

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2026**

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

Zoom: Zhenelle LeBel.

Absent: Joseph Stankovich, Murat Yildiz.

Guest: William Betterman, Director of LEDS.

This meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.

1. Approval of February 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes

With no proposed changes, **the February 20, 2026 minutes were unanimously approved.**

2. Middle States Accreditation Updates

Institutional Effectiveness Specialist Amy Tweedy reported that the evaluation team arrives Sunday, March 29 and visits until Wednesday, April 1. Final evidence is being submitted un response team requests. The visit includes open forums for students, staff, and faculty, an oral exit report on the final day, where the draft report is read out.

Amy explained the three tiers of possible feedback: collegial advice (peer observations), recommendations (requiring a monitoring report and follow-up evidence), and requirements (reserved for serious financial or enrollment crises, not anticipated here). She noted that current accreditation pressure nationally means recommendations are somewhat more common than in prior cycles and should be taken in stride if received.

IPPC members expressed gratitude for the work of our Middle States Steering Committee over the last two years. President Conner and Dean Taylor will issue campus-wide communications reminding folks about the visit and ways to participate.

3. Board of Trustees February 2026 Meeting Updates

President Conner reported that the February board meeting was restructured entirely around the six Foundations of the Strategic Plan with 90-minutes devoted to each. The overall tenor was encouraging and substantive, with the Board engaging at the appropriate strategic and fiduciary level rather than the operational level. Board members also observed five classes (praising both faculty and students), dined with approximately 40 students in the dining hall (widely seen as a highlight), and heard a Campaign planning presentation.

Foundation 1 Academic Excellence (Dean Taylor): Discussion centered on free speech, expression, viewpoint diversity, and civil discourse. The Board worked through two scenarios: a classroom situation and a campus art museum context, exploring how these principles come into tension. The Board engaged thoughtfully on when trustee involvement is appropriate. Chicago Principles background was explained.

Foundation 2 Student Experience (Dean Bautista): The student-athlete program was presented as a model of intentional, holistic student support, involving faculty, advising networks, and learning support with the aspiration of scaling its principles more broadly. The Board dinner in the dining hall was particularly successful; trustees, including alumni, connected meaningfully with students and continued relationships afterward.

Foundation 3 Making Skidmore Possible (VPs Stauderman, Hargadon, Ricker): Tables of trustees used a custom, privately trained ChatGPT loaded on administrator laptops to develop 130-word endowment fundraising pitches over 45 minutes. The exercise surfaced strong alignment on the case for financial aid endowments and demonstrated a productive use of AI tools in a trustee setting.

Foundation 4 Inclusive Community (CIGU/Aiwu Zhao): CIGU members sat with small Board groups to discuss three topics: fostering meaningful dialogue across difference, campus accessibility, and a campus-wide Land Acknowledgement. Board members were visibly impressed by student engagement, including the Task Force Accessibility student tri-chair and the leader of the Student Native American Culture Club.

Foundation 5 Sustainability (Tarah Rowse, Dan Rodecker, Kurt Smemo): The session introduced STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System) as an organizing framework for the College's sustainability work. Skidmore has achieved STARS Silver. Board enthusiasm was high. Specific interest was expressed in incorporating sustainability into planned residence hall renovations (aligned with Skidmore's existing sustainable construction and renovation policy) and in the campus as a living learning lab.

Foundation 6 Long-Term Financial Future (VP Konstalid): The session pulled back from the annual budget to explore strategic use of the balance sheet, including a modest additional endowment draw to fund Campaign fundraising costs, and potential debt financing for major capital projects such as residence hall renovations. The Board received these strategies as legitimate options while signaling they will want additional information on credit rating implications and external perception before acting.

4. Mission Statement Update

President Conner summarized feedback from the February IPPC discussion and proposed a process for spring and summer. Key themes from that discussion: use existing structures rather than forming a large new group; draw on the opening pages of the *Strategic Plan*, which already contain strong community-endorsed mission language; and develop specific draft options for feedback rather than open-ended group writing exercises.

Proposed timeline:

- Spring 2026: Host a community forum and distribute a brief survey, three questions framing what a mission statement should do, presenting the current statement, and inviting feedback. Goal is to build community awareness and generate input.
- Summer 2026: Draft two or three candidate mission statements based on forum and survey feedback, drawing on *Strategic Plan* language.
- Fall 2026: Bring drafts to IPPC and other campus groups for review and refinement early in the semester.
- Winter/Spring 2027: Bring a recommended mission statement to the Board, potentially for the October 2026 or February 2027 meeting, for feedback and ultimate approval.

The committee indicated general support for this approach. The revised mission statement will be important both for the upcoming Campaign and for articulating Skidmore's identity in the contemporary higher education landscape.

5. Draft "Skidmore Institutional Guidelines on the Usage of AI"

Interim VP David Hargadon and VP Elizabeth Stauderman presented a draft institutional AI guidelines document, developed in collaboration with IT (Bill Betterman), the AI Working Group, and General Counsel. Bill Betterman joined as a guest for this item. The document is titled "Skidmore Institutional Guidelines on the Usage of AI" and was presented for feedback, not yet for endorsement.

The draft is organized around four broad areas: data privacy and protection; ethical use and impact (including environmental and social considerations); training and awareness; and alignment with existing institutional policies. The academic side of AI use remains governed by faculty autonomy under the existing CEPP statement. This document addresses enterprise-wide, institutional use. No new enforcement mechanisms are proposed; compliance would operate through existing College policies.

Key Issues Raised in Discussion

- Policy vs. guidelines: Multiple members noted the document uses both terms inconsistently. If it is policy, it must include consequences for non-compliance (per general counsel guidance); if it is guidelines, it is advisory. The committee urged the drafters to resolve this distinction clearly, potentially by separating binding policy language from advisory guidance in the same document.
- Transparency and disclosure: The draft does not explicitly address whether AI use must be disclosed when producing institutional work. The committee flagged this as an important and unresolved question.
- User vs. institutional responsibility: Several members noted that placing responsibility on individual users to assess accuracy, environmental impact, and ethical implications is unrealistic for lay users. The institution should own those determinations at the procurement and approval level.
- Environmental impact: Tarah Rowse shared insights from the Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit, where AI's environmental footprint, energy consumption, water use,

facility siting, was a major topic. She and Bill Betterman will connect to develop more specific language. The committee suggested the institution focus on choosing environmentally responsible platforms rather than placing that burden on individuals.

- Intellectual property and AI ingestion: Amy Frappier raised concern about AI systems training on faculty, student, and staff work without attribution or compensation — an emerging issue with significant implications for higher education. The library, which has an existing AI policy, was identified as a resource.
- Foundational policy prerequisites: Bill Betterman noted the AI policy depends on companion policies not yet finalized, specifically data governance, information security, and acceptable use/identity and access management. These need to be in place to provide the guardrails the AI policy assumes.
- Review cycle: committee members suggested balancing realistic review cycles versus the rapidly shifting AI pace of change.
- Format: Several members suggested a one-page policy document linking to ancillary guidance materials, rather than a single lengthy document trying to serve both functions.

The President affirmed the goal of getting some form of guidance to the community before the end of the academic year, while acknowledging the document is not yet ready for committee endorsement. The committee agreed to return to the item with a revised draft.

6. Call for Agenda Items

Revised AI Policies (April 3, May 8)

Middle States Reaccreditation Review Team Visit Updates (April 3)

SGA Elections Updates (April 17)

Land Acknowledgement (April 17)

7. Other Business

No other business was brought forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Summary document assisted by Claude AI.

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