



Reaffirmation, Recommitment, and Renewal

The Strategic Action Agenda: 2011-2012

October 2011

As we enter the seventh year of the current *Strategic Plan*, we will focus our energy on three major themes that express different dimensions of the four goals:

1. Diversity and Inclusion;
2. Science at Skidmore; and
3. the Civic Engagement and Transition and Transformation Initiatives.

These themes represent our highest current priorities, and they will receive ongoing attention and emphasis throughout the coming months. In support of this and other work, we also will attend

PRIORITIES FOR 2011-12

Diversity and Inclusion

commitment to *engaged liberal learning* also finds expression in our attention to the values of *intercultural and global understanding* and *informed, responsible citizenship* the subjects of Goals II and III in the *Strategic Plan*. If our graduates are to live and work together effectively and in peace in our heterogeneous democracy and, indeed, in a world increasingly marked by interaction among and across disparate cultures they must develop a set of personal and intellectual capacities that we have described under the heading of *intercultural literacy*. These capacities represent fundamental dimensions values of liberal education.⁵ In order to help our students achieve these educational goals, we have set a course toward becoming

engage in meaningful dialogue about issues relating to race, class, sexual orientation, disabilities, and other markers of difference that can divide us as a campus community (and indeed that can divide our nation and the world). A number of strategic agenda items included below speak directly to these topics, and I ask that everyone in the Skidmore community embrace this undertaking and seek opportunities to increase our ability to engage in these difficult conversations, always within a context of mutual respect.

Science and Informed, Responsible Citizenship

The above-referenced efforts are important in themselves and, as also noted above, they relate directly to the deep connection between intercultural literacy and another fundamental commitment in our *Mission Statement*: to prepare our students to function as *informed responsible citizens*. Current trends in our national political arena highlight the importance of this value.

achieve reasonable compromises among policy options but the capacity of our government to function at the most basic levels of operations. Our country has long been divided more or less evenly between Democrats and Republicans. But today our differences of opinion on issues are more often expressed not as alternatives to be considered and evaluated but rather as fundamental divisions that separate us into warring ideological camps a dynamic that is reflected, unfortunately, in the membership of the House and Senate, where we see an increasing polarization toward the extremes of left and right, and thus with more members positioned further from the middle where compromise is more possible.

This political phenomenon reflects the current tendency for people to learn about the world primarily from sources that reflect and reinforce their existing beliefs. **Paradoxically, in an age of burgeoning opportunities to gain information that reflects multiple perspectives, people are more often choosing**

We also need to recognize that one cannot be an engaged, thoughtful, and responsible citizen today without a deep understanding of science, technology, and their relationship to issues of public policy. Many of the significant challenges facing us in an increasingly interconnected world be they political, cultural, social, or environmental include a scientific or technological dimension. As a leading, national liberal arts college, Skidmore needs to ensure that all our graduates are scientifically literate and that the sciences remain a strong presence in our curriculum. The document - lization in the context of the Colle broad arc of strategic planning:

As the College seeks to justify the value of a Skidmore education in the 21st century, fostering the scientific literacy of all Skidmore students and increasing the number of graduates with majors in the sciences is of the utmost concern. In fact, the concern for graduating a scientifically literate student body and increasing the number of science majors The Colle *Strategic* Plan: *Engaged Liberal Learning*, adopted in 2 strengthen the natural sciences to increase the number of science majors and enhance the science literacy of

examine where we are with these initiatives, to ensure that appropriate governance bodies are engaged, and, going forward, to see that necessary consultation with the faculty occurs. Furthermore, I also committed to exploring possible changes in either governance structure or operations (or both) to minimize the likelihood of miscommunication in the future. We now are following up on those commitments, and I will report back to the community in due course. Further conversations will take place in Faculty Meetings, governance committees, and elsewhere as appropriate. Beginning with the recently completed Middle States Periodic Review, the Cabinet has analyzed the progress we have made on several key initiatives over the past several years. That exercise will enable us to be more intentional in clearly articulating the processes and procedures we need to follow to effect institutional change in continuing to realize our objectives over the final years of the current *Strategic Plan*.

