

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 10, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Mary Lou Bates; Adrian Bautista; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; Marta Brunner; Marc Conner, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; Jina Mao; Donna Ng; Diane O'Connor; Jason Ohlberg; Michael Orr; Lori Parks; Joe Porter; Geraldine Santoso '22; Rik Scarce; Kurt Smemo; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling; Smriti Tiwari; Amy Tweedy; Claire Wang '23; Joshua Woodfork; and Carey Anne Zucca.

**ABSENT:** Lori Parks; Dwane Sterling.

**GUESTS:** Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Vice President Nathaniel Lowell '24; Associate Dean of Student Affairs Mariel Martin; Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) Chair Michael Ennis-McMillian; COVID-19 Logistics Working Group members: Assistant VP for Student Affairs and Director of Athletics and Co-Chair Gail Cummings-Danson and Interim Human Resources Director Sarah Delaney Vero.

**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 December 3, 2021 Meeting.**

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of December 3, 2021. With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the December 3, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.**

**2. Student Engagement Updates**

Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork and Associate Dean of Student Affairs Mariel Martin recently met with the leaders of the transphobia protests. Associate Dean Martin presented a brief background and timeline of the transphobia concerns and she and VP Woodfork explained the work to date in response to the concerns. At the end of May 2021, a group of students expressed concerns with their experiences, both within and outside of the classroom, in relation to gender expression and identity. At the start of this academic year, student organizers submitted a list of requests/demands.

VP Woodfork and Associate Dean Martin were able to connect and directly engage with the student organizers and held a meeting with three students as well as Director of Black Studies and Professor Winston Grady-Willis and Visiting Assistant Professor and Associate Director of Intergroup Relations Lisa Grady-Willis. The group was able to set ground rules, delve into challenging issues, discuss shared goals, review the requests that had been received by the student leaders, report on institutional responses compiled thus far to the student demands, and confer about next steps. They have another meeting scheduled in the near future.

VP Woodfork and Associate Dean Martin presented to IPPC the institutional responses to date, including the call for the expansion of trans and BIPOC reference materials at the Scribner Library, which was one request made by the transphobia student leaders. Associate Dean Martin was happy to report that Scribner Library has recently allocated a sizeable amount of funding to purchase materials, provide training, and offer ongoing support to diversify the selection at the

library so as to accurately represent and educate the Skidmore community about topics surrounding marginalized identities including Black trans, queer, and indigenous people of color authors and literature. Specifically, the library will be immediately acquiring a subscription to [Transgender Studies Quarterly \(TSQ\)](#).

Associate Dean Martin spoke to the request for an expansion of all-gender restrooms on campus. An [interactive campus map](#) that presents the all-gender restrooms was shared with IPPC. Associate Dean Martin provided a brief background regarding the work that has been conducted since 2005 on this item, including discussion at the [IPPC meeting of December 3, 2010](#). VP Woodfork noted that he and Associate Dean Martin are working with facilities to create an audit of all restrooms to ensure that we have all-gender restrooms available throughout campus, that restrooms are ADA compliant, and that we have consistent and inclusive signage in terms of language and symbols. They showed a compilation of images that exhibits the wide variety of our current restroom signage. They are working with Facilities to propose some shifting of existing restrooms in academic buildings to ensure access, while paying attention to the importance of religion and cultural identity within the shifting of cultural norms.

SGA Executive Vice President Nathaniel Lowell '24 spoke to the issue of disconnect concerning all-gender restrooms requests over time and asked how the College can ensure that this issue does indeed move forward. President Conner emphasized how crucial it is to hear from students as the College engages in assessment of these issues, including within the campus master planning process, as it is in many ways a collective responsibility. VP Woodfork added that a follow up meeting with transphobia leaders will be held shortly to continue the work and out of respect and deference, the progress being made will be shared with them first before sharing with the campus community at large.

Associate Dean Martin cited the name system at the College as a long-standing point of frustration. The Bias Response Group, the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding, and IPPC discussed name changes and naming several years ago and came up with a process and [a form for community members to utilize](#). Still, students are reporting that their “deadnames,” also known as legal names, are showing up in correspondence, which causes real potential harm. The College has several ever-evolving databases coupled with the many systems that each unit uses resulting in a quagmire of communication glitches that at times can result in our systems not communicating, with a subsequent resurfacing of the legal name. The work ahead will require those responsible for our technology and systems coming together to develop data management principles and governance. VP Woodfork remarked that we need to be attentive not only to the technical nature of name system, but also to the treatment and respect of name changes by our community members. Understanding, training, and accountability will be key as we move ahead. President Conner thanked VP Woodfork and Associate Dean Martin for their exceptional work and to the students who have pushed the College forward with these issues.

President Conner thanked departing Associate Dean Martin for her service and important DEI work she has contributed over 15+ years. IPPC members expressed their gratitude.

Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs Adrian Bautista provided an update on [the We Hear You campaign](#) as it relates to the progress being made on student concerns with the College's Title IX and sexual and gender-based misconduct (SGBM) processes. He reminded IPPC of the College's engagement with Title IX national expert [Leslie Gomez](#). Our goals remain: to listen and engage with students, hold ourselves accountable, and develop specific action plans for any alterations to our policies and processes. Dean Bautista has received feedback from students that simply providing this avenue for listening has proven valuable. Leslie Gomez has reviewed the notes from the eight student listening sessions and provided a set of themes for review.

Dean Bautista spoke to the intersectionality, specifically gender and racial identity, of the transphobia requests and the need to interrogate our Title IX processes with a similar lens. We are in a time of listening to student voices as the College self-examines its policies and procedures. We are beginning to rethink how we all collaborate to engage in constructive dialogue on these issues while paying attention to state and federal law, ensuring that students feel free of harm and heard. With this in mind, Dean Bautista is currently in the process of reviving the inactive SGBM Advisory Council and the new iteration will include a member from our [community partner Wellspring](#). Dean Bautista stated the College is committed to creating real change and he thanked Title IX Coordinator Joel Aure and the many other individuals who have put in countless hours in meetings and listening sessions as we begin to further empower students and develop a transparent roadmap for this important work.

### **3. COVID-19 Vaccination Booster Proposal**

Interim Human Resources Director and COVID-19 Logistics Working Group member Sarah Delaney Vero presented a follow up to the December 3 IPPC COVID-19 vaccination requirement discussion. As part of the COVID-19 Logistics Working Group's ongoing efforts to respond promptly and responsibly to evolving health and safety guidance, on December 3<sup>rd</sup> IPPC unanimously approved the motion to endorse the COVID-19 Logistics Working Group's development of a booster shot requirement policy. Director Vero stated that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued new guidance recommending that "everyone ages 18 and older should get a booster shot" to provide an additional layer of protection against the Omicron variant and to boost the effectiveness of the vaccination, which may become less effective over time. The COVID-19 Logistics Work Group reviewed this information and after thorough consideration brought forth a recommendation to IPPC that all faculty, staff and students be required to receive the booster when eligible. Director Vero spoke to the current [Employee Vaccination Policy](#) and presented a draft of the new Vaccination Policy for community members, which now includes the booster shot requirement.

In response to a question, Director Vero remarked that for the purposes of the policy "vaccinated" means two weeks have passed since the final dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine, and effective January 24, 2022, receipt of a booster shot within 30 days of becoming eligible for a booster. She noted that with this requirement recommendation, medical and religious exemptions would again exist as they did when initially requiring the vaccination in accordance with the College's commitment to provide equal opportunities to all individuals without regard to protected status provided the requested accommodation is reasonable and does not create an undue hardship for the College or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of

others or the individual requesting the exemption. Employees would be eligible for paid time off during work hours if needed and transportation would be made available through Human Resources for those individuals who need this service.

Employees who are not vaccinated or who do not receive a booster shot within 30 days of becoming eligible and are not approved for an exemption or leave of absence, would not be permitted to work on campus. A website to provide employees with the ability to submit their booster status would be created. She emphasized that since the beginning of the pandemic, faculty, staff, and students have consistently demonstrated that our community is one that cares for each other and that shares the responsibility for individual and community health and safety. As we prepare for a full return to on-campus work and learning in the coming weeks, it is the COVID-19 Logistics Working Group's hope that the decision to require the COVID-19 vaccination and booster for faculty, staff, and students will help everyone in our community feel safer and more at ease.

President Conner invited feedback from IPPC on the new policy. Members spoke to the need to have a clear, concise, and equitable policy regarding boosters for the Skidmore community. Director Vero stated that it is important to the health and safety of the community that all faculty, staff, and students are boosted by the start of the spring semester on January 24, 2022—but at the same time allowing for some flexibility for those individuals who may apply for an exemption in accordance with the College's [Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants policy](#). IPPC and President Conner spoke to the gratitude to all those who have offered their time and expertise this fall in our efforts to mitigate COVID-19 on campus, and to all members of our community who have done their part to help keep everyone safe.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the COVID-19 Working Group policy proposal on booster shots. **IPPC unanimously approved the motion to endorse the COVID-19 Working Group policy proposal that all faculty, staff and students be required to receive a COVID-19 booster shot when eligible.**

#### **4. Call for Agenda Items**

No new agenda items were raised.

#### **5. Other Business**

President Conner provided an update on the progress of the search for the next Vice President of Communications and Marketing. He explained that he will chair the search committee and that the other members include: Associate Professor of Management and Business Tim Harper, Financial Services Administrative Assistant Patti Heritage, Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates, and Katie Mastriano '24. The committee will meet shortly and it will be supported by Board of Trustees Coordinator Kate Grimes. Storbeck Search is assisting the College with the search process.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

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