



## Strategic Renewal: Reframing our Priorities at the Midpoint of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Action Agency [2(r)-4 -0.002 Tw 0.435 0 Td [(co)13(n) e.” While the framework for the on and off-campus purpose was the same to engage the larger Skidmore community and the values articulated in our “Mission Statement” and to do to further enhance the already considerable value (term) of a Skidmore degree for all of our graduates. yielded a rich collection of ideas that reinforced our sharper strategic focus

<sup>2</sup>This document is available on the website of the Office of the President under the “Strategic Plan” link:



curricular connections between business and the arts and reach into the world as well. Lastly, we opened the splendid new Arthur Zankel Music Center, which exemplifies Skidmore's continuing commitment to excellence in the arts.

to demonstrate new ways the value of a Skidmore education through effective assessment that will encompass not only the undergraduate years but also the lives of our alumni. Taken as a whole, the College offers to prospective students a noteworthy combination of distinguishing attributes (see below). To the extent that we can further strengthen these attributes, we will improve our standing in the competition to attract successive generations of new students.

In order to seize the opportunities before us, we need to continue to be very smart institutionally—to make the best strategic decisions regarding what we will do and what we will not do. We cannot assume that the economic recovery will progress without further setbacks. But even assuming that it does continue, we still will confront many serious and ongoing challenges: persistent public concern about the price and value of expensive liberal arts colleges, reduced numbers of high school graduates within the geographical regions from which we historically have drawn the largest proportion of new students (most notably, the Northeast), and increasing skepticism among the U.S. population at large about the value of liberal education itself. These factors portend an increasingly competitive context for admissions recruitment.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, some have questioned the continuing economic viability of expensive liberal arts colleges in general, and especially those such as Skidmore that remain undercapitalized relative to their quality and ambitions.

To move forward, we must resist any temptation to regard our recent experience as a one time event now receding into the past. Through the efforts and sacrifices of the entire campus community, we have taken important initial steps toward reestablishing our budget on a sustainable footing so that it again can include appropriate investments in personnel, programs, and our physical plant, as well as financial aid. But even so, the second five years of the Strategic Plan—and in all likelihood, the life of the College for many years beyond—will be shaped, in part, by significantly more constrained resources than were available either at the time of the Plan's development or during the early years of its implementation. In short, we simply do not have the option of reverting to a "business as usual" mindset, returning to an approach to our work that was more tenable prior to the economic downturn. Skidmore's future will depend upon our ability to internalize this new reality—to continue combining creative thought with discipline. It also will depend upon our ability to add significantly to our endowment and further enhance our fundraising, especially, to defray the cost of financial aid that inevitably will rise over time. Most of all, it will depend upon our continuing ability to add to the educational value our students and alumni receive from the College.

### Skidmore's Most Valued and Differentiating Attributes

In order to attract successive generations of students who can take full advantage of what we offer,

students to pursue independent research or creative work, the high value placed on academic achievement and personal development, and the opportunity for students to develop meaningful, lifelong friendships with both classmates and teachers. More broadly, we offer an education that prepares our graduates for continued learning, gives them the ability to master change in an increasingly complex world and points them toward a life of purpose, achievement, and meaning. As one of the nation's premier liberal arts colleges, Skidmore will continue to uphold and promote these and related elements of student-centered liberal arts education at its best.

Other familiar characteristics of a Skidmore education, which also are highly prized by students, parents, and alumni, do more to differentiate us from other small liberal arts colleges. These





and it is both a category heading and referenced in the introduction to the “Goals for Student Learning”:

Our goals emerge in particular from our collective sense of a Skidmore education as a transformative experience. [Emphasis mine.] We want our students to acquire both knowledge and capabilities that enable them to initiate and embrace change and apply their learning lifelong in new contexts. We believe that this learning takes place throughout our students’ experience, both inside the classroom and out, on campus and off.

