

FACULTY MEETING MINUTES  
Gannett Auditorium  
December 4, 1998

President Porter called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 6 meeting were approved as written.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Porter mentioned that Betty Balevic has taught at Skidmore for 30 years and asked that we all join in honoring her on this wonderful occasion.

Betty Balevic, for CFG, had asked President Porter to report on the two committees that he chairs, ACC (All College Council) and IPC (Institutional Planning Committee).

ACC has set up a task force to look at smoking issues. When the decision was made last year not to cease the sale of tobacco products in the Skidmore Shop, ACC decided to focus on educating the community and student body on tobacco use. A subcommittee has been set up to look at educational issues in regards to smoking and it will, once again, look into the issue of whether we should sell tobacco products at the Skidmore Shop as well as protecting rights of non-smokers on campus in certain areas.

A proposal was brought to ACC by students to extend the hours at the Library. With money from SGA and the President's budget, an experiment has been mounted for the remainder of this term. The Library will be kept open until 2 a.m. on weekdays up until exam period and until 3 a.m. during exam period providing there is enough staff. This experiment may continue if it is determined that enough students are using the Library.

ACC is also discussing the wearing of cords and tassels at Commencement. At the present time students who get all-college honors wear special cords and/or tassels during commencement exercises. Rozendaal award winners, SGA officers, and senior class officers also wear them. It's a visible, public, and ceremonial recognition in which we honor special students at the College. Last year one of the honor societies asked whether or not they could wear special cord and/or tassels. ACC is looking into their request as well as considering other groups who might wish to wear them.

The issue of parking is being discussed by ACC. SGA has suggested a series of possible changes to the current parking policies, in part because the current system of high fines for flagrant repeating student offenders is not working. In response to this memo from SGA, ACC is trying to design simpler and fairer parking policies for those who need to drive to campus in order to teach, work, or study at the College without all the unexpected consequences of the current system. ACC also advocates Security paying more attention to those who park in fire lanes and handicapped areas as well as those who drive recklessly.

SGA will have its last meeting of the year on the issue of diversity the week of December 14.

President Porter next spoke about IPC, which has been discussing a number of topics. Task forces have been set up to focus on financial aid and faculty compensation. The task force on financial aid is looking at the gapping procedures we have been using for several years, under which we meet less than full financial

need for some students. The Committee is looking at how much more financial aid the College needs and where it will come from, as well as asking whether we are using the money we now spend on financial aid as effectively as we can. Even in the future, Skidmore will not have as much money as it will need for financial aid, and IPC will consider other ways in which the modest resources we will have can be used to get the students we want.

IPC is also reviewing faculty compensation issues, with a focus on two central issues: in making comparisons with other institutions, do we focus on salary or (as in the past) on total compensation? (At present, IPC is inclined still to keep the focus on compensation, especially since it appears reliable compensation comparisons can be obtained if we can factor out the issue of tuition payments). Second, within our 15-institution peer group, what compensation goals should we set for ourselves? Because we are financially the least wealthy institution in our peer group, Skidmore needs to set real goals that will stretch us to improve compensation for faculty. However, if we set goals that are impossible to reach, it will be a pointless and demoralizing enterprise. At its last meeting, IPC also discussed the proposal for a new International Programs office. The last meeting of the year will focus on the vision statement, especially with respect to residential life and diversity.

Phyllis Roth, Ann Henderson and President Porter visited Gerald Patton, Deputy Commissioner of Education, and Barbara Meinert (also in the State Education Office) on Wednesday, December 2, to talk about Skidmore's discussions regarding reconfiguration. Prior to their visit, Ann Henderson had written an excellent letter to the State Education Office laying out the background for reconfiguration. Although Mr. Patton and Ms. Meinert didn't give specific answers to our questions about expanding three-credit courses into four-credit courses, the mood of the conversation was very encouraging, and they seemed enthusiastic about what Skidmore is doing. We shall send them our guidelines for new four-credit courses when they are ready.

This was the President's last faculty meeting, and he wanted to give credit and pay thanks to some people. He began by thanking "the six remarkable members of President's Staff." He said that anything he has been able to do has been possible only because of these people, then proceeded to speak briefly about the contributions of each member – Kent Jones, Don McCormack, Pat Oles, Karl Broekhuizen, Chris Hoek, and Phyllis Roth.

