

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 6, 2024

Present: Marc Conner (Chair), Eriko Fujita, Michelle Hubbs, Masako Inamoto, Nick Junkerman, Bradley Kadets '27, Dan Konstalid, Josh Maxwell '26, Dorothy Mosby, Amy Oh, Beth Post, Jess Ricker, Tarah Rowse, Rodrigo Schneider (Vice Chair), Joseph Stankovich, Elizabeth Stauderman, Dwane Sterling, Amy Tweedy, Sarah Vero, Dominique Vuvan, Joshua Woodfork.

Absent: Tim Harper and Carey Anne Zucca.

The meeting was called to order at 10:36 a.m.

1) Review of IPPC Operating Code: IPPC Subcommittees, Next Steps

Vice-Chair Schneider led a discussion of the IPPC operating code review. President Conner shared a handout that outlined the IPPC reflection items about the committee's Operating Code. There are three items that are highlighted to talk about. The first item is in the third sentence that says "IPPC advises the President on all policy areas" with the operative word being "all" with primary responsibility for those areas beyond the purview of faculty governance. The Operating Code makes it clear that the faculty governance areas are not typically what IPPC weighs in on. Items like tenure, promotion, and curriculum are a separate part of governance. Would it make sense to delete the word "all"? Should it be changed to "many" instead? Vice Chair Rodrigo Schneider pointed out that tenure is not included in this document and using the word "all" implies that all policies including faculty and tenure issues are under the umbrella in the use of the word "all."

The second item that was raised states that the IPPC advises the president on all policy areas. Does it advise the President *and Cabinet*? All of the VPs sit on IPPC, and there is some interplay with the subcommittee structure and many of the individual President's Cabinet members use subcommittees to good effect. Some of the most helpful things that have emerged from the inquiry are looking at the subcommittees and trying to get more clarity and consistency in their purpose. VP for Enrollment Jess Ricker asked how does the IPPC advise the Cabinet since the VPs are members of IPPC which informs the Cabinet?

The third item looks at how much time is enough time to share materials in advance of the meetings. At the bottom of the page on IPPC Operating Code, it states, "Agendas and supporting documents will be distributed by email prior to each meeting, with lead time sufficient to permit committee members to review these documents carefully." The committee discussed what "sufficient time" included and asked if Wednesday morning by 10:30 a.m. was reasonable? Several members agreed that stating a timeline for materials to be delivered prior to the meeting gives structure to the meeting and enough lead time to become familiar with the material.

President Conner and Vice Chair Schneider thanked the committee for the input and suggested

that we return to the Operating Code in the spring and makes some revisions based on the discussion and feedback.

2) Strategic Planning Review: Process, Other Elements, Next Steps

VP Woodfork shared that during the staff and faculty meetings this afternoon, strategic planning theme leaders will each speak for three minutes and summarize the feedback they have received until now. Theme leaders have prepared summarizing memos, and next week they will provide 30-minute presentations with 3-7 recommendations to be presented to VP Woodfork, President Conner, and Vice Chair of Strategic Planning Smriti Tiwari. The recommendations will be shared with the President's Cabinet the following week. President Conner will then begin drafting the next *Strategic Plan*. As shared at the last IPPC meeting (11/22) he hopes to get a draft completed by January 31 in order to receive input at the February 7 IPPC, staff, and faculty meetings. He will then prepare an updated draft to share with the Board of Trustees for its February meeting.

President Conner stated that we as an institution began strategic planning in January of 2021 when the campus master planning process was initiated and then continued with the Visions and Values project. He pointed out that every strategic planning exercise starts with missions and values, asking such questions as, who is the institution and what is special about that institution? All this information will be utilized for President Conner to draft our vision of the next five-years.

The Board, who is the approving body of the Strategic Plan, will get the draft of the next *Plan* two weeks before the February Board meeting as well. After that, it is brought back to the whole community for more feedback and then it will be brought to this academic year's final Board Meeting in May 2025 for the Board's approval.

VP Woodfork reminded the committee to be mindful of the Middle States reaccreditation process and the interplay with the working groups in reviewing and evaluating how we have been doing. After completing the next *Strategic Plan*, we need to consider our forthcoming Campaign, which VP Zucca has begun work with her team, and the Board of Trustees, including hiring a Campaign consultant. We will engage Board leadership in January and be intentional about how we review the draft *Plan* with the Board in February.

