AASHE Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: April 2, 2026
Time: 11:30 AM ET
Location: Virtual

Attendance (X – present; R – regrets; A - absent):

Board

x	Daryl Pierson	x	Greg (G.L.) Genco
x	Rania Assariotaki	x	Kim Hankins
x	Jillian Buckholz	x	Sophia Agtarap
x	Kristin Parineh	x	Léonie Lado
x	François Miller	x	Chris Ewing
x	John Madden	x	Yasmin Mansour
x	Elizabeth Swiman	x	Joseli Macedo

Management & Guests

x	Meghan Fay Zahniser (Executive Director)		

1. Opening Round and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Daryl Pierson. Meghan Fay Zahniser facilitated the opening round, inviting board members to share a current project or area of interest.

Board members shared a range of initiatives, including sustainability reporting, biodiversity strategies, academic integration of sustainability, operational improvements, and community engagement efforts. Several members highlighted work related to Earth Month programming, research, and institutional strategy development. The opening round reinforced the breadth of sustainability activity across member institutions and set a collegial tone for the meeting.

Use of AI-supported note-taking was disclosed at the outset. Board members acknowledged and consented.

2. Consent Agenda, Approval of February 6, 2026 Minutes

Daryl Pierson confirmed that all members had access to the February 6, 2026 meeting minutes and the proposed agenda.

Motion: Approve February 6, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes and April 2, 2026 Agenda
Moved: John Madden
Seconded: Yasmin Mansour

Vote: Approved unanimously.

Executive Committee meeting minutes were also shared for informational purposes. No action was required.

3. Executive Director Update

Meghan Fay Zahniser provided an update on organizational performance, strategic priorities, and key initiatives.

At the outset, Daryl Pierson noted a process update encouraging board members to submit questions on board materials in advance of meetings to support more efficient use of time.

3.1 2025 Annual Report Highlights

- Membership declined in 2025, particularly among higher education institutions, while business membership remained stable or slightly increased.
- International membership continues to represent a significant growth opportunity.
- STARS valid ratings reached the highest level in several years, while paid subscriptions declined.
- Educational program participation in workshops and courses declined, while webinar offerings increased.
- Conference attendance has decreased in recent years, influenced by location, travel constraints, and broader sector trends.
- Fewer countries were represented across educational programming and conference participation than in prior years.

3.2 2026 Updates (Year-to-Date)

- STARS submissions for the Princeton Review deadline reached the highest level since 2018.
- Planning is underway for the Sustainability Education Forum, with registration progressing positively.
- Conference planning and registration are underway, with continued focus on participation and accessibility.
- Awards programming is in progress, with announcements expected later in April and a webinar showcase in May.
- Membership and conference recruitment and retention campaigns are ongoing.

3.3 Organizational Operations and Capacity

- Implementation of a new account management system is underway, with partial launch occurring and full functionality anticipated in the coming months.
- The annual financial audit is in progress, with early feedback indicating positive results.
- Financial policies are under review by the Finance Committee.

- Updates to the employee handbook are underway, including administrative changes and a cap on vacation payout.
- A Q1 financial report will be prepared following a mid-April review and shared with the Board.

3.4 Board Support Requests

Board members were encouraged to support AASHE through:

- Submitting conference proposals or encouraging participation within their networks.
- Sharing sponsorship and host institution opportunities.
- Amplifying award announcements and organizational content.
- Engaging with AASHE Connect to understand member needs and trends.
- Contributing blog content or thought leadership.

4. Committee Updates & Discussion

Daryl Pierson introduced committee updates, noting the importance of committee work in advancing board priorities and organizational strategy.

4.1 Finance & Fundraising Committee

Kristin Parineh provided an update on committee priorities.Key discussion points included:

- The committee is reviewing AASHE’s financial policies, with an internal deadline of April 17 for feedback and revisions.
- Recommended updates to financial policies are expected to be presented to the Board at the next meeting.
- Progress has been made on developing a revised institutional membership dues structure aimed at increasing pay equity and revenue.
- A preliminary discussion will be conducted to assess board support for potential dues increases for larger institutions.
- The current discussion is intended as a temperature check rather than a formal decision.

4.2 Governance Committee

François Miller provided an update on governance priorities for the year. Key discussion points included:

- Planning for the next board election cycle, with a focus on recruiting Canadian institutional representation.
- Anticipated board transitions, including upcoming departures of current members.
- Exploration of alternatives to Robert’s Rules of Order to improve meeting efficiency while maintaining effective decision-making.
- Alignment of governance committee efforts with the strategic plan.
- Consideration of continuity for the student board member role and identification of potential candidates.

4.3 International Task Force

Rania Assariotaki provided an update on the task force’s initial work. Key discussion points included:

- Ongoing efforts to define the value proposition of international membership for AASHE and its members.
- Recognition of regional differences in sustainability frameworks, policies, and institutional needs.

- Exploration of regional engagement models to better serve international members.
- Plans to map international membership and assess geographic distribution as a foundation for future recommendations.
- Continued development of strategies to support global engagement and knowledge exchange.

5. Legislative Update & Discussion

The board discussed experiences on member campuses and strategies for supporting members amidst state and federal changes.

6. Closing Remarks

Closing remarks were provided by Daryl Pierson. Board members were thanked for their continued engagement and contributions to committee work and organizational priorities.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned following closing remarks from the Board Chair and Executive Director. Next meeting: June 12, 11:30am - 1pm ET.