

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 12, 2023**

Present: K. Aurelia Ball, Mary Lou Bates, Adrian Bautista, Marc Conner (Chair), Xiaoshuo Hou, Charles Ingram, Nathaniel Lowell '24, Michael Orr, Lori Parks, Beth Ann Post, Tarah Rowse, Kurt Smemo (Vice Chair), Joseph Stankovich, Dwane Sterling, Smriti Tiwari, Peter Von Allmen, Claire Wang '23, Leigh Wilton, Joshua Woodfork, Carey Anne Zucca.

Absent: Michelle Hubbs, Amy Tweedy. **Zoom:** Jacqui Conrad.

Guests: Julie Delay (HR, via Zoom), Tim Munro (Campus Safety), and Sarah Vero (HR).

The meeting was extended and called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chair Conner.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes April 14th, 2023 and April 28th, 2023

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for April 14 and April 28, 2023. **The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

2. Welcome to Next Years' Committee Members and Gratitude

President Conner thanked all of the committee members for their hard work on the IPPC committee this year. President Conner welcomed next year's committee members, including faculty Nick Junkerman, Dominique Vuvan, Masako Inamoto, and Tim Harper, and student Josh Maxwell (via Zoom). In addition, President Conner thanked the IPPC members who are rotating off the committee, including Claire Wang, Kurt Smemo, Charles Ingram, Mary Lou Bates, Jacqui Conrad, Xiaoshuo Hou, Leigh Wilton, Lia Ball, and Peter Von Allmen.

3. Revision of Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

Dean Bautista explained that in light of the Federal Government's decision to end the public health emergency, our Covid-19 Logistics Working Group has looked at making a change in our policy. If so, we need to let incoming students know of any policy changes. The group has put together three options: a) we continue the requirement and add the booster as part of the option; b) we transition to a policy in which we only require the incoming class to get the booster; or c) we go to a position of strongly recommending the vaccination and booster. Option c is what most of our peer institutions are doing. After consulting with the President's Cabinet about these options, the group was somewhere between options b and c. We need to look at having a requirement/recommendation that is uniform for all students and not just some of our students to get vaccinated and receive the booster. We spoke to doctors at Saratoga Hospital who said if we went with option a or b we would not be congruent with the CDC and the Federal Government. Ultimately, we decided that option c makes the most sense and that we make the booster available to students.

Human Resources Strategic Advisor Sarah Vero noted that the doctors at Saratoga Hospital explained that, because of developments in our healthcare system, requiring that our community be vaccinated is no longer needed in order to ensure we are caring for our most vulnerable population. We want to ensure our policy is in alignment with our values. If we do move in the direction of highly recommending the vaccine and booster in alignment with the CDC, there will be certain things that we want to maintain that we have had in place since the beginning of Covid-19. For example, allowing faculty members and staff to continue with masking requirements, having booster clinics on campus, and educating the community on the importance of receiving the vaccination. We will make tests available to identify cases early and we will continue to align ourselves with the CDC recommendation regarding isolation and we will continue to enforce those requirements on campus. For students living in the dorms, given residential density concerns, we would strongly encourage those students to get the vaccination and give high risk/immunocompromised students the option of moving out should another student test positive for Covid-19 and we are logistically determining how to continue this practice. President Conner asked for an endorsement to approve this shift in Covid-19 policy. **The policy was unanimously agreed to by the committee.**

4. Acceptable Use Policy on Electronic Security Cameras: Returning Item

During our April 28 meeting HR Strategic Advisor Sarah Vero and Director of Campus Safety Tim Munro presented an “acceptable use” policy regarding our campus security cameras. The draft policy is needed to govern use of cameras. The Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding and the IPPC Subcommittee on Student Affairs reviewed the draft policy and suggested that the community be informed of the camera usage, and to assure that people know where the cameras are placed and how they will be utilized. SGA President Nathaniel Lowell provided additional student feedback, including concern over the usage of security cameras in residential hallways as some students feel hallways are an extension of their dorm rooms. Director Munro noted that we have had instances where we have seen criminal activity in hallways, explaining if there is a pattern of behavior, we have a system in place to speak with witnesses and determine what is happening in the hallway, but installing cameras there would be rare. Language in the policy was updated to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of hallway areas. SGA President Lowell suggested that students also had concerns including the use of protests in the policy, which was changed. Another issue was apartments were not referenced at all, but have since been included in the language. It was suggested that all students (and the community) be made aware of the cameras and their usage. The student feedback was appreciated and helped to improve the policy. A motion was made to approve this policy. **The policy was unanimously passed by the committee.**

