INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
October 3, 2025

Present: Adrian Bautista, Claudette Castillo ’28, Marc Conner (Chair), Amy Frappier, David Hargadon, Timothy Harper (Vice Chair), Michelle Hubbs, Daniel Konstalid, Ting Li, Yueqi Li, Samantha Majiedt ’27, Kerry Nelson, Jess Ricker, Tarah Rowse, Joe Stankovich, Elizabeth Stauderman Natalie Taylor, Sarah Vero, Joshua Woodfork, Aiwu Zhao.

Zoom: Zhenelle LeBel, Murat Yildiz.

Absent: Amy Tweedy.

Guest: Kelly Sheppard, Middle States Steering Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 10:33 AM.

1. **Middle States Reaccreditation Self-Study**

Middle States Co-Chair Kelly Sheppard shared that he works on the Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee with Natalie Taylor, Amy Tweedy, Joshua Woodfork, Joe Stankovich, Julia Routbort, and Beau Breslin. He explained that Skidmore is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Skidmore’s last reaccreditation effort was in 2016, and the next one will be in eight years. We are required to be accredited by one of the institutional creditors recognized by the Federal Government’s Department of Education in order to receive federal aid. This accreditation is a peer evaluation of Skidmore as an institution relative to professional standards to prove we are meeting minimum qualifications. Accreditation agencies are currently under scrutiny at this moment, and Middle States itself is being reviewed. In preparation for our peer reviewer visits, Skidmore engaged in a self-study process to document that we are meeting the standards. This is a moment of reflection for Skidmore to think about what we have been doing and how well we have been doing it. This fits into our institutional planning with the *Strategic Plan* representing what we will do next. We will receive feedback from peers in the process. The Self-Study is a 109-page document we produced to demonstrate how we meet the seven professional standards that cover our mission and goals, ethics and integrity, the student learning experience, and the design and delivery of our mission. The reviewers look at how we evaluate and use assessments of the student learning experience. Through our planning and resources, they want to be sure we have the resources to deliver that education. Additionally, they examine our governance, leadership, and administration, and with those standards, we want to tie them into how they fit our mission, values and goals of the institution. The Self-Study is a document that is both evidence-based, but also reflective of who we are as an institution. It looks at our strengths, acknowledges areas that we want to learn more about or may have questions regarding what the next steps are that we need to be thinking about in the future.

As part of the process, we have a visiting team chair visit this fall and a peer review team visit in the spring. Our team chair is Gettysburg College Provost Dr. Jamila Bookwala. She will be meeting with key campus leaders to ask initial questions and provide feedback on our Self-Study. We will then incorporate both her feedback and the feedback of the community to update the Self-Study. We will be working on the evidence inventory which has over 800 pieces of evidence to date. Our Self-Study and all of our pieces of evidence will be submitted to Middle States and the peer evaluation team by the beginning of February. By Middle States rules our peer team members have to work at institutions outside of New York State. During the spring team visit, team members will meet with campus leaders, various committees, various groups on campus, and members of all constituencies. We want everyone to be prepared. After the visit, the team will finalize their report that we will receive in April. Both our response and the report then go to Middle States in June and they decide on our reaffirmation of accreditation.

An IPPC member asked what happens if we do not meet a standard. It was noted that we could receive a recommendation (a suggestion) or a requirement, an item that we need to do in a certain time frame. President Conner suggested it would be beneficial if every member of the IPPC read the whole Self-Study to learn more about the College and how we do our work. He thanked the groups who have worked on this process to date.

2. **Follow up: Financial Equilibrium: Huron Consulting Group Overview**

President Conner explained that the IPPC is the first group to see the 22-page report that Huron assembled with roughly 15 projects as most appropriate to explore further. In the coming weeks, conversations will be occurring around the noted projects, so the Vice Presidents have been in touch with the appropriate people. Interim Dean Taylor is having detailed discussions with academic department and program chairs in various formats, and the Board of Trustees will also receive the Huron Report as they review the budget. A member asked about the timeline for the Huron mentioned considerations to be worked on and how potential found savings would assist with College's financial standing, including projected outyear deficits. President Conner shared that the timelines are multiple, dynamic, and changing all the time and are mainly impacted by how we are doing financially year in and year out. Some of the things that Huron has suggested clearly require multiple years to bring to fruition, while others could be changed more quickly. VP Konstalid reminded the committee that the report remains confidential until we release it to the community after the Board of Trustees October meeting.