It is important that we regard this concept not as an evocative metaphor but rather as a concrete expectation of a fundamental change in the nature of students’ lives that occurs as a consequence of their Skidmore educational experience. This transformation should be itself a deep seated and abiding alteration of who they are, how they view the world, and how they are prepared to interact with it. Moreover, the “scope” of this change should be proportional



- Goal I – Student Academic Engagement Fostering innovative curricular and pedagogical thinking and new opportunities for students (e.g., for collaborative research), especially as they relate to the “Goals for Student Learning and Development.” We will continue our science planning, with special emphasis on raising the scientific literacy of all Skidmore students. And it is time for us to become more intentional in further developing our capacity to make good on our claim that “Creative Thought Matters” by attending more intentionally to this value in our curricula and individual courses.
- Goal II – Intercultural and Global Understanding Continuing to develop the Skidmore curriculum, the pedagogical skills of our faculty, and the inclusiveness of our campus community to enable our students to achieve the knowledge and skills relating to intercultural and global understanding that are so crucial to achieving success in today’s world. We also need to identify specific learning goals relating to these issues and build upon the good work that already has been done, for example, by faculty members and





Priority Initiatives



- Enhance the campus residential environment, with special attention to common spaces.
- Increase support for athletics, fitness, and wellness.
- Develop, broaden, and deepen the College's connections to the local community; enhance our ability to function as a socially and environmentally responsible corporate citizen.

## Goal IV – Independence and Resources

We will preserve Skidmore's independence by developing the resources required to realize our aspirations.

### Priority Initiatives

- Continue to develop institutional capacity for effective planning and proactive internal communication. [SAA 066]
- Develop and enhance our key financial resources and our capacity to manage them.
- Achieve and maintain competitive compensation for Skidmore faculty, staff, and administrators; enhance our ability to support their professional development.
- Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.
- Develop and enhance those relationships essential to the Skidmore community.
- Develop and enhance the "equity" in the Skidmore name.
- Cultivate a broader positive awareness of Skidmore within local, regional, and national populations. [SAA 066]

# Strategic Action Agenda Items 2010-11

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the expected date of completion for each of the following projects is June, 2011.

## 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. Develop and implement plan to provide leadership for registrarial and institutional research functions.

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

6. Develop plan to complete "Optimization" study (aligning size of faculty and student body for optimal educational experience).

Administrative Responsibility: Acting President (spring 2011).

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 foundation courses.
  - Intercultural literacy- present audit of intercultural courses to CEPP and revise criteria for CR courses; develop assessment rubrics for intercultural literacies, study abre 0 0 11.04 144 567.84 Tm [(A)10(d)5(m)22(in)5(is)3(tr)12(a)3(t)8ort.





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.

15. Begin implementation of Science Plan.

- Continue to educate community about and seek input on the Science Plan.
- Develop science literacy courses.
- Draft evaluation plan of existing science facilities.
- Develop new infrastructure plan for science facilities based on evaluation of existing science facilities and program planning for new facilities.
- Develop fundraising plan for science initiatives.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for  
Advancement

- Increase our effectiveness in helping our graduates plan and prepare for their post Skidmore lives.

16. Constitute and charge working group to develop plan for comprehensive post baccalaureate experience.

- Faculty-student research opportunities.
- Develop plan for increasing the number and support for High Impact Experiences that enhance post-baccalaureate opportunities (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, etc.)
- Develop coordinated fundraising plan to established funded internships (Sophomore Experience).
- Enhance support of faculty advising regarding High Impact Experiences.
- Alumni networking.
- Support for national fellowship applicants.
- Develop programming options to support future increase in participation program participation.
- Establish restructured Center for Career Development; search for and hire new director.
- Seek expanded capacity to support professional advising and advising regarding High Impact Experiences.
- By December 1, 2010, develop budget plan for new initiatives.
- Create coordinated fundraising plan to support the creation of High Impact Experiences for all students.

Administrative responsibility Dean of the Faculty, Acting Dean of the Faculty,  
Dean of Student Affairs, Vice President for  
Advancement

- 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).