President Porter next spoke about the faculty at Skidmore College, commenting on the remarkable balance they strike between three competing priorities -- a passionate dedication to teaching, ongoing involvement in significant creative work and research, and a willingness to make important human connections with students. He also commented on the care the faculty gives both to each other and to other members of the College community, and in this regard thanked the faculty for their generosity and thoughtfulness toward himself and Helen. He mentioned also his appreciation for the trust the faculty has placed in him, not least with respect to the sensitive and important search-related issues he had discussed at the November meeting.

The President indicated that from his early days at Skidmore, and from his "tour" of the faculty in his first two years, he had realized that this faculty's wealth of ideas and their ability to make connections to transcend barriers, and to take chances, were among those qualities that make this College unique and distinctive. President Porter said that for him coming to Skidmore had been like coming home, that he feels great joy in his time here as President, but that especially he is proud to have been a professor and a colleague of the members of this remarkable faculty, for which his profound thanks.

After a long, standing ovation, Phyllis Roth, Dean of the Faculty, introduced Charles Wait, Member of the Board of Trustees.

Charles Wait extended greetings from the Board. He said that the bonds and ties between Skidmore and the Adirondack Trust Company have been made much stronger during the years of David's presidency by the

deep respect he has earned, the actions he has taken, the improvements he has made to the College, and the respect he has earned from the Board of Trustees, the Board of the Adirondack Trust Company, and from the community of Saratoga Springs and Skidmore College as well.

Charles Wait then unveiled a portrait of David Porter painted by Everett Raymond Kinstler, one of America's foremost portrait painters.

## OLD BUSINESS

David Vella made a final appeal for the United Way Campaign. The campaign ends officially on Monday. It has inched past 80% participation, but the dollar amounts are a little behind from last year.

Mehmet Odekon reported on the activities of CFG and the Benefits Committee. CFG has met several times this semester to discuss streamlining the faculty governance system. To make the faculty governance system more effective, CFG will send self-assessment request forms to the faculty committees asking them to review the functions, composition, goals, and effectiveness with which the committees reach these goals. In addition, CFG is working on a proposal to restructure the faculty meetings and hopes to have a solid proposal next semester. Finally, CFG is going to initiate a meeting between CFG, CAPT, and the faculty members of the two previous presidential search committees to discuss the issues that may come up in future top administrative searches.

The Benefits Committee has been meeting at least once every month. So far it has written an operating code, and it has been discussing domestic partner benefits. By the end of the semester, it hopes to make a recommendation to FPPC that the College extend health care benefits to domestic partners. The Benefits Committee also passed a resolution and forwarded it to FPPC. According to this resolution, the Benefits Committee will adopt as a working principle in its deliberations to make every possible effort to avoid a reduction in College Benefits.

## NEW BUSINESS

Ralph Ciancio respectfully asked on behalf of the faculty that David relinquish the Chair to the Dean of the Faculty, Phyllis A. Roth. Phyllis then narrated a slide show about David and Helen Porter. She then greeted Helen and thanked her.

Phyllis again called on Ralph Ciancio. A tribute to David Porter on behalf of the faculty was read (see [Attachment A](#)) and the following resolution was introduced:

WHEREAS, Skidmore College has prospered gainfully under the extraordinary leadership of President David Hugh Porter, and today flourishes as never before in its history; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of exemplary teaching and scholarship, personal caring, stalwart defense of academic freedom, and pre-eminence as a passionate and articulate champion of diversity in higher education, President Porter has at once infused a spirit of collegiality into the community and reassured external onlookers that Skidmore is a haven for mental travelers of various persuasions, teachers and learners alike; and

WHEREAS, today marks the last time the President shall sit with the Skidmore College Faculty in meeting assembled,

BE IT RESOLVED that the faculty acknowledges its profound indebtedness to its colleague and friend for his vision, guidance, and vigorous, unstinting dedication to the collective welfare of the College as a whole, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Faculty expresses its fervent wishes for his well-being after the manner of ancient Athenians who, lest their sentiments well up in tears, invoked traditional blessings for a bountiful life when bidding their heroes farewell: “May all your oak trees grow tall, bear acorns at the top, and be filled in the middle with the honey of bees.”

The motion was seconded and all approved by giving President Porter a standing ovation.

Phyllis signified the faculty’s further appreciation to David by presenting to David a gift from the faculty and staff of Academic Affairs.

President Porter thanked the faculty and staff for their gift. He said the Skidmore faculty is the most wonderful faculty he ever could have imagined working with. It was the greatest of joys to be associated with them over the last eleven years. He then returned the gavel to Interim President Phyllis Roth.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire C. Demarest  
Executive Secretary  
Office of the Dean of the Faculty