

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 3, 2023**

Present: K. Aurelia Ball, Mary Lou Bates, Adrian Bautista, Marc Conner, Jacqueline Conrad, Xiaoshuo Hou, Michelle Hubbs, Charles Ingram, Nathaniel Lowell '24, Michael T. Orr, Lori Parks, Beth Ann Post, Tarah Rowse, Kurt Smemo, Joseph Stankovich, Dwane Sterling, Smriti Tiwari, Amy Tweedy, Peter von Allmen, Claire Wang '23, Leigh Wilton, Joshua Woodfork, Carey Anne Zucca,

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 by Chair President Conner.

1. Approval of meeting minutes from December 2, 2022

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes, and **the meeting minutes for December 2, 2022 were unanimously approved.**

2. Centering our Committee Goals and Norms for Spring Semester:

- a) President Conner welcomed new committee members Leigh Wilton and Peter von Allmen,
- b) VP for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork reminded the committee of the fall visit from outside facilitator Swarthmore College professor Lynne Schofield, who engaged us on setting ground rules for our committee, community norms, operating with respect, and how to be inclusive of different voices, including consideration of power differentials. We used our bios to get to know one another, our roles at the College, and what we bring to the table. We considered IPPC's charge to advise the President and Cabinet, how we work together, our expectations, and being active listeners. President Conner reiterated the importance of IPPC and its role in shared governance.

3. Campus Master Planning: Next Steps

President Conner spoke about moving forward with the process for Campus Master Planning and the need for a body to assist. We considered our Space Planning Working Group (SPWG). During our fall meetings, we had considered the charge of the group and revising the membership, particularly how to get faculty representation. Dean of the Faculty and VP for Academic Affairs Michael Orr presented revised materials that reflected our prior discussions and opened the discussion for final feedback. SGA President Nathaniel Lowell suggested that we move from one to two student members and that the second student member should come from the SGA ADA commission. Dean Orr suggested we change the language to say two students appointed by SGA "with one preferably from the ADA commission." President Conner noted that every project on the Campus Master Plan is focused on student experience so having two student voices makes sense. Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Chair Xiaoshuo Hou agreed that FEC would put out a call for two faculty members to serve on the committee for this semester and next academic year. We will review this committee over this next year, along with the faculty's review of their governance structure. At that point, we will decide whether or not the SPWG will become a formal subcommittee of IPPC. A motion was made to modify the revisions to the SPWG charge and membership, **and the revisions to the SPWG charge and membership were unanimously approved.**

4. Budget Parameters for FY'24

President Conner explained that budget materials were reviewed with IPPC in December prior to the January 25th budget workshop with the Board of Trustees, who provided feedback during that session. We continue to revise the draft budget that will be presented to the Board in February with the final budget coming to the Board in May for their approval. Last May after the Board meetings and Commencement, we held a town hall on the “state of the college finances,” and received lots of great feedback. This budget shows another year of a projected surplus, not just based on higher enrollments, but also including savings and operations. A one-time surplus cannot be counted on repeatedly. What do we do when we have repeated surpluses and projected deficits that never actually happen? In 2019, a decision was made in order to avoid projected deficits, to cut staffing levels by 10%, which had a negative effect on our community. We were able to do this through attrition. Last year, we started to revise this approach and the levels of these cuts have decreased, particularly on the faculty side. The Board has discussed what levers we have to address those projected deficits and how confident are we in the continued surpluses that are due mainly to our continued success in enrollment. The metaphor “levers” is one we talk a lot about and the question is which ones can we pull?

