

Make no small plans. They have no magic to stir
humanity's blood and probably themselves will not be
realized. Make big plans aim high in hope and work,
remembering that a noble, logical plan once recorded will
never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing,
asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember
that our sons and daughters are going to do things that will
stagger us. Let yMd L wib

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The principal mission of Skidmore College is the education of predominantly full-time undergraduates, a diverse population of talented students who are eager to engage actively in the learning process.

Colleges and universities tend to focus either on their past or on their future. While Skidmore honors, takes pride in, and builds upon the legacy of its past, we are accustomed to thinking in the future tense: about our hopes for our students, changes to be made in our curriculum, or a greater role to be played by our College throughout higher education and in the world at large. Even our declaration that *creative thought matters* orients us toward a distant horizon: The concept of creativity itself points to a moment that does not yet exist – when something hidden will be revealed, a plan realized, a quandary resolved through an imaginative approach. Creativity threatens the *status quo* and so entails risk. Yet Skidmore has always invited change and embraced risk. Because of the dedication, foresight, and audacity of so many who have come before us, the College has made enormous progress across its first century. Throughout our history,¹⁴ we have challenged ourselves to make no small plans – to make no ordinary choices –^{ur} and we do so still today.

Since our founding, Skidmore College toll

doesn't really matter." Instead, we begin with the assumption that each admitted student can meet the challenges we present and – with the proper commitment, effort, and assistance – join the ranks of Skidmore alumni. We regard matriculation as the beginning not of a four-year relationship but rather of a *lifelong* relationship between a student and the extended Skidmore community. Even so, despite our best intentions, we must acknowledge that for too many of our students Skidmore remains a promise unfulfilled. The gap between the aspirations of our *Mission Statement* and our actual performance provides both a significant challenge and our most im

Over the past forty years, we have advanced from a sc

- the imperative to invest substantially (perhaps as much as \$100M) in renovating our physical plant a

comprehend those principles today under the heading “engaged liberal learning,” reflecting our belief that *engagement is prerequisite to achievement*. Though we must be prepared to embrace good ideas wherever we encounter them, we must resist any temptation to imitate others for imitation’s sake. Rather, we must devise new ways to express our own core values and, in so doing, strengthen our unique identity.

Liberal education and autonomy

Liberal education is not a destination but a life-long journey – a continuing transformative process modeled by our faculty members in their engagement with their disciplines in their research, creative activity, and teaching. Through their work as *teacher-scholars* – in the classroom, the laboratory, the -

Creative thought matters

The historical and continuing prominence of the arts at Skidmore within a broad liberal arts curriculum has long set us apart from our peers.⁹ Where others have talked about the value of integrating the arts as an essential component of liberal education, Skidmore has created a vibrant culture that is enriched throughout by the fine and performing arts.¹⁰ This key dimension of our heritage led naturally to the phrase *creative thought matters*. The implications of this idea, however, extend far beyond the arts. It is a motif interwoven throughout the fabric of the College, touching all that we do. For the importance of creativity i

Mind and hand

Merely to value ideas, however, is not enough. For the project of liberal education itself is grounded in an ethic of concern that aims not just to transform the lives of individual students but to empowe

Persons from different

Meaningful civil discourse also requires the attitude of openness to

That is, we expect them to balance the competing demands of being a teacher-scholar-citizen, the three major components of the faculty role at Skidmore. It is certainly easier to achieve excellence by emphasizing just one component of one's life it requires much more agility to shift among different roles. By attending more intentionally to this aspect of our hum

an educational experience second to none. A Skidmore education provides the foundation in both the cognitive skills and the personal maturity required to excel in both

effectively not only as a citizen of our country but also as a citizen of our increasingly interconnected world.

- A College that e

To bring our shared vision to reality – to make our own most creative educational thinking matter across our community – we call upon our tradition of audacity, invoke our powers of imagination, and prepare to focus our efforts as never be

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will be funded by reductions in the number of part-time faculty positions others will require new resources.²¹

We will better support the members of o

- Give additional attention to all introductory courses to ensure that Skidmore's most accomplished teachers offer them, engaging our students actively and effectively in the work of the discipline.

