

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2021**

PRESENT: Cerri Banks; Mary Lou Bates; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; Marta Brunner; Marc C. Conner, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; Carolyn Lundy; Donna Ng; Melanie Nolan '23; Diane O'Connor; Michael Orr; Feryaz Ocakli; Joe Porter; Levi Rogers; Mark Rye; Casey Schofield; Kurt Smemo; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling; Amy Tweedy; and Joshua C. Woodfork.

ABSENT:

Chair Rogers remarked that the College has put a tremendous amount of resources into working to advance our sustainable food efforts. To achieve our food sustainability goals, we will need to leverage our sustainable food purchasing opportunities across product categories and analyze our purchasing data to better inform our sustainable food decisions. Our sustainable waste goals will need some additional work as

Planning website that will incorporate information regarding the education session and updates from the Steering Committee and Task Force.

Task Force Co-Chair Fehling reported that the Task Force membership is now in place with Maria Bideiwy '24 as the Task Force student member and Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork as the Diversity member. Co-Chair Fehling commented on the upcoming departure of Levi Rogers and noted that Sustainability Coordinator for Student Programming Jennifer Natyzak will serve as the Sustainability member. The Task Force is in the process of coordinating focus groups that will be held at the end of April.

Task Force Co-Chair Dan Rodecker added that the Task Force is working to gather documentation, data, and project plans, and he thanked IPPC member Carolyn Lundy for managing the Task Force meeting schedule. An IPPC member inquired about sharing documentation with the Task Force or ASG, both of which were encouraged. President Conner remarked on the importance of the Campus Master Planning process, stating that he is appreciative of the work of both the Search Committee and the Task Force.

4. Healthcare Working Group Update

The Healthcare Working Group (HWG) Co-Chair VP Ng and Associate Professor of Management & Business Timothy Harper presented an update on the work of the HWG which has been tasked with making recommendations to address rising healthcare costs. The recommendations will be based on many factors, including information collected from online focus groups and the survey, feedback received, projected cost analysis, benchmark data, and risk management assessments. HWG recommendations will be presented to the IPPC at its next meeting, on April 9, with the HWG present to discuss each of the recommendations.

Co-Chair Harper explained that a prioritized set of criteria will be developed and used by the HWG, noting that collaboration and transparency remain at the core of the decision-making process. He remarked that the HWG will work to try and balance employee satisfaction with employee preferences, while looking at both from an institutional and employee perspective. Co-Chair Harper commented that long term structural issues with the healthcare budget and cost shifting versus cost savings will also factor into the recommendations that will be developed.

An IPPC member stated that the Skidmore community needs to be aware that many external forces are at play in regards to healthcare in our nation and that Skidmore is making a good faith effort to try and combat these rising costs for both the institution and its employees. An IPPC member asked if the HWG collected any benchmark data from peer institutions. VP Ng replied that information was collected on healthcare plan design, but not on healthcare cost salary structures. Clarification was sought around the structural changes that are being potentially explored to the healthcare plan and the cost data surrounding these changes. VP Ng replied that the College will consider past cost data, but that recommendations will focus primarily on cost analysis moving forward. A certain amount of cost assumptions will need to be made and a range, not an exact figure, will be developed to assist with the healthcare recommendations.

IPPC Vice Chair Bibowya

HWG as they develop a set of recommendations. He stated that determining cost structures while paying attention to the community preferences could foster accountability and trust in the process. Co-Chair Harper replied that the complexity of each of the community preferences will also need to be taken into account as well as any potential disparities. The community preferences layered with short and/or long term scenarios while factoring in healthcare costs will all need to be given consideration. President Conner added that the challenge is how to keep rising health costs sustainable while implementing a structure to distribute healthcare increases across the whole institution. This is a challenge not only to Skidmore, but to higher education in general. The President stated his appreciation for the time and engagement the HWG has given to this enormous task.

5. Spring/Summer/Fall Planning

VP Ng provided an update regarding summer planning, stating that Skidmore will continue to monitor health guidance as the number of students on campus for the summer is solidified. She noted the recent announcement that Skidmore will be hosting Camp Northwoods and sports camps this summer. Registration numbers will help to determine the number of faculty and staff that will be needed on campus to support these students and programs and the accompanying safety and testing protocols. It is anticipated that forward-facing positions that interact with students on a regular basis will have separate summer guidance compared with positions that are non-student interacting.

VP Ng noted that the focus has been on summer planning but that there are still many questions being worked through for the fall. Human Resources is working on guidance based on student numbers, testing capabilities, ever-changing health guidance, and vaccination distribution. An IPPC member asked if thought has been given to staggering the number of employees returning to campus for the fall semester. VP Ng replied that consideration will be given to this model of transitioning employees back to campus. President Conner remarked that the spring semester COVID-19 positivity rates continue to remain low and that Skidmore's COVID-19 dashboard statistics are exceedingly low compared to other campuses that have instituted similar protocols. He added that Skidmore is working to get a count of the number of students that have received the COVID-19 vaccine due to employment on campus or other approved reasons.

Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates provided an Admissions update. She stated that regular admission decisions have been sent and that Admissions is hoping to enroll approximately 50% of the upcoming class through regular decision. VP Bates commented that modified outdoor campus tours consistent with all COVID-19 protocols have resumed for admitted students. She stated that Admissions data reflects that 10% of regular decision admits have been to campus. While this percentage is far below Skidmore's percentages from previous years, it is similar to our peer institutions. She stated that in collaboration with Communications and Marketing, a robust suite of virtual offerings to targeted admitted students has been developed. These offerings included the Filene Music virtual music competition and a repeat of the highly successful Friday afternoon faculty academic showcase that will continue through the end of April. Skidmore's admissions deadline is May 1. VP Bates thanked everyone for their time and effort in helping to enroll this year's class. President Conner stated his appreciation of the creativity with Admissions programming that Skidmore has displayed in response to the challenges brought forth

