

Committee on Educational Policies and Planning Annual Report, 2024-2025

Function: To recommend to the faculty and administration short and long-range educational plans for the College and thus be instrumental in clarifying, improving and changing major policies and educational procedures; to evaluate Skidmore's present practices and goals.

Membership: Date listed is the last year of service on the committee.

- Adrian Bautista, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs
- Dorothy Mosby, Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Kelly Sheppard, Chemistry, Faculty Director of Assessment, ex officio
- Jamin Totino, Director of Student Academic Services
[designee for the Dean of Students]
- 2025 Anna Barnes, SGA student representative (fall 2024)
- 2025 Lisa Jackson-Schebetta, Theater
- 2025 Nick Junkerman, English (Chair)
- 2025 Natalie Koegler, SGA student representative
- 2025 Trevor Lai, SGA student representative (spring 2025)
- 2026 Amy Frappier, Geosciences
- 2026 Heather Hurst, Anthropology
- 2026 Robert ParkeHarrison, Art

Meetings: CEPP met weekly for a total of 26 times during the 2024-2025 academic year. The meeting agendas and minutes for these meetings have been posted on CEPP's website. The chair of CEPP attended Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC) meeting throughout the year. The chair also attended once-per-semester Committee of Committee meetings and Shared Governance meetings (convened by the President). The CEPP Chair also served as a moderator of the faculty listserv, together with the Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and the Vice Chair of IPPC.

Incoming Chair: Amy Frappier will chair CEPP in 2025-2026.

Committee Work: The major projects that CEPP worked on this year are described below:

Recording Policy Motion

- CEPP continued the work it had begun in the previous year on a policy to govern the use of recordings of class sessions.
- CEPP returned to and substantially revised the language of an existing motion on class recordings. That motion was submitted to the faculty at the April 5, 2024 meeting, and subsequently withdrawn by CEPP for further consideration.
- The revised version of the motion responded to faculty concerns by addressing student recording accommodations at greater length. In this expanded section, CEPP sought to describe the balance between faculty autonomy to manage recording in the classroom and our legal responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations. It included excerpts of the contract that students with recording accommodations are required to sign, and an expanded rationale.
- The new motion was introduced at the September 27, 2024 faculty meeting. It was approved by a vote of the faculty on November 1, 2024, and went into effect in the spring semester of 2025. The approved policy is available on CEPP's webpage, as an appendix to the operating code, and on the "Academic Policies" page of the Office of Student Academic Affairs.

- Anna Barnes, Trevor Lai, and Natalie Koegler did important work in publicizing this change to the student body.

Online Ratings/Evaluations

- The possibility of moving the college from its current paper-based evaluation system to an online process has long been a subject of discussion on CEPP and in the broader Skidmore community. This year, the committee felt that the time was right to consider the possibility more formally.
- CEPP identified the following key reasons for moving forward on this issue: a) reliance on paper has left us with a cumbersome, fragile system. Printing, transporting, hand-checking and distributing each of the thousands of forms is time-consuming and physically demanding. Furthermore, in recent years Institutional Research has encountered new difficulties, including paper supply problems and trouble getting the forms printed in a timely manner. b) Skidmore's current provider, Scantron, is the only company that supports paper-based evaluations. While we have no indication from Scantron that they plan to suspend this support, we are nonetheless in the uncomfortable position of being at the mercy of a single provider. An unanticipated change on their end (e.g., moving entirely online or greatly increasing the price of their service) could force us to move to online qSET ratings without having time to plan and execute our transition properly.
- CEPP began formal consideration of the move to an online system for student ratings in January 2025. Following initial consultations with IR and the Dean's Office, CEPP spent much of the spring semester discussing the question.
- CEPP collaborated with IR on a survey of evaluation practices at other institutions which returned an impressive 72 responses. Of responding institutions, none are using an entirely paper-based system, and only two are using a hybrid paper/online system. Ninety-seven percent (97%) are using a fully web-based administration.
- The committee and/or the chair met with a number of different groups to discuss these potential changes, particularly options for capturing qualitative feedback through an online process. The groups consulted were: the Appointments and Tenure Committee, members of the Non-Tenure-Track Bargaining Committee, the Promotions Committee, and the Working Group on Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning. Their responses shaped the initial stages of the plan, and have been particularly useful in identifying those issues that will require further study and deliberation before CEPP proposes a formal change.
- On May 21, CEPP circulated an update to the faculty describing its work so far and proposing future steps toward an online evaluation system. The chair received and responded to a number of faculty questions about the document.
- While this work will continue into next year, CEPP wishes to extend its particular thanks to Joe Stankovich and Kerry Nelson from IR, who partnered with CEPP throughout the semester, meeting repeatedly with the chair and committee, creating and administering the survey of other institutions, and providing deep and valuable expertise at every step.

