

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

April 4, 2025

Present: Marc Conner (Chair), Tim Harper, 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, Amy Tweedy, Sarah Vero, Domonique Vuvan, Joshua Woodfork.

Absent: Adrian Bautista, Eriko Fujita, Dwane Sterling, Carey Anne Zucca.

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.

1) *Strategic Plan Draft #7*

President Conner stated that the final draft of the next *Strategic Plan* was shared with the community this week. President Conner asked for any reactions. Committee member Tim Harper praised the lack of a hierarchy for the six foundations, acknowledging that leading with academic excellence and the student experience signaled Skidmore's priorities. President Conner explained that since releasing this version no substantive feedback has come through. Although he received a few congratulatory comments on the *Plan*, he recognized that some people will be disappointed their area or idea was not highlighted. SGA President Josh Maxwell suggested that students expressed their appreciation for the session with the SGA Senate where there was lots of student feedback. Students were talking about student issues, faculty lines, budgets, and the mission of Skidmore. Vice Chair Schneider stated his support for the *Plan* and suggested two characteristics that are going to differentiate us with the focus on labor and learning. He noted the proposed connection between Skidmore's "motto "Creative Thought Matters," the College's commitment to creativity and academic excellence and the Latin phrase in the logo, "Scuto Amoris Divini" (Shield of Divine Love): A shield is not merely a protective barrier; it is an enabler of bold action, allowing those under its protection to explore, create, and contribute without fear. In the context of Skidmore, this shield represents the institutional support, ethical grounding, and structured learning environment that empower students and faculty alike."

Committee member Amy Tweedy stated that a strategic plan is meant to animate the mission of our institution and asked if there are conversations about revisiting the mission statement with possible updates. President Conner responded that revisiting our mission statement to ensure it aligns with our planning is up next, beginning in the fall and recognizing the Board of Trustees would need to approve any revisions to the Mission Statement. How do we tell the Skidmore stories in ways that will enhance admissions, enhance fundraising, enhance the mission of Skidmore? President Conner thanked VP Woodfork and Smriti Tiwari for their leadership with the strategic planning process. He reminded the committee of the Campus Master Plan and the Visions and Values project that both enabled our community engagement. Recognizing the Board of Trustees will consider approval of the *Plan* at their May meeting, **the IPPC unanimously endorsed the *Strategic Plan*.**

2) Academic Freedom

President Conner and Dean of Faculty Dorothy Mosby noted that they had a meeting with our Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR) earlier this week on the topic of academic freedom, including what was expressed in the draft *Strategic Plan*. President Conner has put additional language in the *Plan* about academic freedom and how central it is to the liberal arts education and the democratic process. Skidmore has continued to focus on academic freedom in recent years. Should we further affirm academic freedom at Skidmore? Our draft *Plan* expresses our diversity and academic freedom and freedom of expression. President Conner suggested that over the next year we might consider the University of Chicago's principles of freedom of expression which he shared a link to with IPPC. Over 100 institutions of higher education have affirmed the Chicago Principles. Dean Mosby spoke about her meeting with CAFR and expressed our (IPPC and President's Cabinet) need to partner with this committee now when we are seeing numerous threats to academic freedom and consider how we can be responsive at this time. President Conner pointed out that CAFR has a safeguarding role for academic freedom and rights, as does the president and the dean of faculty. FEC Chair Domonique Vuvan asked if we are thinking about drafting a policy and partnering with CAFR? Are we going to give official advice to faculty who teach in areas that have been targeted by the federal government's executive orders? President Conner stated that our next agenda topic is Title VI efforts, which will address what is happening on campus and our needs.

3) Title VI

General Counsel and VP of Human Resources Sarah Vero reported that she and the Dean of Faculty's Office met in response to the federal government's executive orders, dear colleague letter, and follow-up information. They reviewed academic affairs programs and considered the question raised by our faculty concerned about their potential course offerings. VP Vero explained that she is sorting the information based on her interpreted level of risk. The Dean of Faculty's Office has made a recommendation that we try to put together a faculty working group to address these issues; however, we are not trying to dictate what faculty can teach. We are going to stand by academic freedom to the extent that we can. There will be faculty members who will look to us for guidance, particularly our international faculty concerned about some of their visas and traveling abroad in particular. Dean Mosby is thinking a faculty working group would provide an important consultative opportunity. VP Vero suggested there might be certain programs where we say this is a real risk so how do we rethink it? We are having conversations with students and faculty to understand where our ability to support them ends due to the current political activity taking place. There is a whole team on campus doing this work to make our students, staff, and faculty feel supported and ensuring they are getting the information that they need. SGA President Josh Maxwell asked if compiling an inventory could pose a sort of liability to the College if there was a chance that the school could be subpoenaed for this record of all the initiatives? VP Vero answered that the inventory is being prepared at the direction of counsel, for the purposes of providing legal advice to the College, and all communications are being designated as such, which is typical of sensitive legal matters.

President Conner referred back to the academic freedom discussion on the meeting's agenda and the references to The Chicago Principles and asked that committee members take a look at this document. There are no major differences between Skidmore policy and the policy for the University of Chicago. The question is what would be the efficacy of endorsing something like this? There may be some benefit to an institution-wide assertion. Let's make this a thought project.

4) Huron Consultancy Update

VP for Finance and Administration Daniel Konstalid stated that we have arranged to provide IPPC with an update on the program and operations efficiency review that we are undertaking with Huron during our May 9 meeting. We expect the update will cover three items: 1) observation on what is described as the current state at Skidmore, primarily our financial position via an organizational overview and a perspective of where opportunities for efficiencies and savings may exist; 2) a description of the process and approaches that have been used to help identify opportunities for saving and improvements; 3) an overview of the types of opportunities for savings, efficiencies, and improvements that have arisen through their work. They will present and have time for questions and discussion. President Conner emphasized that Huron does not make decisions, they are just providing us with information and comparative benchmarking.

5) Call for agenda items

No new agenda items were brought forth.

6) Other Business

Vice Chair Schneider shared that at the next IPPC meeting the revisions of the committee's Operating Code that we have been discussing since December will be submitted. President Conner pointed out that we may approve some items and carry others over to the fall.

Member Tarah Rowse shared that the Saratoga Sustainability Fair is May 5. It is a partnership with Sustainable Saratoga and 35 community organizations, and takes place at the Billie Tisch Center for Integrated Sciences.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

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