



Strategic Action Agenda: 2005-06

End-of-Year Progress Report – 15 May 2006

This document identifies key actions to be undertaken across the College during the 2005-06 academic year to advance the strategic objectives articulated in the *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College 2005-2015*.¹ Some of these steps were identified last year in discussions with the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC²), the Board of Trustees, or other members of the Skidmore community; others originated in the course of the FY '06 budget process. They have been grouped un
a lower priority. In any event, such changes should be kept to a minimum, and any addition or deletion must be consistent with the *Plan*. These decisions will be made in consultation with the IPPC and other groups and individuals as appropriate.

Completing the actions identified below will require the coordinated efforts of many people across the extended Skidmore community; likewise, they all will require some level of administrative guidance or action. Primary responsibility for overseeing each action item is therefore assigned to a senior administrator – typically, though not always, a member of the President’s Cabinet.

In general, these initiatives were scheduled to be completed during the 2005-06 academic year and so provide benchmarks to be used in assessing our progress in implementing the *Plan*. In many instances, however, the actions identified here represent just the first steps in a longer, multi-year process required to achieve an ambitious objective. As we move forward, we must strive continually to balance the values of ambition and patience, decisiveness and collaboration.

This End-of-Year report incorporates the earlier Mid-Year Report; new information has been denoted by an *asterisk*, and many items have been explicitly identified as multi-year initiatives.

Goal I page 2.

Goal II page 12.

Goal IIIpage 16.

Goal IVpage 22.

¹Ongoing routine operations (e.g., budget development, review of faculty, hiring and training of residence life staff), though crucial to the operation of the College, are generally not referenced in this document.
²This year, the IPC has been succeeded by the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC).

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

1. Launch new deanships.

Ensure a smooth transition for new Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Special Programs as they enter into the Skidmore community; enable and empower them to

Ø *Increase student academic engagement in the first year.*

4. Implement and support the First-Year Experience initiative.

Provide the initial set of Scribner Seminars for first-year students entering in Fall 2005; develop and implement strategies to provide coherence and engagement for students beyond the first semester such as common readings, spring events; continue to support development of faculty as mentors through workshops, brown bag lunches, pedagogy sessions, etc.; develop New-Student Orientation to reinforce values of engaged learning and responsible citizenship.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of the Faculty in collaboration with the Director of the First-Year Experience.

*** Achieved:** **F05 implementation of FYE involved 49 Scribner Seminars (including two London). Assessment of F05 FYE seminars and mentoring effort underway with support from Mellon Foundation. Assessment focus is on student satisfaction and student writing. Mellon award obtained that will support faculty development grants and workshops for mentoring and curriculum development in FYE in 06-07 and 07-08. Faculty Development workshop for F05 and F06 faculty conducted in Jan. 06; approximately 50 faculty participated. Residential Clusters are planned for F06 with SS participants living in same dorms. FYE Curriculum Development Workshop planned for May 06.**

5. Ensure appropriate staffing to support First-Year Experience.

Working with departments and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, ensure that new faculty positions are allocated in such a way as to guarantee staffing of course for first three years

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of the Faculty in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

***In progress:** **[Multi-year initiative] 47 seminars identified for 2006 (10 faculty repeating); staffing for seminars has begun to affect other programs; department chairs are aware of need to plan strategically. Staffing for SS for F06 is complete with 49**

with the Dean of the Faculty (DOF) and the science faculty to explore new ways to support external grant procurement. The DOF, in collaboration with the VPAA will

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Faculty in collaboration with Dean of Special Programs and the Vice President for

collaboration with the Chief Technology Officer and Vice President for Advancement. [See also #70, below.]

In progress: Work initiated; completion scheduled for Fall 2006.

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

20. Increase the size of the science faculty.

Determine the order of additions to the science faculty, complete first round of searches for identified interdisciplinary positions, and ensure that appropriate start-up funds and laboratory space are available for new hires.

Administrative Responsibility

development at the Tang. This item will be a focus of summer work to determine next steps.

23. Over the next five to ten years, enhance the admissions pool and improve yield for science students to make significant progress towards our goal of increasing the number of science majors from its current level of 12% to 25% of our student body.