- Continue to enhance the campus residential environment, with special attention to common spaces.

26. Advance the planning for Scribner Village replacement and seek Board approval to move to construction.

- Complete the design phase planning for the replacement of Scribner Village.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Student Affairs and Vice President for Finance and Administration

- Develop funding plan for replacement of Scribner Village (target additional \$5-8 million from fundraising and other sources)

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Advancement, Dean of Student Affairs, and Vice President for Finance and Administration

27. Assess continuing residential facilities needs (maintenance, renovation, and infrastructure needs).

- Create a plan for future sequencing for addressing residence hall facilities needs.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Student Affairs

28. Continue work with Case Council, architect, and Space Planning Working Group to establish Case Center as a campus/student center.

- Develop space program plan.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Student Affairs

- Increase support for athletics, fitness, and wellness.

29. Seek permanent funding for the Health Promotions Office

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Student Affairs and Vice President for Advancement

30. Strengthen prevention, education, and response related to issues of sexual misconduct and alcohol and other drugs

- Revise sexual misconduct policies; expand student dialogue on consensual sex and sexual misconduct.
- Evaluate new drug intervention program.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Student Affairs

31. Address athletic facilities needs.

- Complete comprehensive athletic facilities plan and develop timeline.
- Continue work to design and fundraise for new boathouse.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Student Affairs



information as necessary to enhance the community's collective strategic and financial literacy.

- Be attentive to community morale and include community building initiatives during difficult budgetary times.

Administrative Responsibility Cabinet

41. Initiate inter-campaign fundraising efforts and future campaign planning.
- Draft and launch three-year plan to end prior to launch of new campaign; grow number of Legacy Society members by 5%.
  - Draft inter-campaign fundraising plans to support sciences, athletics, financial aid, health and wellness, and post-graduate initiatives.
  - Review all core fundraising systems and protocols.
  - Enhance Volunteer Network (add 75 new volunteers, establish Annual Fund Committee, develop overall volunteer management plan).

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.

42. Continue to implement the Total Comprehensive Compensation Framework

- As we continue to move forward with the Total Comprehensive Compensation Framework goal of bringing both salaries and benefits of all Skidmore employees to the median of our peers (or better), give special attention to areas where current salary levels impede our ability to hire our first-choice candidates.
- Continue to monitor progress toward meeting targets in relation to appropriate external comparison groups.
- Initiate planning for comprehensive market salary survey for staff to be completed in academic year 2011-12, in conjunction with an overall study and benefits survey with emphasis on health care and the impact of scheduled federal mandated changes.
- Seek ways to create long-term funding for salary competitiveness including fundraising, and new initiatives.

Administrative Responsibility Cabinet

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

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Finance and Administration

- Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.<sup>18</sup>

44. Complete review of Campus Plan and determine long-term priorities for campus construction, renovation, and maintenance

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Finance and Administration and Cabinet

<sup>18</sup> See also items 3, 10, 14, 15, 20, 26, 27, 231, 32, and 34

## 45. Filene Hall renovation.

- Complete plans for and commence construction to renovate Filene Hall for Special Programs.
- Determine other related moves to Filene and areas affected by other moves.

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Finance and Administration, Dean of Special Programs, Dean of the Faculty, and Cabinet

## 46. Saisselin Art Building renovation.

- Complete plans for and commence construction to renovate Saisselin Art Building.

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Finance and Administration

## 47. Address Admissions facilities needs.

- Continue refurbishment of Eissner Admissions Cottage and grounds.
- Develop plans for relocation of Admissions and Financial Aid offices to location on the west side of North Broadway.

Administrative Responsibility Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Cabinet

## 48. Continue to address facilities planning for academic space.

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

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty, and Vice President for Finance and Administration (as above)

## 49. Continue to address deferred maintenance.

- Update list of deferred maintenance projects and prioritize items to be recommended in the annual budget process

Administrative Responsibility Vice President for Finance and Administration.

- Develop and enhance relationships essential to the Skidmore community.



