

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

Present: Marc Conner (Chair), Masako Inamoto, Nick Junkerman, Dan Konstalid, Michelle Hubbs, Josh Maxwell '26, Dorothy Mosby, Lori Parks, Beth Post, Tarah Rowse, Rodrigo Schneider, Joseph Stankovich, Elizabeth Stauderman, Smriti Tiwari (Vice Chair), Amy Tweedy, Sarah Delaney Vero, Dominique Vuvan, Joshua Woodfork, Carey Anne Zucca.

Zoom: Tim Harper, Nathaniel Lowell '24, Jess Ricker.

Absent: Adrian Bautista, Dwane Sterling.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Conner at 10:33 a.m.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2023 and September 8, 2023

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for May 12 and September 8, 2023. With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the May 12 and September 8 meetings were unanimously approved.**

2. Continued Welcome and What is Your Role on this Committee?

President Conner spoke about the purpose of IPPC and its role at Skidmore. In our last meeting, we discussed members' purpose with facilitator Lynne Steuerle Schofield, Professor of Statistics and former associate provost for faculty diversity at Swarthmore College. The committee is advisory in charge and provides comment on policy-making and planning. This discussion also covered what is not the work of IPPC and what belongs to the faculty; for example, the academic curriculum, faculty tenure, and promotion. The College's Board of Trustees provides final approval on significant College policies and we also make clear what is not the role of the Board: for example, operations and management. General Counsel and Vice President of Human Resources Sarah Vero asked about making changes and whether or not a legal compliance change that is required by law needs to come before IPPC? President Conner reminded the group of the Policy on Policies, and how to bring up changes and policy ideas. When it comes to legal compliance, there is no decision to make, but we typically inform IPPC to give us the opportunity to share and announce the results of these policy changes and discuss how they will potentially echo across our campus. Student Government President Nathaniel Lowell suggested that initially bringing these items to one of the IPPC subcommittees may be beneficial so College members learn of legal changes being made to policy. He suggested that from the student perspective these changes can come unexpectedly. Having a space to talk about these mandatory changes and bring these changes to the students can be helpful.

Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork spoke on being a member of IPPC and using our full institutional perspective rather than just championing the needs of one's constituency (students, staff, faculty, or administrators). President Conner noted that one of the big roles of IPPC is to channel information to the Skidmore community, but

that we may need to hold confidentiality as we develop policy and planning until we are ready to share more widely. In some cases, we may need to form a working group to more closely study items. He committed to being clear with IPPC as to the reason for discussing particular items and what he is seeking, whether that includes sharing information, seeking advice, or looking for endorsement.

3. Committee Norms and Ground Rules

President Conner spoke about our shared governance committees and how they have members from different constituencies. Sometimes we handle difficult situations and need to be able to speak freely, always aiming for kindness and respect. There are times when we need to agree to disagree. VP Woodfork explained that the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) develops ground rules/community norms at the start of each academic year. These focus on how we work together and what to do if these ground rules are violated. If a committee member thinks something was “out of bounds” they can ask to pause the meeting and we can work through the objection. We discussed what it would look like at IPPC and noted the power differential in the room based on our roles.

4. Policy on College Policies

President Conner referenced the College’s [Policy on College Policies](#), which was created during the 2012-2013 academic year, explaining the process for people to propose “development, adoption, and amendment of College policies.” The policy provides a roadmap of where to go if one has a new policy idea or wants to change a current process. Vice President for Finance and Administration Dan Konstalid asked for clarification on when items are referred to a subcommittee versus starting a new working group? President Conner answered by saying that it depends on the item and whether or not we already have a group which it might fall under, as well as the depth of review and work that needs to occur. He pointed out the structures we created around Campus Master Planning, including the creation of a task force and a steering committee. President Conner suggested that we share this document with people who inquire and reminded us that it is posted on the IPPC webpage.

5. Strategic Action Agenda 2023-2024: Discussion and Input

President Conner provided a draft of this year’s Strategic Action Agenda (SAA), which includes five goals and was developed over the summer. President Conner reminded the committee that we have an over-arching institutional ten-year *Strategic Plan* that we continue to follow, and each year’s SAA is aligned with that Plan. The five goals for this year’s SAA were presented to President’s Cabinet in mid-July and that group spent time reviewing and proposing changes, as well as at end of August during a retreat. He reminded the committee that we are fortunate not to have managing Covid-19 as a strategic goal as it has now moved to an operational project. Looking at the items for this academic year, the Racial Justice Initiative carries over. It is an important item which began on the first day of his presidency and signals to the community our continued efforts around promoting a more diverse and equitable campus community. President Conner noted that the “[The Social \(In\)Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border](#)” series is off to an impressive start.

