

Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS) ANNUAL REPORT, 2024-2025

The Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS) is a subcommittee of the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC). The function of CSS as specified in the IPPC Operating Code is: “To research, review, recommend and help support the implementation of sustainability policies and procedures in such areas as waste and recycling, academics, transportation, green building, food systems, climate and energy, landscape and ecosystem management, community, diversity and equity, and communication and assessment. This includes assisting in the coordination of sustainability strategic planning and its assessment and updates. The subcommittee may create working groups to assist with this process. Secondly, to coordinate strategic event planning and collaborative efforts between departments around these topics.”

The Year in Summary

During the 2024-2025 academic year, CSS met eight times (on 9/12, 10/10, 11/7, 12/5, 1/29, 2/26, 3/26, and 4/23) to carry out its responsibilities related to sustainability governance and coordination. In support of planning, policy, and coordination activities, CSS receives Sustainability Office updates, reviews sustainability assessment and tracking data, and discusses the progress of institutional sustainability initiatives. The primary focus of CSS work for this year was supporting strategic planning efforts and contributing to/reviewing our STARS submission. Meeting notes can be found on the [CSS webpage](#).

Sustainability in Strategic Planning

In fall 2024, CSS developed a white paper (in response to the strategic planning call for white papers) to articulate and share environmental sustainability priorities identified by the committee. Chair Rowse and committee member Kurt Smemo presented the fiscal year 2024 Campus Sustainability Plan snapshot and white paper ideas to the IPPC in October 2024. Further sustainability updates and recommendations were presented to IPPC in November 2024, with Dan Rodecker joining as a presenter.

Tarah Rowse and Kurt Smemo were identified as the environmental sustainability subject matter experts for the strategic planning process and worked with CSS to develop a community input approach for sustainability. Community input activities included a feedback form (community survey), sustainability board in Case Center, tabling, and a community forum. A summarizing memo sharing the community input process and results/themes, as well as national trends, was created and shared with President Conner and the strategic planning committee in early December 2024. Additionally, a set of recommendations was developed and shared via a paper and oral report (with a summary slide deck). CSS discussed and provided feedback on the summarizing memo and content expert recommendations throughout the process. In regards to climate action, CSS discussed Second Nature’s Climate Leadership Network, associated climate commitments, and the possibility of becoming an affiliate member, as well as sustainability and

climate action planning in general. Increasing the visibility of sustainability initiatives through enhanced communications, education, and engagement was another major strategic planning theme emphasized by CSS. As a part of the strategic planning process, environmental sustainability was pulled out as a sixth foundation (distinct from financial stewardship).

STARS Reporting

The primary assessment task undertaken by the Sustainability Office in 2024-2025 was completion of Skidmore's third Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) report. CSS members supported data collection and review efforts throughout the assessment process and received a full report out on Skidmore's STARS submission in March 2025. The report is a strong reflection of the sustainability initiatives Skidmore has pursued and will be used to help identify best practices and prioritize sustainability activities going forward. The STARS report was submitted to the Association for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in May 2025, earning Skidmore a STARS Silver rating.

Institutional Initiatives

CSS received updates, reviewed, and provided feedback on institutional initiatives, including:

- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building certification progress;
- the energy metering capital project and solar rooftop investigations;
- industrial composting and food waste hauler changes;
- fiscal year 2023 and 2024 Campus Sustainability Plan assessment;
- the Palmertown Range/Friendship Trails project;
- reduction of single-use plastics and bottled water;
- Skidmore participation in AASHE's Decarbonization Academy;
- and the Skidmore College Tree Inventory and public dashboard.

CSS Membership, 2024-2025

Madeline Bace '26, Student Government Association Sustainability Commission

Beth Brucker-Kane, Associate Director, Donor Engagement and Stewardship

Megan Buchanan, Associate Athletic Director

Grace Coale '25, Environmental Action Club

Celia Darling, Sustainability Coordinator

Darren Drabek, Associate Director of Admissions

Bruce Murray, Director of Facilities (regular invited guest)

Christine Page (2026), Associate Professor of Marketing

Dan Rodecker, Assistant VP of Facilities and Planning

Tarah Rowse, Director of Sustainability Programs and Assessment, Chair

Carol Schnitzer, Director of Purchasing

Kurt Smemo, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Sciences, Faculty Director of Sustainability