

The “climate” of the Skidmore community establishes the overall context for our students’ educational journey – a context that can reinforce or impede their efforts, and ours. For our students also learn through the messages we send to one another by how we interact and function as a community. This is one reason why we place such emphasis on being a respectful, inclusive, and caring community. Through our ordinary interactions, all of us model the behavior we believe to be appropriate within our community. The good news is that even casual encounters at Skidmore tend to be marked by a noticeable spirit of friendliness and civility. Our alumni frequently comment on the importance of this aspect in their own experiences here, and they are gratified to know that the Skidmore of today continues to be a caring community in which personal relationships still matter. Visitors to campus (including prospective students and their families) and parents often report similar perceptions and sometimes contrast what they see here with what they have noticed at other colleges, reminding us that we must never take for granted the prevalence of such a positive climate within a college community. I believe that what could be discounted as merely a superficial display of manners, in fact, reflects a deeper commitment to the way we express our fundamental educational values in a context of respect for one another.

But we can afford neither to be self-congratulatory nor complacent, because, unfortunately, not everyone at the College experiences our community in these positive ways. Some of our

with intellectual and personal discomfort. In other words, the very nature of the academic enterprise requires that we do not place too high a value on anyone's feeling "comfortable" – a term frequently invoked in discussions of community and inclusion. But we can ask students to participate actively and fully in the challenging work of liberal education only to the extent they are able to trust that, regardless of their identity or background, they truly are valued members of the community, that their participation matters. Alternatively put, students cannot embrace the (sometimes quite personal) risks involved in liberal learning if they feel that the conversation itself places in question their personal identity, status in a particular classroom, or standing in the larger community.

constitute the extended Skidmore community. Because of this complexity, we are in effect a *community of communities*. Each of us is a member of multiple groups based on our interests, affinities, and our work. These groups overlap, intersect, and interact in myriad ways, and together they make up the College. Our students, however, sometimes express a longing for a stronger and more pervasive sense of campus unity: a personal experience of belonging to the greater whole that is Skidmore College. Wanting to feel a genuine sense of belonging and connection to the greater whole is both reasonable and laudable. Perhaps such a sense of connection is best achieved through understanding and valuing one's own contribution to our

vigilant to ensure that they are bringing every student into the conversation and they are not, inadvertently, signaling to some that their voices are less valued than others. The same expectation also extends to public settings, where the act of silencing voices can take overt and more obvious forms, including intimidation or the threat of disruption. Political action and even protest certainly can – and, no doubt, should – have a place in our institutional life. But one implication of the principles articulated above is that, typically, political protests should take place in different times and “spaces” from those devoted to inquiry, deliberation, or decision-making. At the same time, we must acknowledge that, for better or worse, it is exactly these

We are all inherently fallible beings. In conjunction with our fundamental commitment to the values of critical thought, inclusiveness, openness, and respect in our discourse

Following are some of the opportunities that are already present to build community at Skidmore, as well as some of the initiatives included in the 2013-14 “Action Agenda” that speak directly to the themes developed above:

- The strategic planning process that begins this year in earnest will engage the entire Skidmore community.
- Founder’s Day: we will plan to reinstitute a community-wide event that brings everyone on campus together for fellowship and fun.
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Strategic Action Agenda Items 2013-14

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the expected date of completion for each of the following projects is June 1, 2014.

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.

Project/Action Steps

! *Enhance institutional structure to support academic excellence.*

1. **Develop activities to realize the potential value of consortial relationships.**
 - Implement ongoing plans for Connect NY.
 - Implement Teagle grant on blended learning.
 - Coordinate with NY Six on Mellon grant proposal.
 - Discuss possibilities for collaboration with NY Six around inclusive hiring.
 - Explore NY Six collaborative search for a desktop web-conferencing tool.
 - Complete implementation of NY Six MediaShare, streamlining media solutions for sharing digital video across institutions.

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

2. **Enhance faculty resources to deliver the academic program.**
 - Recruit 14 tenure-track faculty members with a continued emphasis on increasing the diversity of the faculty.
 - Review the use of faculty in contingent appointments.
 - Continue to address the concerns of faculty in contingent appointments.
 - Operationalize the new “Dean’s Card Evaluation Form.”
 - Hold a second “Academic Summit” in January.
 - Initiate Second-Year Faculty Learning Community.

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

3. **Develop curriculum and academic programs.**
 - Review current general education curriculum through Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP).
 - Continue to support course development opportunities around Goal II.
 - Study recommendations of Course Cap Subcommittee of CEPP and Curriculum Committee; plan for possible phased implementation of reduced caps.
 - Implement ICARUS/HELIOS program and identify funding for it.