In the 05-06 academic year complete the following initiatives:

- (Study the relationship of admissions data with ultimate choice of major, focusing especially on science and mathematics majors.
- (Identify feeder schools more likely to send us mathematics and science majors; pay special attention to schools in foreign countries or with significant populations of new immigrants. Develop on-campus programming for such schools and for others likely to become science/mathematics feeder schools.
- (Work with the Dean of the Faculty to make the most efficient use of faculty time in recruitment; engage alumni – and especially recent grads

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Support the faculty in the transition from advising to mentoring students, beginning with the Scribner Seminar instructors in the First-Year Experience. Provide opportunities for the faculty to mentor students in the Seminars' flexible fourth credit hour, with support from academic departments and programs. Create an environment in which students develop mentoring relationships with multiple faculty members over the course of four years.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of Studies.

In progress. [Multi-year initiative]

Increase opportunities for mentoring of students by alumni, parents, trustees, et al. Seek ways to involve broader constituencies in mentoring of students – especially as regards choice of career and plans for post-graduate education (e.g., perhaps make this topic a focus of a Board meeting). Develop closer working relationship between Office of Academic Affairs and Advancement to take full advantage of opportunities in the extended Skidmore community.

Explore new ways to bring representatives from academic departments and programs together with Career Services and Alumni Affairs to pursue efforts already underway with such initiatives as the Mellon grant and other initiatives as appropriate.

Increase the early awareness (i.e., awareness in the Sophomore and Junior years) of Skidmore students regarding post-graduate opportunities such as graduate or professional school, as well as fellowship opportunities available to help support such continued study.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs and Dean of the Faculty in collaboration with the VPAA.

In progress: [Multi-year initiative] We are now in the second year of a Mellon grant that involves 10 events (5 per semester) hosted by academic departments that bring faculty, alumni, and current students together on campus to discuss the career opportunities available to graduates from the department. The grant also supports publication of departmental booklets profiling alumni and careers. The Mellon Fellow currently working on this project will be on sabbatical next year; we will name a new fellow in the coming months.

Ø *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).*

26. Build new administrative structures to enhance coordination between the Office of the Dean of Special Programs and the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.

Through regular meetings with the Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Special Programs, discussions at Vice President for Academic Affairs' Senior Staff of current and future initiatives of both offices, enhance the working relationship between these two offices as facilitated by the new administrative structure. If possible, develop one new, jointly sponsored venture as a pilot program (building off the success of McCormack residency).

Administrative responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In progress: weekly discussions occurring; some joint projects under way (e.g., science lectureship).

27. Manage the transition in leadership in the Office of Dean of Special Programs.

Specific objectives include the following:

- (Develop a comprehensive plan to sustain and strengthen existing programs, initiate new programs, and advance program development across disciplines and interest areas by refining the goals and objectives of Special Programs as a whole.

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Administrative responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

28. Increase financial support for Special Programs.

Raise \$3-5M of \$10M Campaign goal for Special Programs.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement in collaboration with the Dean of Special Programs.

***In progress:** Campaign priorities currently being refined.

29. Develop more systematic and effective connections between Office of the Dean of Special Programs and the Office of Admissions.

Establish Admissions/Office of the Dean of Special Programs steering committee to meet regularly to develop opportunities for engagement between Admissions and Special Programs.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and the Dean of Special Programs.

***In progress:** A newly established position in ODSP has been assigned responsibility for this arena. Regular communication continues between Admissions Liaison and Special Programs Office regarding upcoming programs and collaboration.

Goal II – Intercultural and Global Understanding

We will challenge every Skidmore student to develop the intercultural understanding and global awareness necessary to thrive in the complex and increasingly interconnected world of the 21st Century.

Projects/Action Steps

Ø *Increase global awareness across the community in order to sensitize all Skidmore students to a complex, diverse, and interdependent world.*

30. Develop and implement a plan for regular and thorough evaluation of Skidmore Programs and Skidmore-Approved Programs for study abroad; develop advising tools and communication capacities as required to support the new study-abroad structure.

Work with the Advisory Committee on International Study (ACIS) to develop guidelines and a schedule for regular site visits to overseas programs. Develop meaningful ways to disseminate information regarding Approved Programs and home school fees to ensure that faculty and staff are able to work effectively with students who are interested in study abroad. Continue to work with faculty to address department-specific and program-specific needs regarding curriculum integration with overseas programs. Achieve greater balance in enrollments over the semesters.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of the Faculty, Director of International Programs, and the Dean of Special Programs.

