

Meeting Minutes #19

(Adopted December 10, 2025)

Seattle University (SU) Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

6:00 to 8:00pm

(Transcriber's Note: The notes shown below are summaries of statements provided. They are not transcriptions and have been shortened and edited to include the major points raised. Full comments are retained in the files in video recording and available upon request.)

In-person Location:

Seattle University
Advancement and Alumni Building — Stuart T. Rolfe Community Room
824 12th Ave — Seattle, WA 98122

Virtual Option: via Webex

IAC Members Present:

John Feit, Chair
Todd Johnson
James Kirkpatrick
Wolf Saar
Manette Stamm
Wes Wheless
Bill Zosel

IAC Members Absent:

Maureen O'Leary
Mark Stoner

SU Staff:

Lara Branigan
Nathan Gregory
Ranleigh Starling

City of Seattle Staff:

Dipti Garg, Department of Neighborhoods (DON)
Sarah Sodt, Department of Neighborhoods (DON)
Carly Guillory, Department of Constructions & Inspections (SDCI)
Tammy Barrett, Department of Constructions & Inspections (SDCI)

Welcome & Introductions

Dipti Garg opened the meeting at 6:00pm. She reviewed the meeting agenda, meeting procedures, expectations of participants, then introduced IAC members, SU and City staff before handing over the meeting to Chair John Feit.

Chairperson's Report

Meeting Overview and Minutes Adoption

Chair Feit reviewed the past meetings, focusing on July 30 meeting. He asked for comments on the minutes. Bill Zosel asked they reflect the function of the committee presentation that was made by the attorney for SU and not a neutral party. John Feit moves to adopt the corrections; second by Wolf Saar. Minutes adopted at 07:25.

Seattle University Museum of Art (SUMA) project

SU staff (Lara Branigan) presents detailed design changes and the IAC's concerns in regard to the relationship of campus and neighborhood context, plaza and street activation, and the campus gateway. Lara quickly went over the changes in design and functionality. She reviewed a more detailed project schedule (Value Engineering phase), including the Master Use Permit (MUP) process, which includes the IAC meetings. Changes include a change in massing, primarily due to the removal of the basement and moving functions to upper floors. SU applied for a land use number and building permit in order to have a pre-submittal conversation with SDCI about the project.

Note, SU is a secondary practice facility for FIFA in summer 2026, so nothing can be done in the parking lot until that is over. Lee Center will be vacated at the start of FIFA and will remain until the permits happen. Lee Center uses will be transitioning to either Cornish or to the Columbia warehouse.

Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) was an aspirational snapshot in time. Two unanticipated changes during the MIMP process to be taken into account when looking at the campus context: the art gift and the Cornish acquisition.

With the Jesuit heritage of SU, a major central vision of the MIMP has always been the Chapel of St. Ignatius. Chapel Project member Tom Kundig spoke of the background of the chapel design ("gathering of light for the gathering of people") and how the chapel relates to the campus and connections to community urban centers (including as a visual site from the corner). One MIMP focus was any future development could not throw a shadow on the chapel, particularly the east side of the chapel. The need for the chapel to support a gathering of people and a gathering of light for morning worship influenced and limited the location of the proposed museum.

IAC states while this clarification was helpful there is confusion why this important, driving concept was not included in the Master Plan. This is an example of goals missing in the MIMP — maybe future plans should be more thorough.

Relationship of the new development to the surroundings described and demonstrated with images of neighborhood streets and campus context, including scale of surrounding existing and new buildings.

Responding to questions about steps and raised plaza – the intent is maintaining the level of the current Lee Center with the elevation aligned with 12th Ave, mid-block. Currently working with elevations after concerns from IAC, the design is working on Marion and 12th Ave elevations modified to be more engaged with the pedestrian environment, as well as moving the entrance and lobby of the museum onto 12th avenue for better connection and activating use (there will be an additional entry that leads to an immediate gathering space from the plaza).

Working on the building to create an inviting gateway. This proposal will make the Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation (Sinegal) facing side more engaging by continuing the factors that are working well (entrance) and enhance with new engagement options (plaza) and by reflecting some of the setback datums and harder edge definition from the Sinegal. The backside will be more appealing and has aspirational plans (parking lot for immediate future, but hopefully a green space, ramps, sculpture to be developed).

Materials goals are for local feeling materials in tone. Terra cotta examples of cladding are being explored in this schematic stage. Looking also at panelized brick, tinted Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) want texture, a natural material. Inspired to make some visual interest, maybe using terra cotta panels/fins to give the feeling of

movement and ripples like water along the street; maybe creating a dynamic facade that could be lit up at night like a beacon. Possible dialogue between the light in the chapel and how the light may hit the panels of the museum.

Regarding function, 70% of the building programs will need to be elevated because security needs are driving the galleries to be located on the upper levels. Description of how this is affecting the massing options — spaces and services have moved, changed in size, and elevations have been adjusted. Concern about sustainability were addressed, especially in comparison with other museums in the city – goal is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold – all electric, moving away from natural gas.

Regarding the design of exterior spaces and engagement – design of overhang depth will provide shade in sunnier months and rain protection during other months. Ceiling (soffit) will be light, subtly lit, and a potential canvas for projected art, possibly surrounded by LED lights for warm lighting or perforated for lighting that way.

Concerns about plaza activation. Went over the traditional events hosted by the school (163 outdoor events in 2025). One benefit could be a financial savings (no tent rentals), a time benefit (less setup and take down canopies); and accessibility. Also working on breaking up the space for smaller gathering opportunities — possibly zones and/or tiers. Activation event examples described and demonstrated (student tour meeting spot, presentations, faculty welcome event; outdoor concerts, wedding celebrations, yoga).