5. Conscientious Religious Observance Syllabus Language

Vice Chair Kurt Smemo spoke about the language used for religious observations listed on course syllabi. A proposal was made to change the language slightly to have it read in a less legalistic manner without any substantive changes. This went before the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) and was approved. A motion was made to endorse

this new language. **The updated policy was unanimously passed by the committee.**

6. Retirement “Single Record Keeper”: Returning Item

This item is returning from a discussion at our last meeting, where we talked about how our dual record-keepers practice (1 from TIAA, 1 from Vanguard) is redundant and requires our employees to pay additional costs for the additional record-keeper. Such practices have been the subject of lawsuits in recent years and our fiduciary obligation basically requires us to keep costs to our employees down and therefore shift to a single record-keeper. The main focus today was on how to communicate this new information to the Skidmore community. Human Resources (HR) provided a potential timeline. Interim VP Charles Ingram explained that the timeline from HR doesn't have to be in place in September, but something we can start sharing in the fall and by mid-winter, when we could execute the plan. President Conner proposed that there are a couple of ways to proceed: 1) if there are more objections, we can talk them through and work on it over the summer and return to it in the fall for endorsement; or 2) we can also do a “provisional endorsement” during this meeting and return to it for a full endorsement in the fall. The difference between the two involves ramp up work that HR needs to do with our various external consultancies to get this ready for our employees in the fall and winter. Importantly, this matter is a fiduciary oversight responsibility of the College, which ultimately falls to the Board of Trustees to make sure we are watching out for the fiscal wellbeing of our employees. It is vital that we communicate the facts of this issue clearly to our employees.

HR Director Julie Delay explained that a draft communications plan was created, including regulatory administrative requirements, that selecting TIAA is based on the fact that many of the funds offered through TIAA cannot be offered on the Vanguard platform, but funds being offered via Vanguard are offered by TIAA, the single provider structure has minimum cost efficiencies, but the main driving factor is that there are savings to participants because participants pay record keeping fees. The detailed work with TIAA and making this change with Vanguard is a four-month process so we are looking potentially at a September announcement to employees. Stakeholders are current plan participants and retirees as well as union members. The plan components would include a community announcement, the HR Benefits Website announcement, FAQ's and detailed Transition Guide for participants, webinars with TIAA and HR, and TIAA would have extensive in-person, online and phone call advising and consultation.

Committee members asked about the process for people with Vanguard to transfer to TIAA. Director Delay answered that if an individual does not have a TIAA account, they can go to the website and create an account. When transferring to Vanguard we would match the funds at TIAA and move the funds on a specific date so people would be informed about the timeline for transfer. It is a simple transaction and we would provide instructions on how to process this. A committee member suggested that we make the announcement to go to a single record keeper on several platforms and communications to avoid confusion, including Staff and Faculty meetings, which allow for Q&A. Director Delay agreed and suggested that the College will be reaching out to all Vanguard members individually to announce the change via a letter. A committee member pointed out the challenge with timing at the end of this academic year when the community is

moving towards summer. President Conner noted the risk that we are taking knowing this information. He explained that the risk is two-fold. Because we are not fulfilling our fiduciary duty we might be putting ourselves at risk for a lawsuit, and the other risk is the very reason for the lawsuit because we are charging more than our employees should be paying for this service which might be seen as a violation of our fiduciary responsibility.