Interim VP for Finance and Administration Charles Ingram spoke about the status of the budget this year. Regarding the off-campus numbers, we budgeted 150 students but we realized 160 which explains the current surplus. Regarding expenses, one of the levers is capital where we went from \$11M (million) to \$13.5M. In October 2022, we projected the FY '23 operating budget to be at \$1.3M deficit. Currently, we are projecting a \$1.1M surplus due to not using all financial aid contingency and improved margins in dining operations. Below the line shows \$6.977M for a total operating budget on the surplus side. The compensation saving plan saw 33 staff positions eliminated over the last two years with a savings of \$2.6M. There are 32 positions still to be eliminated with a savings of \$1.9M. Reduction implementation has been challenging in some areas, like facilities, student affairs, and media services, which saw a reduction in staff. We are analyzing all available levers to achieve our desired dollar target reduction. How much money do we need to harvest as opposed to how many positions do we need to cut?

Some of these challenges are the unknowns like the impact of the marketplace, transportation costs, the war in Ukraine, all of which will raise the cost of projects and goods we utilize. One of the things we need to look at is our Compensation Plan over the next five years. We are forecasting 89 students below the line with resulting net revenue at \$4.6M. We are asking the Board approved a two-year capital cycle to accommodate lead time and scheduling of projects, summer programs, and staffing. Regarding the five-year forecast, we have kept tuition at 3.5% and enrollment assumptions at 700 for the incoming class. In 2024, we are projecting a balanced operating budget, but starting in 2025 with these assumptions, we are forecasting deficits.

The discussion turned to wanting to look at multiple levers to address the forecasted deficit. These might include Capital allocation, fundraising, tuition, and enrollment assumptions. The Skidmore fund is a lever that has been growing over the last few years which is built into our projections. Another lever is the budgeted number of students. Right now, we are aiming for 700 student incoming class. What if we were to increase our class size from 700 to 725? Do we have the residential capacity to handle this increase? Increasing student housing is in the *Campus*

Master Plan but affects teacher and class capacity and workloads. One of the levers we have available to address staffing needs is the new initiatives allotment of \$500k.

VP and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates addressed the question of potentially increasing the target size of the entering class. She indicated that this could present some challenges in the outyears. Last spring, we worked with an enrollment consulting firm, Maguire Associates, to address the question of whether our 5-year projections for a first-year class target of 700 with corresponding projections for financial aid allocations, discount rate and net tuition revenue were supported by the data. Maguire did a statistical analysis of external domestic demographic data (nationally and in the northeast) and internal data on our applications. Their analysis concluded that for the next 5 years those projections look sound, but afterwards the numbers are less clear. Dean Bates reported that this year's applicant pool, while the second largest in our history, is down 8% from last year's record 13,000+ applicants.

Dean Bates reported that we now look separately at our domestic pool of applicants and our international applicants. Domestic applicants constitute about 65% of our total pool, international are 35% of the pool. In order to meet our financial aid and enrollment targets, we can enroll 10-12% of the class from the international pool and then need to enroll the remaining 88-90% from the domestic pool. Two years ago we saw that while total applications were increasing, domestic applications were going down. Last year we reversed that trend and while this year's domestic applications are down from last year, they are up over all other years. VP Woodfork raised the question of timing with a new VP of Enrollment being hired this Spring.

5) Student Employment Update

Dean Bates gave an update on a revision, recently approved by President's Cabinet, to the Student Employment Policy, established two years ago, that limited students' hours worked to an average of 7 hours/week with corresponding annual earnings of \$2600/year. The Financial Aid Office, which supervises the Student Employment Program, has received feedback from some supervisors, including those in Dining Services, the Child Care Center, and the Writing Center, indicating that they were unable to adequately staff their departments to deliver the needed services. The Financial Aid Office has also received feedback from students wanting to work the additional hours needed by their supervisors. In response, we have revised the policy to say that "while we recommend that students work an average of 7 hours/week, they can, with supervisor's approval, work up to an average of 10 hours/week with a corresponding annual earnings of \$4000/year. In special cases, a Vice President can approve exceptions beyond the approved limit. The currently approved FY23 budget has adequate funding to cover these additional earnings." Student committee members expressed appreciation for this change.

6) Other Business

No other business was brought forth.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

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