Ø *Enhance the diversity of our student population while providing the resources necessary to support all of our students in meeting our educational objectives.*

33. Build upon the progress of the previous year (04-05) toward increasing the percentage of students of color within the Skidmore population.

Increase the annual HEOP/AOP entering class from the previous norm of 25 students and the '04-05 total of 34 new students to 40 new students for Fall 2005 (**achieved**) and maintain that level in the future. Provide necessary programmatic support within HEOP/AOP to accommodate the additional students.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] A phon-a-thon for faculty of color to contact accepted students of color was added this April to other ongoing yield initiatives by the Admissions and HEOP/AOP Offices. Five faculty contacted 101 accepted students of color. Faculty presence in Discovery Weekend was increased. Past emphasis on diversity in recruitment from Admissions staff continued.
Results: First-year class entering F06 includes 20% students of color.

Specific initiatives include

(Launching the Kettering-AOP partnership.

trends, with emphasis on targeting growth in multicultural populations.

In progress.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and the Dean of Student Affairs.

34. Increase the College's resources for need-based student aid.

Raise \$5M to support student opportunity programs (financial aid and operating funds) and \$10M of \$40M Campaign goal for student aid.

Administrative responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

***Achieved: \$6.6M raised; \$13.5M in progress; \$5M planned.**

35. Enhance the effectiveness of the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Complete the hire of a new Director of the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA). In preparation for doing so, assess the past effectiveness of the Office of MSA as a basis for determining what changes in mission, staffing, or title (if any) are indicated for the future. Ensure that the position is adequately defined and placed at an appropriate level so as to attract the strongest possible candidate pool. Mentor the new Director and, in so doing, support effective collaboration between this office and the new Director of Culture-Centered Inquiry, as well as with the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs in collaboration with the Dean of the Faculty.

***Initiative:** [Multi-year initiative] We have hosted colleagues from Mount Holyoke, Study Circles Resource Center, and Project Democracy to consider changes in the MSA office mission and program. Search is in process, in coordination with the search for a Director of Culture-Centered Inquiry in Academic Affairs. We are prepared to defer the search for a year, if necessary to make the right hire.

Ø Enhance the diversity of our faculty and other employee populations and enhance their skills that relate to achieving this Goal.

36. Continue efforts to recruit, attract, and retain candidates for faculty positions who enhance the diversity of the faculty.

Continue work with department chairs and program directors to ensure that ads for positions are written so as to attract the broadest possible applicant pool. Where feasible, explore interdisciplinary position descriptions to expand candidate pools; signal special interest in candidates experienced in and committed to working with students from underserved populations. Ensure that chairs, directors, and colleagues are working in advance to establish and solidify professional networks to help attract broadly diverse applicant pools. Ensure that offers of compensation are competitive. In selected instances and for compelling reasons relating to the needs of the

chair, whether any given hiring pool is sufficiently strong (considering all relevant factors) to advance the search at any given stage (e.g., from compiling applications to inviting candidates to campus or from campus interviews to making an offer).

Administrative responsibility: Dean of the Faculty in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Department Chairs have met to share progress and strategies for increasing diversity of pools in searches; DOF monitored the diversity of pools for all candidates invited for on-campus interviews. Four of eight successful hires in 05-06 are members of underrepresented groups.

37. Continue efforts to recruit, attract, and retain candidates for administrative positions who enhance the diversity of the campus community.

The Assistant Director for Equal Employment Opportunity and Workforce Diversity will work with senior administrators and directors to ensure that ads for positions are written so as to attract the broadest possible applicant pool. Senior administrators will be responsible for ensuring that heads of hiring units work in advance to establish and solidify professional networks to help attract broadly diverse applicant pools. Ensure that offers of compensation are competitive. Empower the Cabinet officer responsible for a hiring unit to close a search that has not developed an appropriately diverse applicant pool.

Administrative responsibility: President in collaboration with members of the President's Cabinet and hiring units.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Search for Assistant Director for Equal Employment Opportunity and Workforce Diversity completed.

