# INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
# MEETING MINUTES
# FEBRUARY 16, 2024

**Present:** Marc Conner (Chair), Tim Harper, Masako Inamoto, Dan Konstalid, Michelle Hubbs, Lisa Jackson-Schebetta, Nathanial Lowell ’24, Josh Maxwell ’26, Dorothy Mosby, Lori Parks, Beth Post, Jess Ricker, Tarah Rowse, Rodrigo Schneider, Joseph Stankovich, Dwane Sterling, Smriti Tiwari (Vice Chair), Sarah Delany Vero, Dominique Vuvan, Joshua Woodfork, Carey Anne Zucca. **Zoom:** Adrian Bautista, Elizabeth Stauderman

**Absent:** Amy Tweedy.

Chair Conner called the Meeting to order at 10:33 am.

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 1, 2023 and February 2, 2024**

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for December 1st, 2023 and February 2, 2024. With no proposed changes, **the meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

2. **Budget Update**

VP for Finance and Administration Daniel Konstalid presented a budget update, stating that two weeks ago when IPPC met, external trends were discussed and how they inform the budget. The Board of Trustees (BOT) held its annual Budget Workshop at the end of January, which included discussion of certain key parameters that were discussed with IPPC in December. The next step for the Operating Budget is to ask the BOT to affirm certain budget parameters when they hold their meeting later this February. Then we will have an update for the campus in March regarding how we see next year’s budget coming together. After that, the BOT will consider other budget parameters at their May meeting and then they will adopt the budget in full. Chair Conner shared that we will have a budget update presentation to the community on March 6 with notice of the meeting coming via the *Skidmore Weekly Bulletin*. The meeting will be held from 3:30-4:30 pm in Murray-Aikins as well as via Zoom. Staff and faculty may submit questions.

3. **Capital Budget Overview and Project Update**

VP Konstalid explained that the Operating Budget includes an annual appropriation to the Capital Budget. The past few years that transfer has averaged about $13 million. With what will be a $187 million budget next year, we are envisioning that $13 million will be a transfer to the Capital Budget for capital activities. Of the allocation for the $13 million, we will allocate around $2 million for IT and infrastructure with another $1 million for major equipment around the campus and a certain amount is held for contingencies that have not been identified. Another $7 million for facilities for the campus, including everything from sidewalk repair, window and roof replacements, and other maintenance on campus which is a necessary investment. Periodically, the Capital Budget is also called upon to shoulder major projects on campus, which in some cases also calls on us to tap into other resources outside the annual capital appropriation in order to fund a complete major project of a certain scale. Those additional funding sources have traditionally included donor funding and we have seen success with achieving it.

In order to accomplish some major projects, there have also been times when Skidmore has decided to incur indebtedness when we were not able to come up with available resources all at once. In these cases, we have made decisions to go out into the debt markets and issue Municipal Bonds or take on another form of financing to allow us to have access to funding at a certain moment and in turn, service that debt over time through the Operating Budget. At times, we have also used College reserves to fund projects. We have talked about how our enrollment in excess of our net fiscal enrollment guideline - enrollment beyond our long-term plan base enrollment - has been a way in which we fund some projects. In cases of the two major projects that are active on the campus right now, there is the Billie Tisch Center for Integrated Sciences (BTCIS) which has made use of those funding sources, donor support and to a lesser extent debt funding, and some use of reserves to support this large project. The other major project that is currently underway is the McCaffery-Wagman Tennis and Wellness Center, which is being funded by donors and College resources in order to move the project along. VP Konstalid explained that BTCIS is in its third and final phase and should be completed by May. The McCaffery-Wagman Tennis and Wellness Center is at the height of its construction and will hopefully be completed by the end of October 2024. VP Konstalid confirmed that no debt was incurred for this project.

President Conner asked about the Capital Budget request process and how it is determined what items get put on the list for this $13 million allocation? VP Konstalid explained that allocation is supported by requests that are made by the campus in response to a call for capital requests. These requests are prioritized by highest need for the College at that time. These requests are continuing to come in and there will be a process whereby facilities, IT, and others will review them and make recommendations that will in turn be reviewed with two groups: the President's Cabinet and the IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance. This will ultimately be part of what we bring to the Board to approve in May as part of their approval of the Operating Budget, including signing-off on the capital allocation of $13 million.

Assistant Professor of Economics Rodrigo Schneider asked how much of the $187 million budget covers salaries for employees and VP Konstalid answered that about 60% of the budget covers total compensation costs. General Counsel and VP of Human Resources Sarah Vero spoke about the negotiating process regarding union employees and the various proposals we receive. Within the next month or so, we will be receiving a compensation proposal from the non-tenure-track faculty bargaining group, which will be shared with budget office so we can determine the implications of this proposal. We also want to look at equity across campus and doing external surveys on what our peer colleges are offering for compensation. We anticipate everyone's wages will increase to a certain amount, which is included in our annual budgeting.