Concern was expressed about lack of delineation at gateway; ideas the design team are making based on that feedback. Create clear signage, play with the paving surface, additional signage, flag poles and lights, vegetation and landscape, and an overhead sign over street entry. Threshold was created between Sinegal and the museum.

Committee Questions and Answers

Wolf Saar: What about the west building façade and how the ground plane will be treated?

Response: Intend it will have the same treatment as the 12th avenue side; there will be glazing on the corners to add to transparency. The far west side at the driveway is still under development.

Wolf Saar: What about the functionality of the plaza, concern that is disengaged from the rest of the campus. Does the university think that the plaza is going to work?

Response: Events staff are excited about the opportunity this will offer, especially in how it will work for the community.

Bill Zosel: The wide porch in front of Sinegal and the images showing activation in the renderings isn't what happens in reality. Can people enter the museum from any side?

Response: Sinegal is more casual and doesn't have the same power hookups and infrastructure for events activation. Regarding the museum, people can enter the plaza from either side, but they will be required to enter the museum from corner at 12th.

Bill Zosel: It would be nice to have people be able to sit and get coffee and sit in the plaza.

Response: Yes, that will be an option since people always want access to a café at a museum.

Wes Wheless: Overnight security details? Seattle Central Plaza attracts suspicious activity . . . will SU attract that?

Response: SU has multiple public safety foot patrol officers on campus 24/7 as well as a heavy upgrading camera system that is monitored to watch what is happening and there will be upgrades. The seating is being discussed (so it won't hide people) and there will be lighting to help with surveillance. There is a tension sometimes between being open to the community and safety, but it is being worked on.

Bill Zosel: MIMP specifically calls out defining entries at grade level. Understanding the design has not been concluded, but this design has very small defined entry at grade level. Concern about university turning its back on the street.

Response: The entry to the museum was chosen to create ongoing entry and give space for groups to gather, which is why it was chosen to be from the plaza; maybe they will explore making the entry highlighted more.

Todd Johnson: Thanks for addressing the questions and concerns that have come up. Will be delighted to see this building and responds to the master plan.

John Feit: • From page 7 - should the elements of the chapel be evident in this part of the building design? Not seeing the design connection between the pool and the landscape.

- From page 47 - soffit needs to work with daylight and electric light – a fifth façade. Subtle window and peak of the chapel. Soffit is a dominant element without a connection with the chapel. Response: in static renderings, it might appear distorted, but in reality (animation done to balance any distortion), the chapel is more framed as a focus.
- From page 48 - prefer option 1 because of the straighter connection with 12th avenue.
- From page 51 - rain will probably intrude under the covered porch area, as it is blown by the wind — won't be able to count on it for 100% cover.
- From page 58 – Whistler not good examples as it is actually a dark foreboding space. Wood decking from the Boston example is really nice and warm, it would be really nice to have that incorporated – or maybe break up with scoring or patterning. Response: the daily cleaning of wood decking could be a challenge.
- From pages 64 to 69 - hope the design won't rely on the crutch of signage to mark the gateway of the building. Response: there is already a second project for people who are driving onto campus, so this was done, in part to help with that situation and, hopefully, get people into crosswalks. There is also a street clock in the near future.
- How does terra cotta hint to what is inside? Response: Movement created via light, weather, and time. Perceived as art in itself.
- If SDCl waits for construction plans, will the IAC still be able to have an impact in the process? Response: SDCl is trying to achieve is the IAC is in agreement on the plan so that by the time it gets to SDCl, they are only looking at the plans from a technical perspective.
- Instead of spending money on expensive cladding and robust structural moves, why not spend money on the plaza, soffit, and façade on the streets which are important to implementing the master plan. Plaza doesn't feel humane; plaza needs to be caught up with the rest of the design. Why wouldn't premium materials be at street level or within the plaza? Response: actually there is some work being done already about cost.

Bill Zosel: Could we see examples of plazas near urban environments? Response: yes, that can be done.

Wes Wheless: Reviews why the Lee Center couldn't be converted or retained. Response: expanded on the situation, emphasizing energy efficiency and museum use needs.

Public Comments

None

Committee Discussion

What the IAC would like SU to focus on as they move forward:

- West side of the building to the campus: how it looks, the access, where we are at the ground plane; how the cars will interact and that all connects
- Security – not creating a barrier, but create a space that flows with the community
- Soffit – dominance, concern with the value engineering, materials a concern; would like it to be more interesting or interactive;
- Space between Chapel and Plaza – better definition on the connection; pool, architecture and landscaping to collapse that space
- Next presentation, could understand the special mechanical and electrical needs of the building
- West façade inside corner make sense as opposed to the outside corner
- Guidance offered that the two entrances both being from the plaza are too close together and a street entrance feels like something to be considered

Agreement: no longer discussing the Lee Center since that decision has been made.

Confirmed about 80% through Schematic Design (assuming the budget works out)

Report from west side of Broadway, emotional impact of project not as high except traffic concerns.

Next meeting presentation:

- Would like an understanding from SDCI of in what ways the IAC is and is not a Design Review Board; what are the parameters on what the IAC will write (produce); how will the document produced by the IAC be used?
- Expect the value engineering exercises will be complete and will be a good point for a discussion
- Narrowed selection of material choices
- Final understanding of dimensions, placement, elevations, permutations of structures

SU comments that they don't want to get too far ahead of things without getting more consensus/direction from IAC.

Setting up subcommittees

Suggested: Urban design/Landscape issues, Neighbor/Resident issues, Policy issues). Dipti and Chair Feit will connect to work on the committees, then the members will get an email so they can express interest in the committee of their choice.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58pm