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- Enhance faculty research and creative work by increasing support for yearlong sabbaticals to 80% of salary explore ways to reconfigure sabbatical program (e.g., with regard to the timing of sabbaticals) to increase effectiveness of the sabbatical program.
- Enhance the usefulness of internal grant resources and develop other new resources to support such efforts.
- Enhance internal support and external resources (e.g., through the Independent Colleges Office) to assist faculty members in all areas of the curriculum in identifying and seeking external grants for research, creative work, curriculum development, and pedagogy.
- Provide additional support for departments, programs, and individual faculty members in bringing external speakers, workshops, and conferences to campus.
- Seek opportunities to bring externally funded research projects to campus that will create opportunities for faculty groups to collaborate and that may provide new opportunities for student internships and research assistantships.

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- Develop the funding necessary to complete the new music building to accommodate the needs of the Music Program. This building will include a 700-seat auditorium that will accommodate musical and other performances (throughout the traditional academic year and in the summer). It also will provide a venue for events that will further enhance the intellectual life of the College and serve as a resource for our region. Renovate Filene Hall and other areas on campus, as identified in the revised Campus Master Plan, to meet the academic program's requirements for additional space on a timetable that a

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war is over, but a stranger war has begun. Alienation has perhaps never been so widespread all the more reason for getting together and seeing what bridges can be built.

– Salman Rushdie²⁵

It is arguable that the global situation changed in the 1980's but the United States did not fully wake up to those changes until September 11, 2001. No longer is the world divided into two spheres of superpower influence. Although the United States retains a preponderance of military power in the Post-Cold-War era, multiple sources of economic influence, political power, and cultural energy compete for attention on the world stage and affect every aspect of our students' lives – from the price they will pay for gasoline, cement, and steel to the types of jobs available to them in our economy to the quality of the global environment to the governmental policies that will be necessary to maintain not just their accustomed standard of living and personal freedom but the very possibility of a stable world order. If we want them to emerge as leaders and not just as observers, our students must understand this world and their place in it. Our job is to immerse them in that world. It is their future.

We need to do more to include global perspectives in our curriculum and foster global awareness throughout our community. Specifically, all Skidmore students need to understand that no one's worldview is universal, that other people may have profoundly different perspectives and values, that world systems are interdependent, and that local choices have global impact. To become globally aware, students must study at least one foreign culture and language understand the dynamics of international conflict, collaboration, and negotiation learn to differentiate between phenomena that are area-specific and transnational and develop the skills to identify and analyze complex international problems in their historical, technological, and ethical contexts. We will encourage more of our students to undertake transformative study abroad as part of their undergraduate education – with destinations such as Asia, India, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America becoming as common as Paris or London. For their part, 61% of the students entering in Fall 2003 indicated a desire to study abroad. We must enable them to do so, and we need to affirm these values by supporting our faculty as well, to enhance their own ability to lead such efforts.

This project begins with the composition of our student body itself. We seek to recreate Skidmore as a more diverse, globally conscious community better able to prepare *all* our students for the world each of them will encounter upon graduation. For any college, each year's applicant pool marks a moment of transition and opportunity. As we look towards the Skidmore student population of the future, we must first of all assert that *creative thought knows no boundaries*. We want our strongest accepted candidates, whatever their backgrounds, to make Skidmore their first choice. We also need to be clear about our objectives with regard to increases in specific populations, such as students of color, international students, and so on. For example, creating an educational context capable of supporting meaningful discussions about the world situation, requires a student body that includes meaningful numbers of students whose backgrounds place them in direct touch with the perspectives of persons living in other countries. Accordingly, o

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In the first few years of this planning cycle, we will build upon our existing strengths t

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- Charge the Intercultural and Global Understanding Task Force to initiate and support this conversation.
- Provide additional resources to faculty members to meet the pedagogical needs of an increasingly diverse student population and take advantage of the opportunities represented by a more multicultural classroom environment.
- Identify individuals who will have leadership and operational responsibility for guiding the implementation of this initiative.²⁸

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- Expand and stabilize the resources of our remarkably successful HEOP/AOP programs, ensuring that these will continue regardless of the vicissitudes of external (primarily governmental) fundingc

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- Increase our efforts to recruit and retain faculty members, administrators, and staff members who represent excellence in their field and who also will increase the diversity of our employee population. Where feasible, we will use flexible interdisciplinary faculty positions to increase the diversity of applicant pools. We will send clear signals that we are seeking faculty members with an interest and experience in working with previously under-served student populations.
- Using Fulbright and other international grants, bring accomplished international scholars to Skidmore to teach as visiting faculty members, in short-term residencies, etc.
- Consistently include programs to enhance the skills that relate to this Goal in the professional development of our faculty, staff, and administrators.