Online Summer Course Review

- In the spring semester of 2023, CEPP approved the offering of online summer courses at Skidmore for a two-year pilot. In the spring of 2024, the committee agreed to extend the pilot program it approved last year by one year to allow the Office of Special Programs time to gather results from the 2024 summer and generate a report. Summer 2025 courses were not to be part of the assessment project.
- This year, CEPP conducted its review of the pilot program. In February of 2025, the director of Special Programs sent a detailed report on the pilot to the committee. The question that the

report put before the committee was: "Should Skidmore continue to offer online summer courses, or should it return to only in-person instruction during the summer?"

- CEPP reviewed the report in detail, with the goal of providing a recommendation on this question to the dean of the faculty, and met with the director of Special Programs to discuss the report and the pilot.
- On April 24, 2025, CEPP circulated an emailed summary of key findings from the report to the faculty list serve, and asked for input on question of continuing online summer teaching at Skidmore. The committee received seventeen responses. The large majority argued for continuing to offer online courses, on the grounds that it provides equity benefits for our students, and important flexibility for both faculty and students. A smaller number of respondents advocated against the proposal, or at least urged caution, expressing concern that even limited online teaching would run contrary to Skidmore's mission and the existing character of its educational offerings. The committee debated all the feedback, with particular attention to possible unintended consequences of extending online summer education into the future.
- Ultimately, the committee decided to recommend that Skidmore continue to offer online summer course options in the future. It forwarded that recommendation to the Dean of the Faculty. As part of this decision, CEPP commits to conducting an overall review of summer courses in the next 2-4 years. This will permit the committee to study how the inclusion of online options shapes our summer courses beyond the limited scope of the pilot.

Middle States Committees

- Two members of CEPP were staffed to Middle States working groups. Amy Frappier represented CEPP on Working Group 1 (Mission & Goals and Resources & Planning). Robert ParkeHarrison represented CEPP on Working Group 3 (Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience and Assessment). In recognition of this added service burden, and per agreement with the chair of CEPP, these members were not required to attend CEPP meetings on weeks when they were scheduled to attend Middle States meetings.
- The committee received periodic updates on Middle States throughout the year, particularly from Kelly Sheppard, a member of the committee and co-chair of the MSCHE steering committee. CEPP will continue to be involved in Middle States work next year. He noted Working Group 3 was going to recommend that CEPP review and update the [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#) approved in 2009 and build into its operating code reviews of the student ratings to coincide with the MSCHE accreditation cycle. Such timing would also fit with the ongoing discussion of moving ratings online (see above).

Institutional and Curricular Review and Assessment

- Kelly Sheppard, Faculty Director of Assessment and committee member, provided periodic updates on assessment. In particular:
 - Kelly consulted with CEPP about how to assess the Global Cultural Perspectives requirement. His recommendation was to use the established and validated "[Global Perspective Inventory](#)" used at other institutions as a means to assess the learning goals of the requirement next academic year. CEPP agreed to the recommendation and that no subcommittee will be needed for the assessment.
 - CEPP was informed that the assessment of the Writing Requirement is delayed to the upcoming academic year so the English Department has enough personnel to conduct a full assessment. The assessment will include looking at different populations of interest (e.g., students placed into EN 103, first-generation students, etc.). This academic year will be used to pilot and calibrate a new rubric. CEPP was also informed that the Scientific Inquiry was being assessed at the end of this academic year still and the results