Over the summer I announced a series of personnel transitions in the office of Academic Affairs, including the forthcoming retirement from the College to reexamine the current administrative structure that includes a separate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty. At the time of writing, we are moving forward, in consultation with appropriate governance committees, to convene a small faculty group to advise me in this examination. I will announce the results of these deliberations by the beginning of November.

chief academic officer.

by the troubled external economic environment. This past June, our endowment had finally reached and then surpassed its level prior to the 2007 recession totaling approximately \$298.5 million. Unfortunately, the growing global economic uncertainty, the inability of our political system to resolve either our current unemployment crisis or our long-term debt issues, and the decline in equity stock prices lower by the end of August, a month that saw a 14 percent decline in the Dow Jones average.¹¹ Reflecting these market realities, our endowment no doubt declined as well. Economists remain divided as to the likelihood of a second recession, but it is clear that the current extraordinary level of volatility in both the financial markets and public opinion complicates any attempt to forecast future developments. Al

that can prevent them from realizing their potential as contributing professionals, responsible citizens, and fulfilled human beings. Our best work with our students again, what not 0 1 90.024 706.9 Tm[ci

The Plan for Skidmore College 2005-2015 Goals and Priority Initiatives

Goal I Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

We will challenge every Skidmore student to achieve academic excellence through full engagement with our rich and rigorous educational experience.

Priority Initiatives

Increase student academic engagement in the first year.

Increase support for research and creative activity throughout faculty careers.

Enhance intellectual life for the faculty, students, and others who comprise the extended Skidmore community.

Strengthen information resources across the College.

Strengthen the natural sciences to increase the number of science majors and enhance the science literacy of all Skidmore students.

Increase our effectiveness in help

Goal III Informed, Responsible Citizenship

We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world.

Priority Initiatives

Foster pedagogical innovation relating to responsible citizenship; support campus initiatives that teach and exemplify this value.

Enhance residential learning.

Enhance the campus residential environment, with special attention to common spaces.

Increase support for athletics, fitness, and wellness.

enhance our ability to function as a socially and environmentally responsible corporate citizen.

Strategic Action Agenda Items 2011-12

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the expected date of completion for each of the following projects is June 1, 2012.

Goal I Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

We will challenge every Skidmore student to achieve academic excellence through full engagement with our rich and rigorous educational experience.

Projects/Action Steps

Enhance institutional structure to support academic excellence.

- 1. Review the positions of the VPAA and the DOF to decide whether these positions should remain separate or be combined. Complete the appointment process for VPAA or VPAA/DOF.**

Administrative Responsibility: President.

- 2. Complete separation of the offices of the Registrar and Institutional Research.**
 - Implement new office structures as necessary.
 - Resolve space issues for the Office of Institutional Research.
 - Develop mission statement and institutional profile for OIR.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

- 3. Continue to implement reorganization of the Office of the Dean of Special Programs.**
 - Finalize mission statement.
 - Determine principles for ODSP budget.
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Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

6. Enhance faculty resources to deliver the academic program.

- Recruit 10-12 tenure-track lines.
- Continue to address contingent faculty concerns (e.g., possible conversion(s) to tenure-track line(s), compensation adjustments, etc.).
- Implement paperless advising.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

7. Develop plan to institutionalize support for digital resources position at the Tang.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

8. Curricular and program development.

- Arts Administration implement minor.
- Determine support requirements for departments/programs in transition.
- MALS Program: conduct internal and external review; develop plan for combined BA/BA/MALS degree program.
- Continue to establish Zankel Program (budget, operations, protocols, programming, etc.); establish social networking; create policies and procedures manual.
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retrieval from the new student information system and existing administrative systems.

- Implement Skidmore mobile applications and improve access for mobile devices to current key web systems as well as new student information system.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Advancement, and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

Strengthen the natural sciences to increase the number of science majors and enhance the science literacy of all Skidmore students.

14. Begin implementation of Science Plan.

- Continue to engage community about and seek input on the Science Plan.
- Continue to develop curricular and pedagogical strategies to increase scientific literacy of our students.
- Submit invited grant application to HHMI.
- SWG to develop plan regarding program implications of Science Vision.
- Draft evaluation plan of existing science facilities.

