

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 25, 2026

Present: Adrian Bautista, Silvia Carli, Marc Conner (Chair), Pablo Gomez, Raahim Latif Khan '28, Daniel Konstalid, Melissa Komora, Dylan Kostbar '28, Kerry Nelson, Ryan Overbey, Jessica Ricker, Tarah Rowse, Joseph Stankovich, Elizabeth Stauderman, Natalie Taylor, Amy Tweedy, Joshua Woodfork, Murat Yildiz (Vice Chair), Aiwu Zhao.

Zoom: Patricia Hilleren, Zhenelle LeBel.

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m.

1. Approval of May 8, 2026 and September 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes

With one correction to the spelling of a member's name in Section 2 of the May 8 minutes, **the May 8 and September 11, 2026 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

2. Lightning Introductions and Biography Quiz

Members introduced themselves by name and role. President Conner then led a "quiz" based on the brief biographies members had submitted, as a community-building exercise.

3. Reaffirmation of Diversity and Inclusion Statement

VP for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork led the committee in the annual reaffirmation of the College's "Diversity and Inclusion" Statement, which originated with the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) and was approved by IPPC during the 2012-2013 academic year and serves as a guiding "North Star" for the College. He noted that the "Equal Education and Employment Opportunities Policy" appears [on the same webpage](#), and is the College's nondiscrimination policy, which complies with Saratoga County, New York State, and federal government laws. President Conner observed that Skidmore continues to move forward on its diversity and inclusion commitments at a time when many institutions are stepping back from them. **The statement was unanimously reaffirmed by the committee.**

4. Ground Rules

The committee reviewed the ground rules document used by CIGU, which IPPC largely adopts. VP Woodfork presented three modifications proposed by CIGU: removing the phrase "step up, step back" in the interest of more inclusive language; replacing the word "violent" with softer language such as "trespassed" or "breached"; and adding that the success of the committee is everyone's responsibility. Vice Chair Murat Yildiz confirmed that no additional changes were needed. President Conner emphasized that ground rules should be revisited as needed and that any member may request a pause if discomfort arises. **The three modifications were accepted.**

5. Skidmore College Policy on College Policies

President Conner briefly introduced the "[Policy on College Policies](#)" document, which was circulated in advance. Policies typically originate from or through President's Cabinet and come to IPPC, though any community member may initiate a policy discussion. IPPC does not govern

strictly academic policy (curriculum, tenure, promotion, faculty hiring), which remains in faculty purview. For IPPC operations, President Conner explained that IPPC meeting materials will be shared no later than the Wednesday before a Friday meeting, ideally on Monday or Tuesday, and agenda items will make clear whether the committee is being asked for information, feedback, or a formal vote. No action was required.

6. Strategic Action Agenda (SAA)

President Conner presented the new Strategic Action Agenda (SAA) format, which is organized around the six foundations of [the College's Strategic Plan](#). Institutional Effectiveness Specialist Amy Tweedy noted that the goals reflect work already underway across the institution. Goal champions provided brief updates:

- Foundation 1, Creativity and Academic Excellence: to revise the College's Mission Statement. Interim Dean of the Faculty Natalie Taylor described the revision as timely; the current statement has not been revised since 1993.
- Foundation 2, Skidmore Student Experience: to create a Residential Experience Curriculum. Dean of Students Adrian Bautista described the shift from a program-focused approach to a learning-outcomes-based residential curriculum that incorporates health, wellness, and facilities redesign.
- Foundation 3, Supporting Opportunities of a Skidmore Education: to revise the Goals for Student Learning and Development (GSLD). Chair of the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) Ryan Overbey reported that a subcommittee will revise the GSLD (last updated in 2009) this fall, gather community feedback in the spring, and bring the revised goals to CEPP by the end of spring 2027.
- Foundation 4, Building the Inclusive Community: the work of the Task Force on Accessibility. Dean Bautista reported on forums and a summer survey, and on plans to issue an RFP for a consultant and present recommendations by February to CIGU and IPPC by Spring Break.
- Foundation 5, Sustaining Our Environmental Future: the creation of The North Woods Project. Director of Sustainability and Environmental Initiatives Tarah Rowse described a sustainability-across-the-curriculum initiative in which a cohort of 15 faculty will receive course development grants of \$1,000 to \$1,500. A sustainability education expert from Dickinson College will lead a January workshop, with a December mixer and an April faculty showcase is also planned.
- Foundation 6, Sustaining Skidmore's Long-Term Financial Future: Faculty Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) and Staff Position Review. VP for Finance & Administration Dan Konstalid described the Faculty VSIP as a time-limited initiative; eligible faculty are considering participation, and outcomes will inform replacement and savings decisions. Interim Dean Taylor added that a summer working group of faculty governance leaders recommended the program over alternatives such as department closures or increased course loads. VP Konstalid also described the ongoing staff position review, in which vacant positions are evaluated before being replaced.