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

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

38. Encourage pedagogical innovation relating to responsible citizenship.

Create opportunities for faculty members to develop new ways to interrogate the concept of responsible citizenship within courses and enhance curricula in ways that encourage our students to engage this value actively (e.g., the SENCER project in the sciences). In a parallel effort, develop creative ways for faculty members to fulfill their service responsibilities by working with students and student groups in co-curricular settings to foster responsible citizenship – both on and off campus.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of the Faculty in collaboration with the Dean

of Student Affairs.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] DOF sponsored SENCER pedagogy workshop with invited faculty leader from Hamilton College; approximately 35 faculty members attended. Following several meetings with Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Special Programs, and the Mellon Fellows, we have agreed on the use of some private funding to strengthen and coordinate these efforts in the Office of the DOS next year.

39. Expand opportunities for service learning and student volunteer work.

Continue the Mellon Service-Learning Initiative. Expand and strengthen support from Student Affairs for student internships and volunteer opportunities.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs in collaboration with the Dean of the Faculty.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Mellon Service Learning Fellow has developed a proposed Center for Civic Learning, currently under discussion. Additional community service programs developed (e.g., Katrina relief) for winter and spring break. Collaboration underway between DOF and DOSA to provide expanded support for service learning coordinator

40. Ensure the alignment of institutional expectations of faculty with the system of faculty review and reward.

Work with CAPT to review (and, as necessary, modify) *Handbook* criteria and standards for faculty contract renewal, promotion, and tenure to ensure that they accurately reflect institutional expectations for teaching, research, and service.

Administrative responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative) Interim VPAA will continue working with CAPT on new *Handbook* language.

41. Place additional emphasis on citizenship in the Admissions process.

Review admissions materials to determine if the value of responsible citizenship receives sufficient attention. Highlight community service in presentations to prospective students. Determine whether to add a question to the application supplement asking applicants to reflect on community and citizenship. Continue assigning both IQR and CQR to applicants. Track the effects of these changes in yield, in the nature of the matriculant pool, and in the subsequent performance of matriculated students.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid in collaboration with the VPAA.

In progress: Question added to this year's application asking applicants to reflect on ways in which they would contribute as citizens to the Skidmore community; as applicants are evaluated judgment of "strength of character" is included in admissions rating.

Ø *Enhance residential learning.*

discuss plans at the May 2006 meeting.

45. Complete the new student residential complex.

Complete the new student residential complex for juniors and seniors on time (by Fall '06) and on budget. Assign an appropriate name to the complex.

Administrative responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Project remains on time and within budget. Students have been assigned to the complex for F06.

46. Complete the sale of Moore Hall.

Identify a suitable buyer for Moore Hall and complete that transaction.

Administrative responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Agreement is in hand, with projected closing Fall 2006. Decisions of City Planning Board have presented challenges for buyer, with potential implications for the College. Negotiations remain under way. We still anticipate closing on a sale agreement F06. No Skidmore students will be housed there following summer 2006.

47.

Ensure smooth transition of new Athletic Director into Skidmore community and enable her to establish herself effectively in her new role.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

***Achieved:** New Athletic Director is in place; transition complete.

50. Implement NCAA Women and Minority Leadership grant.

Support new Athletic Director in launching search, completing hire, and mentoring of new athletic administrator to be supported by this grant.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

Achieved.

51. Increase support for intercollegiate athletics, intramurals, health, and wellness programs.

Provide additional support for both operating and capital investments in athletics, health, and wellness programs.

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In conjunction with plans to renovate dining facilities and revise dining plan, emphasize freshness of produce and foodstuffs. Where possible seek local producers and sources of organic produce, etc. Involves students actively into this process.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Plan will be implemented (assuming approval of revised “Optimization” budget).

Ø *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.*

54. Consider the establishment of a retirement community on College land.

Review the report prepared by the former CFO. Working with the Board of Trustees, determine the next step in the decision process with regard to this possible project.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

Achieved: Report was reviewed with the appropriate Board committee; project tabled for time being.

55. Enhance the College’s capacity to function effectively, as a corporate citizen and a good neighbor, within our local community.

Develop ways to engage with the local community more deliberately and effectively – to share the benefits represented by the College and to gain the benefit of good advice as we make decisions that have implications beyond our borders. Develop additional capacity in the President’s Office to attend to issues of community relations. [See also ##68 and 69, below.]

Administrative Responsibility: President in collaboration with the Vice President for Advancement.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Meetings held during second semester with neighborhood association relating to plans for athletic fields (see #52, above). Date set for meeting between President’s Cabinet and City Council. Hiring of new Executive Director for the Office of the President will provide additional staffing to assist with this initiative.

