

## **Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS) ANNUAL REPORT, 2025-2026**

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 2025-2026 academic year, CSS met eight times (on 9/19, 11/5, 11/21, 12/10, 2/11, 3/25, 4/15, and 4/29) 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 sustainability planning to advance Foundation 5 (“Sustaining our Environmental Future”) of the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. Meeting notes can be found on the [CSS webpage](#).

### **Sustainability Planning**

Skidmore’s previous Campus Sustainability Plan set out goals for 2015-2025. With this previous plan expired, CSS took the lead on developing a new five-year sustainability plan to advance Foundation 5 of the Strategic Plan. Prior to the fall 2025 semester, the CSS Chair completed a sustainability planning guidance document and conducted a Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) gap analysis (based on Skidmore’s May 2025 STARS Silver report). The gap analysis reviewed Skidmore’s STARS performance and identified potential opportunities for sustainability projects, programs, and activities. Four working groups made up of CSS members and additional representatives (based on job function) were established: 1) Education and Engagement, 2) Climate & Energy, 3) Operations, and 4) Food. Working groups met three to four times to discuss potential goals and actions and develop a set of recommendations. A separate meeting was held in conjunction with the Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship to discuss public engagement opportunities.

The planning process was guided by STARS (the leading higher education framework of sustainability standards and best practices) and the overarching goal of submitting a STARS Gold report in 2029. The intention of the plan was to develop a roadmap of sustainability action aligned with Skidmore’s institutional plans. Based on the working group recommendations a draft plan and associated action timeline was developed and shared with key VPs in December

2025. In spring 2026, CSS received initial feedback, made revisions to the draft plan, and proposed an approval process (by Cabinet with IPPC review/endorsement) in partnership with key VPs. Further feedback raised questions about the overarching goal of STARS Gold, the process of deciding on goals/actions, and the need for a plan. The draft sustainability plan was not brought to IPPC. Additionally, a restructuring of CSS membership is under discussion. The proposal is to remove divisional representatives (Student Affairs, Admissions, Advancement) in favor of operational roles while maintaining faculty and student positions. Next steps in sustainability planning and CSS membership will be considered in summer 2026.

### **Board of Trustees Engagement**

Three members of CSS (Tarah Rowse, Dan Rodecker, and Kurt Smemo) were engaged by the Cabinet to lead the Foundation 5/Environmental Sustainability strategic planning session at the February 2026 Board of Trustees meeting. The presentation and discussion focused on the utilization of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) as our organizing principle and planning framework. Skidmore's sustainability strengths and opportunities within all categories (academics, engagement, operations, and planning/administration) were shared.

### **Institutional Initiatives**

CSS supported, recognized, and celebrated several institutional initiatives, including the Geo Trees Unveiling on April 24, which featured the installation of the first "Geo Tree" geothermal sculpture and a demonstration of the South District human borefield; the awarding of \$30,000 in pro bono consulting services for renewable energy analysis and strategy development; discussion between the Environmental Action Club and President Conner regarding sustainability performance and climate action; and the completion of the 2025 Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

#### *CSS Membership 2025-2026*

Madeline Bace '26, Student Government Association Sustainability Commission

Rachel Chase, Assistant Director of Career Development

Celia Darling, Sustainability Coordinator

Darren Drabek, Associate Director of Admissions

Jodi Frank, Associate Director of Constituent Relations

Liana Krasnoff '26, Environmental Action Club

Bruce Murray, Director of Facilities (regular invited guest)

Christine Page (2026), Associate Professor of Marketing

Dan Rodecker, Assistant Vice President of Facilities and Planning

Tarah Rowse, Director of Sustainability and Environmental Initiatives, Chair

Carol Schnitzer, Director of Business Services

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