In discussion, Associate Professor Silvia Carli asked about IPPC's role relative to the SAA implementation groups. It was clarified that IPPC is a policy review and advisory body that assesses alignment with the *Strategic Plan* and provides oversight at a macro-level. SGA

President Dylan Kostbar asked whether a more detailed narrative would accompany the one-page SAA and suggested links to project websites. VP Woodfork reported plans to develop an infographic version of the SAA and rebuild the SAA webpage with links to project documentation. In response to a question about goals not completed within the year, President Conner noted that evaluative summaries need to be built into the planning process. Vice Chair Yildiz highlighted the connection between Foundations 2 and 4, and members noted the importance of keeping the mission statement (Foundation 1) and the GSLD revision (Foundation 3) aligned.

No vote was called. The SAA will be brought to the committee for endorsement at the next meeting, in two weeks, ahead of the Board of Trustees meeting. Members were encouraged to review the six goals and direct questions to the relevant champions.

7. Mission Statement Project

President Conner provided an overview of the review of the Mission Statement, which builds on campus master planning, visions and values, strategic planning, and the Middle States reaccreditation. Community engagement last year indicated that the revised statement should retain core elements of the current statement (the undergraduate focus, the balance of liberal arts and professional preparation, the residential identity, and the “mind and hand” motto); draw on existing mission-centric language; use existing governance structures rather than new working groups; and emphasize creativity, experiential learning, and community. He described a mission statement as stating the “why” of the institution and what is most distinctive about Skidmore, rather than listing all values or explaining how the College operates. He also referenced a review of mission statements at the top 50 liberal arts colleges, of which 40 were found to be largely interchangeable.

In discussion, Director Rowse asked about a complementary vision statement, and it was noted that the guiding principles may serve that function. Member Carli asked where the teacher-scholar model would appear; President Conner suggested it may fit better in the guiding principles, as it speaks to “how” rather than “why.” Two or three draft mission statements, six guiding principles, and the motto “Creative Thought Matters” will be brought to the next IPPC meeting for small-group workshopping. Survey results from last year’s engagement, the study of mission statements, and a Society for College and University Planning document on mission statement revision will be shared with the committee in advance. After community engagement and IPPC input, the goal is to bring an endorsed revised mission statement to the Board of Trustees at its February 2027 meeting.

8. Enrollment Update: Class of 2030

VP and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Jessica Ricker reported enrollment of 711 first-year students and 24 transfer students. The class of 2030 includes students from 38 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 23 countries; 72% are receiving financial support, 17% are Pell-eligible, 14% are first-generation college students, 42 are in the Opportunity Program, and a record 32% are domestic students of color. VP Ricker noted that headcount is strong, but more families required financial aid than anticipated, resulting in a financial aid budget overrun of more than \$2 million. She introduced the new Enrollment Opportunity Working Group, a two-

year shared governance group supporting Foundations 3 and 6 of the *Strategic Plan*. President Conner congratulated the enrollment team and noted that more than 220 community members participated in the recruitment process.

9. Budget Update Announcement

VP Konstalid announced a budget update session for faculty and staff on Wednesday, September 30, at 3:15 p.m., on the second floor of Murray-Aikins Dining Hall and with a Zoom participation option, to review fiscal year results, the current year outlook, and the budget development climate through 2028 and beyond. The session follows the recent completion of the annual audit.

10. Call for Agenda Items

No new items were introduced.

11. Other Business

No new business was brought forth.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Summary document assisted by Zoom “Using Meeting Summary with AI.”

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