

Faculty-only Meeting Notes

11/15/2024

Opening remarks

FEC Chair welcomed everyone and thanked attendees for joining and acknowledged co-hosts, including FEC and representatives from IPPC, C&D, and CEPP. Meeting objectives included sharing updates on operational efficiencies and addressing projected budget deficits, ranging from \$4.1M in FY 2026 to \$9.5M in FY 2028. The meeting will be divided into two parts: first, information sharing; and second, an open discussion.

1. Information Sharing

IPPIC Vice Chair and B&F subcommittee member

- x Enrollment Shortfall:
 - o The college's target enrollment for the academic year was 705 students. However, actual enrollment fell short at 685 students.
 - o The primary issue is a 20% decline in fully tuition students, which has significantly increased budgetary pressure.
- x Increased Financial Aid Demand:
 - o A higher proportion of students now require financial aid, particularly in the Northeast, where the majority of Skidmore's students are from.
 - o Demographic challenges, rising living costs, and stagnant wages are contributing factors to this trend.
- x Demographic Factors:
 - o Long predicted decline in college-aged people has now materialized.
- x Budget Adjustments Underway:
 - o To address the shortfall, expenditure reductions are being implemented in the following areas:
 - f Academic Affairs Adjustments to department budgets.
 - f Study Abroad Programs Reevaluation of partnerships and cost structures.
 - f Financial Affairs: Cuts to travel, professional development, supplies, contracted services, and subscriptions.
 - f Campuswide, departments have been asked to reduce their budgets, with the amount for each department reflecting their share of the total college budget.)

FEC Chair noted an 8% budget freeze and a reduction in the Helios payout rate, leading to annual savings of \$100K. Discussions around balancing department-specific needs with broader faculty collaboration to address resource constraints.

CEPP Chair and B&F subcommittee member reported OCSE has been working proactively to identify programs that offer similar curriculum quality at a lower cost. There is a \$380K annual saving from provider changes in Florence, with an estimated \$500K

total savings by FY 2026. At the same time, increased student participation in study abroad since the pandemic is increasing our budget.

2. Faculty Discussion

FEC Chair opened the second part, focused on Faculty Discussion, with the goals of gathering input to help shared governance representatives advocate effectively and fostering a unified faculty voice for upcoming discussions.

- x Faculty from Sociology questioned whether strategies beyond ~~costing~~, like expanding endowment efforts, were being pursued
- x IPPC member acknowledged challenges in raising funds but stressed the need to explore untapped revenue opportunities.
- x Faculty from Psychology suggested leveraging alumni contributions for specific departmental initiatives, although advancement offices have shown resistance in the past.
- x Faculty from Anthropology emphasized the importance of transparency within Advancement, given recent turnover and instability. Greater collaboration between Advancement and faculty was encouraged to improve fundraising strategies.
- x Faculty from Music raised questions about the representation of faculty in the consultant process. What is the role of these liaisons, and how were they selected? Is this arrangement the best way to ensure faculty have meaningful representation in this process?
- x CEPP Chair noted that the meaning of liaison is not entirely clear, yet its defining contours are being worked out.
- x Faculty from Econ noted that past consultant procabihani a (, a)4 4-2 (a)4 (b)-2 (o(i)-2 -1 (e)60

x
p r o . C h a

- x Faculty from Social Work expressed concern about how consultants will recommend budget cuts, questioning whether they will consider disparities among faculty, particularly nontenure track staff, as blanket cuts could worsen existing inequities.
- x Chair of CEPP noted, in response, that consultants provide data and analysis, not recommendations on the academic side.
- x Faculty from Physics stated that his analysis of 20 years of Skidmore's tax forms revealed that financial aid costs have grown significantly faster than other expenses, highlighting a key issue for long term planning.
- x Faculty from English asked about the faculty's non-negotiables in this process and emphasized the need to assert collective rights if consultant recommendations conflict with faculty priorities.
- x Faculty from History inquired about historical data on how Skidmore has responded to past consultant recommendations, suggesting that such information could help inform current decisionmaking.
- x FEC Chair emphasized that faculty conduct the core business of the college and should assert their rights. She highlighted the importance of unifying as one voice around shared career priorities, noting that faculty hold significant power in decisionmaking.
- x Faculty of Psychology encouraged faculty to actively respond once consultant recommendations are made, as the administration will decide on the next steps. She emphasized the importance of closely reviewing and monitoring the consultant reports.
- x Faculty from Econ noted that funds from over-enrollment were allocated to specific needs, but significant over-enrollment is unlikely going forward. He emphasized rising financial aid costs as a growing challenge and highlighted information sessions as valuable learning opportunities. While reducing faculty over five years is not ideal, it may be considered if revenue generation falls short.
- x Faculty from Political Science expressed less concern about the immediate \$4 million shortfall but greater worry about the \$9 million deficit projected for the future. Key non-negotiables identified should include maintaining the 2- teaching load, sabbaticals, and existing faculty resources.
- x CC Chair noted that any changes to teaching loads or course caps would require a faculty vote. Even if consultants project potential savings, the broader implications for pedagogy and departmental viability must be considered. For instance, increasing course caps could disproportionately impact smaller departments, limiting the breadth of academic offerings.
 - x *Note: Following the meeting, further research by the CC Chair indicates the need for a correction: Any changes to teaching loads of course caps would require not a faculty vote but rather a joint CEPP-CC recommendation that the DoF would then roll out. In the past, while CEPP, CC, and the DoF office have collaborated on creating changes to course caps, the recommendations have come from CEPP in consultation with CC, and the DoF's role has been to implement those recommendations.*

- x Faculty from Anthropology emphasized that small class sizes are a key factor in attracting students and must be maintained.
- x Faculty from ESS stressed the importance of understanding financial reports to identify priorities and