

**ABSENT:** Mary Lou W. Bates; President Philip A. Glotzbach, Chair; and Denise Smith.

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Tim Harper called the meeting to order.

**2. Approval of Minutes from September 25, 2015**

IPPC **approved** the meeting Minutes from September 25, 2015, pending one revision in item 3. **IPPC Annual Report**, noting that both Joerg Bibow *and Natalie Taylor* prepared the 2014-2015 IPPC Annual Report.

**3. President's Message, "Incident of Alleged Fraud," September 28, 2015**

To update the Committee, Vice President for Finance & Administration Michael West read the following statement from the NYS Police, dated September 29,

“On September 28th the State Police in Malta arrested 47 year old Clifford L. Williams of Nassau, NY for Grand larceny in the second degree and two counts of Falsifying business records in the first degree.

He is accused of stealing over \$258,000 worth of assorted electronic items from Skidmore College from 2011 to 2015 while he was employed there by ordering and purchasing the items for the campus using a college credit card and then removing them to his home where he retained possession of them. Williams then manipulated school business and purchase records to conceal the thefts.

Williams was arraigned in the City of Saratoga Springs Court and was released on his own recognizance.

He is scheduled to reappear in the City of Saratoga Springs Court on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015.”

Vice President West could not comment further as it is an ongoing investigation, but noted that next week, a communication will be sent reminding the campus community of the Code of Conduct, the Conflict of Interest, and the Whistleblower Policy. He also noted that changes to internal purchasing processes are being considered and policies updated.



Mr. West concluded with two important points. He apologized to those faculty, staff, and families who have experienced concern as a result of the announcement of the upcoming healthcare changes this week. He also apologized to President Glotzbach, President's Cabinet, Human Resources Director Barbara Beck, and members of IPPC for harm caused. He pledged to work more closely with the IPPC Budget & Finance Subcommittee and the full IPPC on these and similar matters in the future.

He noted that we will be sharing additional information and details regarding these changes in the weeks ahead, and there will be informational meetings over the next month and one half. The initial message was intended to inform faculty and staff of the major changes. Our intention has been and continues to be to help employees understand and deal with the changes.

Committee members asked for clarification related to the timeline of the process involved with Healthcare Benefits, provided both their feedback on improving the process, and also expressed their appreciation to their colleagues whose area of expertise is relied on to make these important decisions. It was noted that providing information too early in the process without enough available details could cause confusion. Discussion of past practices related to a Benefits Committee occurred with concerns expressed by a faculty member as to whether the results were commensurate with the time and effort it was necessary to invest in that activity.

It was also noted that the message informing employees of changes to health insurance was received differently among various groups on campus.

## **5. Open Discussion**

Vice Chair Harper suggested that item #4 on the Agenda, the next *Strategic Plan*, be tabled until the next meeting when President Glotzbach is present and instead offered to open up the meeting to allow for a discussion on issues that have surfaced on campus regarding campus climate, sexual and gender-based misconduct, recent Cabinet appointments, and process. He encouraged everyone in the room to share their concerns or questions, and following are some of the comments expressed, much around the issue of communication on campus:

Addition of two new V.P.'s somehow dilutes the DOF/AA voice on President's Cabinet and at the College in general, yet Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs explained that Academic considerations always drive the conversation; Vice President Breslin acknowledged fault for not communicating better to faculty in this area, yet he thinks that more voices around the President's Cabinet table provide a more informed outcome and better decision-making;

There is a false assumption on campus that "once you have heard something, then everyone else has heard it as well";

At one level, we want to talk about everything, and on the other hand, how do we reduce the number of committees and demands on our time?

Skidmore is becoming much more corporate; how does it square with our internal mission?

Tell people what external pressures (compliance, reaccreditation, law, financial, media, social trends, changing demographics) are instead of not explaining them; and, yet, people can worry with too many details;

Emphasize all of the positive initiatives taking place on campus (including balanced budget, admissions numbers, faculty hires, richness of summer programs); perhaps with all of these other initiatives taking place, Academic Affairs may, at times, be overshadowed; we all benefit from the success of other areas across campus; is there a way to graphically represent how the various areas of campus connect? This will help with fostering collaboration and transparency. How does this relate to “integrative learning” and the General Education curriculum review?

Some decisions are slowed because of communication, and possibly to the detriment of moving a decision forward;

There seem to be silos of communication across campus; not as many moments to bring people together to communicate, which might impact morale;

Students expressed concern that in the President’s recent email about the alleged employee theft on campus, there was no mention of the recent sexual assaults; Interim Dean of Students and Vice President of Student Affairs Gail Cummings-Danson noted that she, as Title IX Coordinator, should have sent out a communication and will do so shortly;

What is the best way for students to receive communications? When students see the sexual assault alerts on campus, are they then discussed in classes or in safe places for conversation, or are students left wondering about next steps? A review of what is an “alert” versus a “notification” should be discussed as part of the larger communications conversations, as there is a fine line between what can and cannot be said. It was also noted that the messages will never be perfect as some messages are received by individuals