A discussion ensued regarding how and when to best make this announcement to the Skidmore community. Committee members raised concerns that we have not communicated to Vanguard our intention to switch to TIAA, that we have not presented this information to union members or retirees. Director Delay explained that we would work with the unions. A few committee members expressed concern with making the announcement over the summer. After the two thorough IPPC discussions, President Conner stated that he would be uncomfortable asking IPPC for an endorsement at this stage. He suggested “we stop here” on this topic and add this information to the meeting minutes and return to this item in the fall.

7. Name Policy: From the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU)

On September 9, 2021 a group of students called The Black Trans Abolitionists came forward and presented a series of demands to the administration, including the need to update class rosters and systems that include student’s chosen names rather than their “dead names.” Skidmore has a “Preferred Name” policy that is not effectively working as our systems are not communicating to make updates. CIGU worked with the then VP of Finance and Administration Donna Ng to convene a working group of 30 different stakeholders from across the campus who came together several times to develop a policy and a system so community members would only have to update their information, including adding pronouns, in one place and a second place if they wanted to change their email. Working group members and student leaders provided helpful feedback on the draft policy and important elements of a website.

VP Woodfork stated that CIGU unanimously endorsed the Name policy on May 9. He explained that we are hoping to receive IPPC’s support today in order to work over the summer to get these systems in place. The procedures will be listed on the accompanying website, which will be linked to the diversity, HR, and registrar’s websites, and include FAQs. As this comes to IPPC from a subcommittee it arrives as a motion that does not require a second. The agenda item was moved. **The policy was unanimously passed by the committee.**

8. Transphobia Demands Update

The Black Trans Abolitionists students and CIGU student members were instrumental in working with CIGU to prioritize the work on CIGU’s agenda. For example, CIGU had previously worked on all-gender restrooms. This year, we were able to expand offerings to include two multi-stall all-gender restrooms in Bolton Hall. We also updated a campus map to indicate all-gender restrooms across campus. Unfortunately, committee time did not permit discussion of other updates, including Title IX processes, Scribner library holdings, etc.

9. Admissions Report Class of 2027

President Conner highlighted that Skidmore “made the class” which is a great achievement for the College. We project an entering class that is 35 students higher than we were aiming for which was 705 students with a projection now at 740 students. Last year’s “summer melt” was more than what we had predicted. More students are saying yes to our admissions offer. This leads to the capacity challenge which means a larger entering class. The upcoming Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action challenges might make it difficult to create a diverse population for future classes so we are watching that and considering how it might impact us.

10. 2023-2024 Strategic Action Agenda (SAA)

In September next year IPPC will receive a draft of the SAA for next academic year where we set out over-arching strategic goals. This year, the goals include the Racial Justice Initiative (RJI), The Speech and Expression Project, the Visions and Values Project, the major capital projects emerging from campus master planning, and the Vice-Presidential leadership transitions. The Wyckoff Center had over 100 events over the past year for RJI and continuing this will be one of our strategic goals for next year. Speech and Expression had many events throughout the year including our symposium in April. Visions and Values had discussions with every constituency this year including the Board of Trustees, IPPC, staff meetings, faculty forums, SGA, Cabinet, and a campus-wide survey. We will work over the summer to put together this information. Capital projects are moving along well, including remodeling our outdoor tennis courts, which should be ready for varsity play in September. We have hired four VPs and the search for the General Counsel and VP of HR has about 65 applications and we will bring the three finalists to campus in two weeks. Hopefully, we will have the new President’s Cabinet in place for the summer. We have a challenge now with residential life and accommodating the incoming students, including wi-fi issues, loss of common space, and over-capacity in many areas. We need to think about what the residential life should be like for our students, including renovating our residence halls, consideration of a new space and of a Dean of Student’s residence living on or near campus; all other NY6 schools have this Dean’s residence model.

11. Selection of Committee Vice Chair for 2023-2024

IPPC committee member Smriti Tiwari was asked to step out of the meeting as the committee voted on the next Vice Chair. Current Vice Chair Kurt Smemo moved to nominate Smriti as the Vice Chair for 2023-2024 academic year. The motion was seconded and **the motion was unanimously passed by the committee.**

12. Call for Agenda Items

13. Other Business

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

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