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

4. Review Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) Program.

- Complete a plan to restructure the MALS program.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

5. Enhance Skidmore's capacity for academic assessment.

- Present Assessment Subcommittee (AS) report and list of recommendations for improving climate for faculty and students to the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC).
- Collaborate with CEPP to formulate a plan for assessment of general education (the GSLD).
- Design and implement a pilot assessment of students' visual communication across the disciplines, with the additional goal of building a consensus among faculty on the role, importance, and sites of our students' learning about visual communication.
- Work with chairs on departmental assessments to ensure 100% of departments are continuing to progress through the assessment cycle, with an emphasis on direct assessments of departmental goals, making use of information gained from assessments, and integrating departmental goals and assessments with the GSLD as appropriate.
- Begin assessment outside of departments and programs, starting with Study Abroad.
- Work with an appropriate faculty member or group (CEPP) to design assessment of quantitative reasoning and science literacy.
- Continue efforts to pilot e-portfolios.
- Begin preparation for the Middle States self-study.

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

! *Increase support for research and creative activity across the faculty career.*

6. Coordinate support of faculty development.

- Establish Chairs/Program Directors' Workshops.
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! *Strengthen our system of shared governance and our capacity for developing leadership throughout the College.*

7. Continue a community conversation about our goals for shared governance and the effectiveness of our current structures and procedures.

- Cultivate leadership skills and provide leadership development for institutional academic leaders, including department chairs, program directors, and other academic professionals.
- Address revisions to Faculty Handbook, especially to increase clarity regarding standards for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.
- Support the work of the Faculty Workload Working Group.

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

! *Enhance intelle*

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

10. Continue implementation of Science Plan.

- Complete Schematic

14. Partner with the Associate Director of pre-professional and graduate study in the Career Development Center to support student preparation for graduate and professional school.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs.

15. Support the development and implementation of the sophomore program.

- Work with campus partners to articulate a comprehensive sophomore program based on the success of several events piloted in 2012-2013.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs.

16. Recruit and hire a new director of the Career Development Center.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs.

Goal II – ~~2012-14~~

19.

- Refocus travel seminars around student interests to better attract under-represented groups and infuse intercultural understanding and engagement across the curriculum.

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

22. Enhance educational and peer mentoring programs regarding diversity for all employees.

- Continue diversity and inclusion training for members of the campus working with Romney Associates to institute a “Respectful Workplace Program.”

Administrative Responsibility: President’s Cabinet.

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.

Projects/Action Steps

- ! *Foster pedagogical innovation relating to responsible citizenship; support*

25. Advance the work of the Community Dialogs project.

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- Complete the construction of Phase II.
Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

29. Complete review of Case Center and create long-range plan for space usage and improvement.

- Review architectural building concept design.
- Create long-range plan for space usage and improvements.
Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs.

30. Seek to identify new sources of revenue, particularly additional endowment, as part of the new Comprehensive Campaign to support operations.

- Set campaign goal for \$50-60 million in new endowment for financial aid, internships, and research collaborations.
Administrative Responsibility: President, Vice President for Advancement, and President's Cabinet.

31. Prepare for next Comprehensive Campaign.

- Complete recruitment of campaign committee.
- Complete campaign plan including goals, timelines, structure, communications plan, and policies.
- Seek formal Board vote to enter into a campaign.
- Develop key communications for first year including campaign name, logo, and look and materials for Center for Integrated Sciences, Financial Aid, Annual Fund, and Transitions and Transformations-related goals.
Administrative Responsibility: President, Vice President for Advancement.

32.

- Finalize program, concept, schematic design, and phasing plan.
- Finalize “business plan” for funding Science building project.
- Launch fundraising program of \$100 million with goal to complete by 2016.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Finance and Administration, with support from President and President’s Cabinet.

36. Saisselin Art Building renovation.

- Complete phased construction renovation of Saisselin Art Building.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

37. Address Admissions facilities needs.

- Develop both building and financing plans for re-location of Admissions and Financial Aid offices to a new facility on the west side of North Broadway.
- Present updated plans to the Board of Trustees for approval by May Board meeting.

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

38. Develop the planning for Phase I of the Athletic Master Plan.

- Complete work to identify the space availability and needs for a new cardio/weight room and additional locker room space located in the Williamson Sports Center.
- Complete programming and concept design for the Tennis Center.
- Identify the costs to accomplish these facility additions and improvements.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

39. Complete planning for renovations for Health and Counseling Center renovations in Jonsson Tower.

- Propose capital budget items to fund the completion of the renovations.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

40. Complete final fundraising for the Valentine Boathouse.

- Advance the Valentine Boathouse project to the permitting phase.
- Raise a minimum of \$275,000 to complete Phase I, \$600,000 to complete Phase II, or \$910,000 to complete the project.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Vice President of Advancement.

! *Develop and enhance relationships essential to the Skidmore community.*

41. Engage the Skidmore community in a comprehensive effort to develop the next *Strategic Plan*.

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