

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 20, 2026

Present: Adrian Bautista, Claudette Castillo '28, Marc Conner (Chair), Amy Frappier, David Hargadon, Daniel Konstalid, Zhenelle LeBel, Ting Li, Yueqi Li., Samantha Majiedt '27, Kerry Nelson, Jess Ricker, Tarah Rowse, Joe Stankovich, Elizabeth Stauderman, Natalie Taylor, Joshua Woodfork, Murat Yildiz, Aiwu Zhao.

Zoom: Tim Harper (Vice Chair)

Absent: Michelle Hubbs, Amy Tweedy, Sarah Vero.

This meeting was called to order at 10:33 a.m.

1. Approval of February 6, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Via email after the meeting, **the February 6, 2026 minutes were unanimously approved.**

2. Search Updates: Collyer VP for Advancement and Director of Athletics

Melissa Kamora has been appointed as the new Collyer VP for Advancement. She brings extensive experience as a VP for Advancement at two other liberal arts colleges, including full Campaign management. A formal announcement and press release have been issued. She will join the College on June 1, 2026 and will serve on IPPC starting in the fall.

For our next Director of Athletics, Dean Adrian Bautista is leading the search, with Bernardo Rios (Faculty Athletics Representative) serving as co-chair of the search committee, which includes students, faculty, and staff. The Spelman Johnson executive search firm has been engaged. They will assist with developing a candidate profile and visit campus mid-March to assist with our recruitment goals and further organize the search process. The target is to complete the hire before the end of the semester.

3. Task Force on Accessibility Updates

President Conner provided an update on the formation of the Task Force on Accessibility, arising from a recommendation made in December by CIGU, the Bias Response Group, and the Space Planning Working Group. Accessibility was identified as a concern during strategic planning and is embedded in both the *Strategic Plan* and this year's Strategic Action Agenda.

Structure

- Tri-chair model adopted: Adrian Bautista (Dean of Students), Oscar Perez Hernandez (Associate Dean of Faculty and Space Planning Working Group co-chair), and Elise Hinrichs (student, ADA Subcommittee, CID, newly joined CIGU).
- A community update announcing the group and a draft charge will be distributed soon.

- A Willingness to Serve (WTS) process will be conducted in coordination with SGA, FEC, and HR; applicants will submit a brief statement of interest with supervisor approval.

Key Principles

- The Task Force is not a deferral mechanism — it is intended to produce real, lasting change. The College will continue responding to campus accessibility items during the Task Force's work.
- The goal is to build a durable culture of accessibility for the entire campus community.
- External consultants may supplement internal expertise; two speakers related to disability are coming to campus this semester (one during disability week and another keynote in April, selected by our students who participated in the NCORE conference last June)).
- Not all interested community members will be able to serve on the Task Force itself; forums, surveys, and consultant outreach will provide additional pathways for community input.

4. Board of Trustees February Meeting Preview

President Conner described a restructured Board of Trustees meeting organized entirely around the six foundations of the *Strategic Plan*, with 90 minutes devoted to each. The goal is to engage the Board at the appropriate strategic, governance, and fiduciary level — not at the operational, management level. Board members will also move around the campus, dine with students, and have the option to observe classes. The May meeting will include formal budget approval; February is for high-level engagement and direction-setting.

Foundation Presentations

- Foundation 1 — Academic Excellence (Dean Taylor): Focus on Middle States reaffirmation (near completion) and free speech and expression. The Board will work through two scenarios balancing free speech and academic freedom, and consider the Chicago Principles.
- Foundation 2 — The Student Experience (Dean Bautista): Discussion of the residential curriculum and a case study on first-year transition. The student-athlete experience will be presented as a model of intentional, holistic student support, with questions about budget and policy implications.
- Foundation 3 — Supporting the Opportunities of a Skidmore Education (VP Stauderman): Focus on financial aid endowment fundraising. Board members will use a custom, privately trained ChatGPT tool to develop 130-word elevator pitches on the importance of endowment giving for financial aid, shared with the full group.
- Foundation 4 — Building an Inclusive Community (CIGU Co-Chair Aiwu Zhao): CIGU members will sit with small groups of Board members to discuss campus dialogue in the current climate, accessibility (including budget implications), and movement towards a college-wide, Board-approved Land Acknowledgement.
- Foundation 5 — Sustaining Our Environmental Future (CSS Chair Tarah Rowse): Update on institutional sustainability progress; overview of the STARS framework as the guiding assessment system. Board input sought on priorities going forward.

- Foundation 6 — Long-Term Financial Future (VP Konstalid): Shift from annual budget to balance sheet strategy. Two illustrative scenarios: (1) a modest additional endowment draw to fund incremental fundraising costs during the Campaign, and (2) the potential trade-offs of additional debt to fund major capital projects such as residence hall renovations. Board guidance sought.

5. Mission Statement: Initial Discussion

President Conner opened an initial discussion on revising Skidmore’s Mission Statement, last updated in 1993. The impetus comes from Middle States work, the completed *Strategic Plan*, and the recognition that the current statement is lengthy, describes programs no longer offered in the same way, and does not fully reflect who Skidmore is today.

Sample mission statements, suggested elements, and ideas for action steps were shared with the committee. Key criteria for a strong mission statement: brief, clear, memorable, and inspiring. Discussion highlighted that Skidmore’s current statement reads more as a description of activities than a statement of purpose or identity and does not differentiate Skidmore clearly from peer institutions.

Ideas from the discussion included:

- Engaging students via interactive formats (e.g., library whiteboard prompts) and surveying incoming students about what they understand Skidmore to be.
- Developing two or three draft mission statement options for community review and input (suggested by Vice Chair Harper).
- Ensuring the revised statement is forward-looking and distinctive — capturing where Skidmore is going, not just where it has been.
- Connecting the mission statement to “Creative Thought Matters” as a differentiating brand identity.

6. Call for Agenda Items

Board of Trustees February 2026 Meeting Update
Middle States Reaccreditation Review Team Visit
Mission Statement Next Steps
AI Policies

7. Other Business

No other business was brought forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Summary document assisted by Claude AI.

Please advise the President’s Office of any suggested changes to these meeting minutes.