President Conner then shared with IPPC another Capital Project for a new baseball field. The current field was identified as in need of substantial renovation with an estimated price of approximately $2.8 million. We received a donor opportunity from someone who wanted to donate specifically for a baseball field project. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to replace the current field at its current site, so rather we are proposing to relocate it to Daniels Road, west of the riding facility on land that Skidmore already owns. Financially it makes more sense to move the field rather than fix the current baseball field, which will always be a liability and ongoing expense for the College. The new location will have better parking off the road (thereby addressing a major safety issue with the current field) and includes a turf field rather than grass. The Board of Trustees reviewed this project in October and after many questions on the project and its fundraising efforts, they approved the project in January. It is a $3.4 million project in total with $2.4 million which we will fundraise—hence it is only a $1 million commitment from the College. We have these funds in Capital Project reserves which is important so we do not have to chip away at the annual $13 million being used for other campus projects.

Dean Bautista spoke about how this project fits under Student Affairs and how we have examined what is needed in our Athletics Department. Renovating our riding facility is our number one priority with this baseball field as our second highest priority. Renovations to our riding facility are very costly and exceed what we can currently afford. We considered the safety portion regarding parking in the current location which the Board raised as well. This new baseball field is in alignment with the *Campus Master Plan*, although it was not an original project, this resonates with the needs of our Athletic Department as well as health and wellness. President Conner shared that, once the Coach can share this new information with his team, we will have an article in the *Skidmore Weekly Bulletin* regarding the new baseball field. SGA President Nathaniel Lowell asked what the timeline was for completing this project and President Conner informed IPPC that it will be completed by the Spring 2025 season. Vice Chair Smriti Tiwari asked how the community will accept budget spending on a new baseball field when we just announced no new initiatives and freezing services and supplies budgets. President Conner stated that they are two completely different budget issues and are funded by different sources. Essentially, we are fundraising for a majority of the baseball field project to finance the completion of the field. Director of Sustainability Programs and Assessment Tarah Rowse commented on consideration of future access and connectivity options from campus. SGA VP Josh Maxwell asked what the projected maintenance for the new turf field will cost and how often does it need replacing? President Conner stated that the maintenance costs go down by switching from grass to turf, but will need to be addressed in the future with IPPC when the time comes for this maintenance. This would come in the form of a Capital Budget request.

**4. Strategic Planning**

VP Woodfork reviewed where we left off in December with strategic planning. We finished fall semester meetings with sharing strategic directions that emerged from Campus Master Planning and the Visions and Values project. These included: creativity and academic excellence, increasing endowment for need-based financial aid, the residential student experience, DEI, and sustainability. We discussed how the planning streams build on each other and the interplay strategic planning will have now with our Middle States reaccreditation, particularly on community engagement. We confirmed that IPPC would act as the governing body to shepherd our strategic planning process. Vice Chair Tiwari will assist with the strategic planning process as vice-chair for this and next year. For today, we want to consider what types of community engagement we want to undertake and with whom do we want to engage.

VP Woodfork reminded the committee that during our last strategic planning process we had lots of community engagement modes, including: white papers from various groups around campus asking about goals and landscape; an academic summit in January with faculty; roundtables with students, staff, and faculty; presidential office hours; surveys; and lots of engagement with various constituencies. What types of engagement do we want to see this time? Associate Professor of Theater Lisa Jackson-Schebetta suggested we consider the obligations folks in our community already have in terms of meetings and how to be strategic and intentional in not adding things while finding ways to engage with practices we already have in place. She cautioned that someone needs to read all the white paper materials. VP Woodfork pointed out the Staff and Faculty meetings can be leveraged without adding too many extra meetings. SGA President Lowell suggested going to SGA Senate and various student clubs that already exist. He also suggested utilizing short surveys that can be placed on social media and sharing information with club leaders who will disseminate to the club.

The next question is thinking about the different constituencies including students, staff, faculty, alumni, the BOT, Saratoga Springs and the larger community and what other groups are missing from this list that would be important to consult with? A committee member asked about who might be included in the Saratoga Springs larger community. This might include civic leaders and not-for-profit leaders and neighbors, for example. What other groups should we be engaging with in our community at Skidmore and the broader community? Associate Director of Civic Engagement Michelle Hubbs suggested we engage with retirees of Skidmore.

VP Woodfork pointed out that it might be helpful for us to consider higher ed's landscape beyond the finances and admissions highlights we received last meeting. So how do we consider the standing of our peers and aspirants as well as the sector. VP Vero spoke on ways to reach staff and being proactive as we gain valuable information when we reach out to talk to various groups. SGA VP Maxwell added that he believes in addition to SGA clubs on campus, we need to reach out to student employees and workers, and specifically the RA's and going to the spaces where students are already occupying. President Conner thanked everyone for their work and participation in this discussion. The concern that some have raised about overloading the community with needs for feedback and participation is one of the reasons IPPC is taking the lead on the Strategic Planning process.

**5. Call for Agenda Items**

No new agenda items were raised.

**6. Other Business**

No other business was brought forth.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 am.

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