Our *Mission Statement* add

- Educate Skidmore community members regarding the rights and responsibilities of information citizenship.

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- Implement those aspects of the First-Year initiative that pertain to Residential Life. Review and revise as necessary our Residential Life programming and staffing to ensure that we are creating a campus environment that supports our educational objectives. Intentionally design (and, where necessary, redesign) co-curricular and residential programs to promote collaboration between the faculty and the Office of Student Affairs.
- As we implement and continue to evaluate recently changed campus drug and alcohol policies, expand and enhance on-campus programming that provides social and recreational alternatives consistent with the College's values and educational objectives. Monitor effects and revise policy and programming as necessary.
- Strengthen the Honor Code. Raise the intolerance level for behavior that is destructive of community values (e.g., mutual respect for members of this community, caring for the campus physical environment). Actively promote the development of social integrity, civic virtues, and personal responsibility.
- Support student involvement in College governance. Extend faculty and administrative mentoring to key student organizations such as SGA, *Skidmore News*, etc., while recognizing such work as a valuable dimension of faculty

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- Strengthen programmatic support for athletic, fitness, and recreational acti



in projecting our “brand” to external constituencies and the “equity” of that brand in the marketplace. For all of these reasons, not only must we understand and live up to our values but we also must attend carefully to the symbolic expression of our identity, protecting, preserving, and strengthening it as one of our most precious institutional assets. Within the Skidmore community, we must be more intentional in shaping the semiotics of our campus architecture, signage, and internal publications to reinforce our sense of community. We need to ensure that the College’s communications with our students – especially those pertaining to prospective students – reinforce the lifelong relationship we are forging with them. Finally, we must become even more effective in establishing our distinctive identity with external constituencies as we make known to them the worth of a Skidmore education.

Our recent admissions campaign emphasizing the theme *creative thought matters* appears to have met with initial success (both in terms of numbers of applicants and in terms of their self-selection). At the same time, as a College with aspirations to diversify the geographic (national and international) and demographic composition of our student body and to increase our visibility as a distinctive liberal arts college, we must build on past efforts to define Skidmore’s external “brand identity.” This does not mean somehow reducing our complex reality to a simple slogan, but it does entail a more sophisticated institutional recognition of the steps needed to attain the indicated goals. We will be advantaged to the extent that we are able to define and “own” a concise, recognizable, and distinctive identity. Doing so will require persistence in presenting the College to the external world – repeating a consistent message long past the point at which, internally, we will have grown weary of hearing it. This process will be facilitated to the extent that we can discipline ourselves to unify and coordinate our publications and other expressions of institutional identity (including, again, the appearance of campus buildings and spaces) to present a consistent and identifying appearance to external audiences.

Finally, we envision a Skidmore increasingly recognized for its role, as a leading national liberal arts college, in advancing the cause of engaged liberal learning – indeed, the cause of enlightenment – within the world community both through the actions of our alumni and through the College’s own contribution to the advancement of knowledge. That contribution takes two principal forms: The first is the professional activity of our individual faculty members (in many cases, in collaboration with our students) in advancing the work of their disciplines. The second is the contribution of the College itself through its sponsorship of significant artistic and intellectual events such as performances, conferences, exhibits, and symposia dealing with the most important questions of our time. In this context we might again mention the Tang, along with our journal, *Salmagundi*, our summer institutes in the arts and letters, the Filene Visiting Artists Series in music, and our named annual lectureships and residency programs. We will seek ways to strengthen our already impressive work in these areas and identify new ways to enter the national conversation on the role of liberal education in contemporary society.

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- Enhance our capacity for long-range budget forecasting and integrate long-range budgeting

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