Goal IV ~~TD()Tj0.1.115TD() Indepar ence and Resources (BDC BT/TT2 1 Tf00Tc -01.14~~

***Achieved: Phase I of analysis completed. Task Force recommendations accepted by IPPC and the President. Revised "Optimization"**

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

63. Continue the development of Annual Fund,

Reach \$5.5 million annual fund goal. Specific actions include the following:

- (Expand the middle tier (\$2,000-\$9,999) of donor base in Friends of the Presidents (FOP) program.
- (Enhance the success of reunion fundraising, particularly in Milestone reunions.
- (Increase participation of alumni in annual giving to 42-43%.
- (Increase attendance at Reunions (by 15%) and at regional alumni events.
- (Raise the profile of Skidmore Classic Horse Show; meet increased revenue target.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

***In progress:** We anticipating meeting financial goals. **Current status: \$4M in gifts (up \$380K); 27.1% in participation (down 450 donors).**

64. Complete the second phase of the Comprehensive Campaign.

Finalize plans for the Comprehensive Campaign (including creation of Campaign Executive Committee), complete solicitation plan, attain goal for FY '06: \$100M in commitments and gifts by 1 June 2006.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

***Achieved:** Campaign goal of \$10

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

***Achieved:** [Multi-year initiative] Phase I and Phase II completed; Phase III awaiting approval of revised “Optimization” budget. If proposed budget is approved, we will accelerate completion of Compensation Framework plan by one year. We anticipate substantial progress, especially in regard to faculty salaries. Additional and ongoing work remains to be done with all employee groups.

Ø *Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.*

66. Update Campus Master Plan.

Complete revision of Campus Master Plan, including space needs and space utilizations studies. Discuss the revised Master Plan widely within the College community, seeking input and making changes as necessary, before it is finalized. Develop a financial analysis indicating the probable cost of initiatives identified as having highest priority in the near term. Secure Board approval and begin implementation.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Land-use issue for retirement housing project resolved. Placement of new athletic fields resolved. Discussions of proposed revisions to commenced with IPPC; broader campus conversations will occur in F06. Board will review progress on Master Plan at May meeting. Completion still scheduled for Fall '06.

67. Address deferred maintenance.

Implement next phase of work to address issues of deferred maintenance. Finalize long-range schedule for completing this work.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Analysis remains in process. Several projects to be addressed (e.g., sprinklers added to Jonsson Tower) in FT07 budget.

68. Improve the College’s stewardship of the Skidmore North Woods.

Complete and implement a management plan for the Skidmore North Woods that balances the values of preservation and flexibility of use for the College’s immediate and long-term needs. Ensure effective management for appropriate educational and recreational uses by the Skidmore community and local residents. Communicate the results of this work effectively within the Skidmore community and beyond.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration in collaboration with President’s Cabinet.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Work is part of revised Campus Master Plan. Student interns hired for summer '06 to mark trails. Usage zones included in revised Master Plan. Work will continue in FY07.

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

69. Cultivate and strengthen relationships across the College and between the College and the Saratoga Springs community.

Develop a multi-year action plan to enhance key relationships across the College and with important external constituencies through improved communication and collaboration. Implement the first phase of the plan, focused on strengthening the relationship between the College and the local community. Document one important aspect of Skidmore's contribution to the region through an economic impact study.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement in collaboration with the President and the President's Cabinet.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] Economic impact study in process and nearing completion; outreach planned to new city government (see #55, above).

70. Improve communications with alumni – create a virtual alumni community.

Launch On-Line Alumni Community through College web site.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

Achieved: SkidNet web community launched.

Ø *Cultivate a broader positive awareness of Skidmore within local, regional, and national populations.*

71. Continue to develop ways to enhance broader awareness of the College – both within and beyond the American higher education community.

Administrative Responsibility: President.

*** In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] It is clear that initiatives on multiple fronts continue (Admissions, Advancement, Academic Affairs – e.g., grants, faculty presentations at conferences, etc.).

72. Improve our spring yield in the Admissions process.

Enhance our communication of information regarding student engagement in academic work and collaboration with faculty members at Skidmore to prospective students (especially admitted students) in the Admissions process.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

***In progress:** [Multi-year initiative] We revised the format for lunch on Accepted Candidates Days and invited the faculty to join

families for lunch. A total of approximately 35-40 faculty participated over the four Accepted Candidates Day programs.