- will be presented to CEPP early in the Fall semester along with the departments and programs offering courses fulfilling the requirement.
- Kelly reported out the results of the [assessment of the Applied Quantitative Reasoning \(AQR\) requirement](#) conducted by the QR Director, Smriti Tiwari, and the QR Review Team. There were disparities seen as women underperformed men. Those results the QR Review team with Smriti will be looking at more in-depth to provide productive suggestions for improvement. The discussion also highlighted the need for more AQR courses without pre-requisites beyond placement or completion of an FQR course for students who did not have a major or minor in a quantitative field, which the QR Director and Review Team are aware of and working to address.
 - Kelly reported out on the review of [oral communication assessments](#) conducted by different departments and programs over the last few years. Generally, the assessment showed students presented well across the divisions of the college. Regarding information literacy, Kelly noted that additional departments and programs found areas for improvement in line with the [review conducted last year](#) as well as FYE assessment. Those results were reported to the CLTL and Scribner Library for follow-up. In keeping with the CEPP approved General Education Assessment Plan, writing in the major assessment will be reviewed summer 2025 and technology literacy in the summer of 2026.
 - Kelly reported on the [High Impact Experience study](#) conducted by the [IPPC Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness](#) as part of the College's HHMI IE3 grant initiative. The analysis revealed initiatives to improve participation of students with high financial need in summer funded experiences and collaborative research were successful but there was room for improvement for first-generation students in that context as well as the engagement by men in such experiences. It was noted the results along with those examining student cumulative GPAs by the ADOF for Student Academic Affairs and Institutional Research and from the [first-generation student focus groups](#) conducted by Student Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness informed the renewal of the first-generation student initiative. The limitations of our current data systems were also highlighted by the study.
 - Kelly reminded CEPP that the [2017 general education proposal](#) called for CEPP to review the curriculum this academic year, which [CEPP did](#). Given the assessment results to date and planned, the impacts of COVID-19 during implementation, and the ongoing Huron Consultancy, which includes analysis of the costs of delivering the requirements, CEPP believes the current curriculum is generally working but a fuller review during the 2029-2030 academic year is warranted. The additional assessments at that point will include from alumni that are not yet available given May 2024 was the first graduating class under the new requirements. By that point the Goals for Student Learning and Development may be revised (see above) that should inform the review and any revisions to the curriculum. The limited options for AQR and Bridge Experience courses were also noted for consideration looking forward.

Academic Calendars

- The registrar provided CEPP with proposed academic calendars for three upcoming years: 2027-2028, 2028-2029, 2029-2030.
- After consulting with the registrar and the ADOF for Student Academic Affairs, CEPP approved all three calendars.

Off-Campus Study & Exchange (OCSE) Oversight

- CEPP was joined on two occasions by Cori Filson, Director of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges to discuss the major work she was doing on the curation of Study Abroad portfolios. Her efforts have resulted in significant ongoing savings for the college, without sacrificing the quality of our Study Abroad offerings.
- CEPP thanked Cori for her hard work, and affirmed the importance of off-campus study to Skidmore's educational mission.
- CEPP was also notified of the suspension of our Skidmore in Spain program. It approved the addition of two replacement programs in Madrid and Seville. CEPP also approved the addition of a program in Japan. All added programs were thoroughly vetted by OCSE and the relevant Skidmore departments and programs.

Title II/Accessible Documents Policy

- At the end of the semester, CEPP was joined by Julia Marco, Director of Marketing and Engagement, Aaron Kendall, Lead Instructional Designer, and Jamin Totino for a discussion of the accessibility of our documents.
- The committee was informed that Skidmore has considerable work left to do to ensure the accessibility of its digital resources. This includes course materials posted online.
- This push for accessible documents is driven in part by updates to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Recent updates to Title II require colleges and universities to ensure that all web content and mobile applications comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA. This includes providing alternative text for images, ensuring compatibility with screen readers, and making interactive elements accessible. The deadline for compliance for schools serving under 50,000 students is April 24, 2027.
- Meeting our obligations for Title II will require significant work and collaboration by staff and faculty. A Digital Accessibility Policy originating from CEPP could be one way to guide our efforts. Although there was not time this year to discuss the details of such a policy, discussion of this issue will continue on CEPP in the coming year.

Other Items

- In the spring semester, the chair of CEPP served on the steering committee and the Academic Portfolio Leadership Group for the Operational Efficiencies project with Huron Consulting. In that capacity, the chair provided regular updates at faculty meetings and helped to run two faculty-only forums to solicit input from faculty, respond to questions and hear concerns. The work of reviewing Huron's data and recommendations continues into the summer. The outgoing chair will work with other members of the Academic Portfolio Group and the dean's office to prepare option for faculty and administration to make decisions about in the coming year. While the process for making those decisions is not yet settled, it seems likely that CEPP, as a key governance committee, will be involved in that work.
- CEPP will continue to discuss the affordability of course materials, prompted by the information brought to the committee by Anna Barnes and Marta Brunner in November 2024. This may include the preparation of a resolution on course material costs for presentation to the faculty.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Junkerman, 2024-2025 CEPP chair