Second, the residential experience was discussed, particularly how to frame it. Third, institutional planning was also discussed as we have many planning horizons at play this year. Fourth, the pressure nationwide on the topic of speech and expression appears more pronounced than ever. Fifth, the item that developed the most is what we are calling “Community of Care,” which was previously “Health, Wellness, Fitness and Athletics,” which is still a work in progress and a major focus this year. President’s Cabinet had great feedback asking if there is a larger concept that would be meaningful to our community and Community of Care was suggested. What does a Community of Care mean at Skidmore? This includes mental health, compensation, benefits, sense of community, to name a few examples.

Institutional Effectiveness Specialist Amy Tweedy expressed support for the exercise of having annual goals and noted that it assists with the documentation of our accreditation. She asked if there are ways the community can attach their projects to the SAA? VP Vero and VP for Communications and Marketing Stauderman stated that much of their work and focus is surrounding the work and items on the SAA. This is an active document that helps to determine the direction of the College. VP Woodfork pointed out that the SAA is not an exhaustive list of work and efforts and questioned if we separate the review of last year’s items from this year’s proposed goals.

SGA President Nathaniel Lowell ’24 spoke about reimagining residential space for students. After speaking with various students on campus, he suggested the residential areas are a place to sleep, but lack social spaces to gather. President Conner acknowledged the need for such spaces and addressing this need will be part of the planning.

President Conner explained that we will conclude the Visions and Values project this fall and move into discussions about Strategic Planning by year’s end and into next year, working towards a new strategic plan for 2025.

The Speech and Expression goal continues from last year after determining the language used to define it. In today’s climate, how we word these things is very important to getting our message and mission made clear for Speech and Expression.

During the “Community of Care” discussion Director of Financial Aid Beth Post cautioned the committee about any upcoming healthcare benefits changes and the ripples with caring. VP Vero pointed out that although there are changes, we are still looking at the institution as a whole as we develop and share the changes made to our healthcare plan and how it will affect staff and faculty. We need to be careful about pushing this information in a “we care about you but” language and explain to people that we do have financial pressures that factor into our decision-making process. It is important to maintain trust in our community. Dean of the Faculty and VP for Academic Affairs Dorothy Mosby pointed out requests from faculty leaders for faculty/staff spaces for people to engage in conversation on a more informal basis.

The SAA will return to IPPC when we seek endorsement of the goals and document. If members have additional thoughts, please share. After that the revised document will go to the Board of Trustees' Strategic Planning Committee for discussion and ultimately Board approval.

6. Agenda Setting for 2023-2024: Call for Agenda Items

President Conner stated that there were some carry-over agenda items from last spring that need to be resolved. VP Woodfork listed the items, including: returning to the Transphobia demands beyond the ones we covered with the expansion of all-gender restrooms and the passage of an updated Name Policy; moving the chalking item to the IPPC Subcommittee on Student Affairs; moving the animals on campus over to the Safety Committee; and holding a campus interpretive event on the Supreme Court's rulings on the affirmative action cases.

President Conner noted that the final carry over item is the single record keeper issue and next steps. VP Vero spoke about our retirement plan for faculty and staff and our 403B plan. She explained that as the plan sponsor, we have responsibilities to exercise fiduciary duties and have designated that fiduciary responsibility to a retirement oversight committee. Last year, the retirement oversight committee recommended that in order to maximize benefits to our plan participants, that we would go from two service providers/record keepers (TIAA and Vanguard) to one (TIAA). There are a number of savings that people would be able to realize through this move. In terms of the actual offering retirement perspective, all of Vanguard's offerings are available in the TIAA portfolio (while the reverse is not true) so taking away Vanguard would not impact anybody from an actual investment choice perspective. This was presented to our former Interim VP for Finance and Administration who along with President Conner presented it to IPPC last spring. IPPC came back with very sound counsel that although the proposed change is reasonable, we need to think carefully about our communication plans and timing. The HR department put together a communication and implementation plan that will be presented at a future IPPC meeting. We are looking to implement this plan in April or May of 2024. Committee members suggested they look forward to learning more about the communications and timeline.

President Conner asked that committee members consider agenda items for this year and to please bring them forth or share with him or Vice Chair Smriti Tiwari.

7. Other Business

No new business was brought forth.

This meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

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