work done by the Student Employment Working Group and the leadership provided by VP Bates and Director Post.

A motion was made to implement a \$2,400 student wage cap beginning in academic year 2021-2022. **IPPC unanimously approved the motion to approve the \$2,400 student wage cap beginning in academic year 2021-2022.**

### **3. Revised Assessment/Institutional Effectiveness Plan from SIE**

Institutional Effectiveness Specialist and IPPC Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness Co-Chair Amy Tweedy reviewed the revised *Institutional Effectiveness Plan*. Co-Chair Tweedy presented the highlights of the revised plan which was originally drafted in 2014 with a call to revise in 2019. She stated the Plan has been expanded to:

- 1) Create a process that included all divisions of the College, as opposed to just academic departments.
- 2) Collect current assessment practices that are already routinely practiced.
- 3) Update the organizational assessment structure.
- 4) Demonstrate alignment with the College's mission, *Strategic Plan*, and Goals for Student Learning and Development.

Co-Chair Tweedy reviewed the assessment process and cited numerous examples of assessment that have recently occurred across the campus. The Faculty Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Specialist Tweedy will continue to work collaboratively with the Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness, the President's Cabinet, and IPPC to plan, conduct, and monitor pan-institutional assessment projects. The revised Plan works to ensure that assessment projects across all areas are documented, creating a narrative around the work that Skidmore is accomplishing in striving to meet the strategic mission of the institution and engage in continuous improvement.

The revised *Institutional Effectiveness Plan* proposes campus-wide engagement in assessment on an ongoing basis. Under the Plan, Divisions have the flexibility to determine projects that are specific to their operations, while being expected to document progress on an annual basis. The Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness will engage with Departments on a collaborative and consultative basis. In addition, the Plan documents the assessment of the General Education curriculum as well as the maintenance of surveys that are all-college in scope. Co-Chair Tweedy emphasized that the revised Plan seeks flexibility to allow for meaningful and useful assessment.

An IPPC member asked for clarification surrounding academic assessments and the resulting potential changes to a Department. Co-chair Tweedy responded that these are the types of assessments that need to be looked at thematically, and connected across departments to assess patterns and outcomes to increase efficiencies, create policy-level change or inform decision-making. President Conner thanked the Subcommittee for their efforts in updating the Plan.

A motion was made to approve the revised *Institutional Effectiveness Plan*. IPPC **unanimously approved the motion to approve the revised *Institutional Effectiveness Plan*.**

#### **4. FY '21 Budget Updates**

President Conner stated that the College has been able to yield a balanced budget for FY '21. He remarked that this is a remarkable feat, one that the entire community has worked tirelessly to achieve through careful savings, a hiring freeze, department budget constraints, and no general salary adjustment (GSA). These factors combined with federal stimulus funding have resulted in a budget surplus of one-time funds that must be spent by the end of FY '21.

After consulting with the President's Cabinet, President Conner announced that the surplus funds will be allocated for a one-time discretionary payment that will go to every employee to recognize work in the extraordinarily challenging pandemic environment. He acknowledged those individuals who worked on campus throughout this time. One IPPC member commented that it would have been ideal to have distributed these surplus funds earlier in the academic year for a much needed morale boost. President Conner pointed out that it was only very recently that Skidmore confirmed that we did not need to use the remaining contingency and that there was another federal COVID-19 relief grant, and that it would have been unwise to promise a payment that we then could not deliver. VP for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng added that the discretionary amount received for each employee will be determined by their Human Resources job classification, as well as their date of hire. Discretionary one-time payment amounts will range from \$500 to \$3,000. Payments will be disbursed on May 21, 2021.

An IPPC member inquired about the vacation carryover policy that was changed at the start of FY'21 from two weeks to one week, asking if the one-time discretionary funds could be used for employees to carryover 70 hours. President Conner replied that although using the funding for that purpose is not possible, every employee who is affected by the carryover change will receive an additional one-week of floating holidays to use anytime in FY'22 at their discretion. VP Ng added that this is a one-time occurrence. An IPPC member noted concern over the decrease to one week. President Conner acknowledged these concerns, expressing hope that the additional one week of floating holidays will assist in giving back any unused vacation time to employees.

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Chair Casey Schofield applauded the decision of the President and Cabinet to disburse the funds as a flat payment and not connect the payment to an employee's salary. IPPC members added their appreciation of the President and Cabinet for their leadership during a time of transition and voiced support of this one-time discretionary payment. IPPC Vice Chair Bibow remarked that this is an exceptionally good outcome in a very difficult year. He reminded IPPC of the scenarios that were on the table at the start of FY '21, including possible layoffs and salary cuts. He thanked IPPC for acting as a sounding board for ideas and proposals for college leadership, noting that IPPC members should know that they helped play a role in how well the College functioned this past year. President Conner concurred, emphasizing that the makeup of the IPPC is unique among our peers and that the committee has been pivotal.

It was asked if students could be acknowledged in some way for their exceptional job in keeping the campus safe. President Conner stated that on every speaking occasion he closes with the remarkable job that Skidmore students have done. We will honor that commitment with a commencement that encompasses the gathering of the whole senior class.

VP Ng presented additional detail regarding the FY'21 budget. She stated that despite the drop in net tuition revenue, as well as the impact from the loss of revenue from summer and auxiliary operations and study abroad, we were able to cover these losses with offsets in reducing expense budgets and unanticipated government funding. VP Ng reported that the endowment was initially down at the start of FY'21, but has rebounded due to increased performance. For FY'22, VP Ng stated that Skidmore again will be impacted by the loss of summer revenue. The FY'22 budget forecast assumes regular in person operations beginning fall 2021, grant funding from the government Recovery Act, a 2.5% GSA, and no staff furloughs. The FY'22 operating budget will be presented for approval to the Board of Trustees at the May meeting.

## **5. Call for Agenda Items**

No new agenda items were raised.

## **6. Other Business**

No other business was brought forth.

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

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