President Conner and VP Woodfork spoke about the progress with the 78 white papers and how transparent we want to be about sharing this information along with other feedback received, which began by constituency way back on September 28, 2023 with Extended Cabinet. We need to determine how to bring this information to the community in a clear and understandable way, including our use of the [Skidmore 2030 website](#).

3) Budget Considerations

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Negotiations Update Continued

Class of 2029 Update Continued

Feedback on December 4th Budget Presentation

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Negotiations Update Continued

VP Sarah Vero continued updating the committee on the latest negotiations for non-tenure-track faculty. VP Vero shared that the College's administration negotiating group has continued to meet with the union leaders and that we are 99% where we want to be on benefits. We are still working on the compensation piece, which is the hardest part to negotiate. Both parties are committed to getting this done by early January 2025. President Conner asked for a sense of how frequently negotiations occur and how many hours go into this and who is at the table. VP Vero answered that the groups generally meet every other week and both groups have multiple prep sessions and spend on average between 10 and 20 hours a week on this topic. These issues are brought to Dean of Faculty Dorothy Mosby, who talks with academic department chairs and program directors for discussion on what to present within counter proposals. We are currently negotiating a fair rate that takes into consideration current non-tenure-track faculty and those faculty members who may join us in the future.

Class of 2029 Update Continued

Dean Ricker shared the first glimpse into the applicant pool for early decision round one (ED1) where applications are due November 1. The financial aid deadline is November 8. We won't have information about financial need until later in the process of reviewing each round. Early decision applications are reviewed and decisions and aid packages are rendered by mid-December, with those students enrolling at Skidmore by early January. There is a second round of early decisions in January, and then decisions for those applications are released mid-February. The two rounds of early decision have historically brought in about half of our enrolled class and roughly half of our full pay students each year. That means we need to enroll half of our class and half of our full pay students from regular decision students who apply in early January and receive decisions from us in mid-March. This is where we fell short last year and is one of the drivers of the budget considerations. At any moment, the number of full pay students in our applicant pool is a moving target. Keep in mind that with 80% or more of our applicant pool applying for aid, the financial aid team is trying to give estimates of the level of need for approximately 10,000 applicants. As a tuition-dependent institution whose endowment size limits how much financial aid we can provide, we need to make sure that we do not go out with offers of admission that will overextend our financial aid budget. Regarding the class of 2029, we think we will be further ahead in progress towards our revenue goals coming out of ED1 than we were last year, though the outcomes of Regular Decision of course remain to be seen.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that from his work with faculty, including following up on the Faculty-Only meeting, there are five questions that some faculty are asking regarding admissions and enrollment, including:

1) Discuss the decision-making process at each stage of admitting a student to Skidmore. How are the processes at each stage similar and different compared to how they were conducted under prior Dean Mary Lou Bates' leadership? Dean Ricker shared that the admissions process remains more of an art than a science, and describing the entire process would take more time than

allotted at this meeting. Dean Ricker shared that Skidmore has always practiced holistic review while also attending to tuition revenue needs, and she assured that we continued to do so under her leadership. The timeline for each application round was reviewed, including how late in each round revenue relative to financial needs becomes known for decision-making purposes, making it inherently difficult to predict outcomes with precision.

2) There is a narrative that suggests that Dean Bates always erred toward over- enrollment whereas now we aim at hitting an exact target which increases our chances of under-enrolling classes, like last year's results—can you speak to that narrative? Dean Ricker answered that we continue to aim for above the target, for, as Dean Bates was aware, there is a “summer melt” built-in, which is the number of students who say yes initially and then pull out of the class over the summer, so the aim is always above 705 students. Summer melt estimates based on historical ranges are always included in planning.

3) What has changed about our recruitment strategies for full pay students in particular? Are we focusing differently on athletic recruitment for example? Dean Ricker answered that we start recruiting students in their sophomore year of high school. It takes a good three years to cultivate those relationships. In the fall of 2023, we had our first full post-pandemic travel season, in addition to open houses, campus visits, and virtual sessions. We are strong in our partnerships with our campus partners in athletics and athletes run the range on the financial aid spectrum.

4) Have we changed our focus on recruiting from private schools in New York City and Los Angeles? Dean Ricker answered that we have been visiting these independent schools as often, if not more often, as we have in previous years in our admissions process.

5) How are some ways faculty can assist in recruiting domestic and international students? Dean Ricker stated that we are eager to partner more with faculty and the campus community. We are working with Dean Mosby's team to get an email out next week so that faculty could fill out a form with the ways they are most able to assist with recruitment.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m. because of a fire alarm within the meeting space; thus, there was no Call for Agenda Items or for Other Business.

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