- Seek expanded capacity to support pre-professional advising.
- Create coordinated fundraising plan to support the creation of experiential learning opportunities for all students.
- Develop programming options to support future increase in pre-orientation program participation.
- Expand Career Jam and SkidBiz programs.
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Administrative responsibility: Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Special Programs, Vice President for Advancement.

16. Implement process for collecting and distributing five-years-out post-graduation information (e.g., graduate school, employment data).

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

17. Expand support for students interested in graduate and pre-professional school in the Career Development Center with the hire of the new associate director.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

Take better advantage of the resources and capacity for innovation in the Office of the Dean of Special Programs (ODSP) to support the relevant initiatives identified under this Goal (and others, as appropriate).

18. Continue to enhance summer conference and institute operations.

- Enhance summer conferences and institutes in ODSP; consider expanded summer programming (in light of Northwoods and Scribner construction).
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Increase global awareness across the community in order to sensitize all Skidmore

We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed,

- Support the work of the Campus Life and Student Culture Task Force.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

34. Review original plan to return the Opportunity Program to larger space in Student Services area (Weicking move is temporary).

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

*Develop,
our ability to function as a socially and environmentally responsible corporate citizen.*

35. Conduct new economic impact study.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President

Administrative Responsibility: President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

38. Continue Participation in the New York Six Consortium, supported by the Mellon Foundation, to explore partnerships and collaborations with Colgate, Hamilton, Hobart and William Smith, St. Lawrence, and Union.

- Areas of potential collaboration to be worked include information technology, acquisition of goods and services, sustainability, student engagement, faculty and staff development, and intercultural literacy.

Administrative Responsibility: President with support from Cabinet.

39. Work with the Board of Trustees and other members to ensure a smooth and effective transition in the position of Board Chair.

Administrative Responsibility: President.

Develop and enhance both our key financial resources and our capacity to manage them.

40. Continue to review and enhance Admissions and Financial Aid policies and practices in support of enrollment goals (including academic excellence, with diversity a component of excellence) and within targeted budgetary guidelines.

- Continue to award need-based aid based on individual circumstances; continue Joint Appeals Committee (admissions and financial aid) to review requests for re-evaluation of need-based awards; institute appropriate measures for returning students late in submitting financial aid applications.
- Continue to analyze enrollment and financial aid trends for applications and yield.
- Work with enrollment management strategists to develop predictive model for enhanced recruitment and enrollment projections.
- Re-evaluate, in consultation with IPPC Subcommittee on Admissions and Financial Aid, role in enrollment planning.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

41. Complete analysis of current discount rate parameter.

- Compare current discount rate to peer institutions and analyze impact on enrollment goals if discount rate were raised by additional financial aid.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

42. Continue implementation of Banner Student Records system.

- Enhance operational efficiency and capability in recruiting, selecting, and enrolling the class.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

43. Achieve fundraising targets to support strategic initiatives and prepare for next campaign in 2014.

- Raise \$7 Million for Annual Fund.
- Raise \$20 Million in total gifts.
- Increase visit numbers by 25%.
- Increase prospect pool by 30% over next three years.
- Increase FOPs by 10% (focus on mid-level donors and launch young FOP initiative).
- Expand Legacy Society members by 20% over three years.
- Review key internal processes and systems (database, gift receipting and acknowledgement, prospect tracking and management).
- Expand volunteer structure and volunteer supports (launch new Annual Fund National Committee).

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

Achieve and maintain competitive compensation for Skidmore faculty, staff, and administrators; enhance our ability to support their professional development.

44. Continue to implement the Total Comprehensive Compensation Framework.

- Continue efforts to implement the Total Comprehensive Compensation Framework goal of bringing both salaries and benefits of all Skidmore employees to our targets in relation to appropriate external comparison groups.

Administrative Responsibility: Cabinet.

45. Enhance educational and peer mentoring programs for all employees.

Administrative Responsibility: President with support from Cabinet.

Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.

46. Filene Hall renovation.

of former heating plant building).

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

49. Continue to address facilities planning for academic space.

- Plan for classroom and office space for next three to five years. (VPAA/DOF)
- Coordinate Campus Plan with Academic Plan. (VPAA/VPFA)

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty

**55. Improve the
Similar Properties.**

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