3. **Strategy into Action: Strategic Action Agenda (SAA) 2025-2026**

The IPPC reviewed the revised version of the Strategic Action Agenda (SAA) including the feedback from both the IPPC and Extended Cabinet (direct reports to Cabinet members). The revisions included emphasizing and clarifying information, linking the *Strategic Plan's* six foundations to the SAA goals. A member asked for further clarity about "the residential curriculum." Dean Bautista explained that our residential curriculum is a way of thinking more intentionally about the day-to-day interactions that our students have in the residential halls, which goes hand-in-hand with how we are thinking about space. We are looking at how we are enhancing a sense of connection and belonging for our students. SGA President Majiedt told the committee that SGA Senate would review the document next week. SGA VP for Financial Affairs Castillo shared her support of continuing the Racial Justice Initiative in some form to highlight what Skidmore is doing to continue inclusion efforts. With no proposed changes, **“Strategy into Action: Strategic Action Agenda 2025-2026” was unanimously endorsed.**

4. October Board of Trustees Meeting Preview

President Conner shared that Skidmore’s Board of Trustees holds meetings on campus in October, February, and May. We typically carry about 32 trustees and this year the Board is welcoming five new members. For the first time since before the covid-19 pandemic trustees will visit classes. Over the last several years, we have aimed to have more contact between the Board and our students, staff, and faculty. The Board will review the budget, enrollment, capital projects, strategic priorities, and high-level governance questions. The Board will also discuss execution of the *Strategic Plan*, the Middle States reaffirmation of accreditation, and the upcoming Campaign. Dean Bautista and his team have organized a presentation by the Career Development Center. The Board will participate in a Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery 25th anniversary celebration dinner, which will include members of the Tang’s National Advisory Council and former Trustee Oscar Tang and his wife Agnes. President Conner shared that the Board is well aware of the current climate for higher education, and we are keeping them informed about how Skidmore is responding to external pressures and anxieties we are facing.

5. IPPC’s Multiple Roles in Policy and Governance Continued

President Conner pointed out our IPPC Operating code says our function is to advise the President with regard to strategic planning and taking a comprehensive view of significant issues affecting the College. In doing so, IPPC serves as the central deliberative body for all College governance. Within the College’s shared governance, IPPC performs various roles: to preview topics, as a consultative group, as a think tank, and as a discussion body with campus policies and institutional planning. For example, *The Faculty Handbook* says that the Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) shall sit on the IPPC in order to strengthen communication between the two committees, which is the case with a number of appointments to the IPPC. Sometimes the work of other groups intersects with the IPPC. One instance is *The Faculty Handbook* that calls upon the FEC to share policy changes with relevant committees including the IPPC.

Because the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the non-tenure track faculty was completed last year, there have been multiple revisions to this year’s *Faculty Handbook*. In the past, we have had Title IX and Title VI necessary revisions to ensure we are in compliance with the federal government as well as New York State. President Conner explained that it is a delicate balance of things we need to do out of necessity, which may sometimes not align with how we make changes in our policies or practices within our shared governance processes. Vice Chair Harper emphasized the deference we should provide to proposed policy changes that come from committees or bodies that are responsible for managing or providing oversight of that area.

6. Call for Agenda Items

A) FEC Chair Ting Li asked for the IPPC to consider a policy change regarding parental leave for faculty. This is related to the execution of the CBA. VP Vero shared the larger context for all faculty and staff. President Conner explained that this will be an example of a potential revision to *The Faculty Handbook* that also needs to be reviewed by the IPPC.

B) VP for Human Resources and General Counsel Sarah Vero asked for time on the next IPPC meeting agenda to review the benefit changes and explain the open enrollment dates. She explained that work has been done between HR and Finance and Administration based on our recommendations from our external consultant.

C) SGA President Samantha Majiedt asked for the IPPC to receive updates on the Student Government Association's goals for this academic year and their efforts to date, including for the SGA VP for Financial Affairs to provide an update on SGA's finances.

7. **Other Business**

No other business was brought forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 AM.

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