



Skin In The Game

The Strategic Action Agenda: 2012-2013

This year's "Strategic Action Agenda" (SAA) calls for us to build upon the good work of the past and continue to enhance the value we offer to our students and alumni – value that is substantial, unique, and important to the world today. Over the past seven years, we have made considerable progress toward achieving our strategic goals by focusing on them consistently and with determination, even as we have faced both external and internal challenges. This year we will remain focused on maintaining our existing areas of curricular and programmatic excellence and supporting our efforts to help our students attain the key learning outcomes of a Skidmore education, even as we seek to increase our strength in selected areas as described throughout this document. Specifically, we will continue our emphasis from last year on the following strategic priorities:

1. diversity and inclusion;
2. science planning and the more thorough integration of science throughout the Skidmore curriculum; and
3. engaged liberal learning – preparing our students to be articulate exponents of their liberal education and affording them the experiences they need to help make the transition from college to the next phase of their lives.

Overall, as a context to the specific work referenced here, we will place renewed energy behind

admissions cycle, we saw a *decrease* in the percentage of families in our applicant pool not requesting aid, while the number of applicants seeking financial assistance remained constant relative to last year. An unprecedented financial aid budget of nearly \$36.7 M, representing a 13.7% increase over FY '12, enabled us to operate as though we were essentially “need-blind” for 75% of this admissions process. (And it is very important to emphasize that we meet the “full demonstrated need” of admitted students eligible for financial aid.) But with financial aid status becoming a factor in the remaining 25% of decisions, we were forced to move over 250 highly desirable admissions candidates from the admitted pool to the wait list, all because we had exhausted our financial aid capacity.⁴ Moreover, a 13+% rate of increase in our financial aid budget is simply not sustainable, absent a sudden and substantial increase in our endowment. In addition, though we have consistently resisted external pressures to increase our “merit aid” as a strategy for attracting desirable students, we are increasingly feeling disadvantaged in our competition with other institutions that do so.⁵ Concerns relating to these issues are further exacerbated by the continuing softness in the economy and, especially, the continuing erosion of the economic position of the U.S. middle class – which

Engaged Liberal Learning

We will continue to develop the Transition and Transformation initiative to ensure that all students have access to the full range of engaged liberal learning practices, both inside and outside of the classroom, that are needed to prepare them for success in their post-Skidmore lives. We also will expand our alumni and parent networking programs to provide more measurable benefits to our current students and our graduates as they make their way in their post-Skidmore lives.

Creative Thought Matters

As we look to our immediate work and begin to think forward to the next *Strategic Plan*, we

Funds realized through this effort will be allocated to support the College's highest strategic

Hall, and all other performance and exhibition spaces on campus. Our new residence facilities, which will be completed over the next two years, should further enhance our ability to attract new summer programs. We also have constituted a working group (comprising faculty members, administrators, trustees, and alumni) to explore the possibility of

Engaged Liberal Learning

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

Goal III – Informed, Responsible

Strategic Action Agenda Items 2012-13

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the expected date of completion for each of the following projects is June 1, 2013.

Goal I –

6. Identify financial support for digital resources position at the Tang.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

7. Enhance Skidmore's capacity for academic assessment.

- Re-launch the Assessment Steering Committee by December 31, 2012; establish membership and agenda.
- Continue to develop stronger, more effective assessments in all departments and programs. Make model assessments more available for departments to replicate by December 31, 2012.
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➤ *Strengthen our system of shared governance and our capacity for developing leadership throughout the College.*

10. 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 opportunities (trainings, workshops, etc.) for academic leaders, including department chairs, program directors, and other academic professionals.
- Address revisions to *Faculty Handbook*.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

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

11. Develop a plan for the College calendar, and establish a centralized system for scheduling College events other than regular classes.

- Determine scheduling rules, guidelines, processes, and policies.
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- Develop fundraising plan for science initiatives.
- Complete implementation of pilot program related to Scientific Literacy.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Advancement.



- Offer monthly programs focused on important decisions to make during the Sophomore year.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

19. Review Career Development Center assessments and implement appropriate programmatic enhancements.

- Pilot first year of peer Career Coach program in the Career Development Center. Coaches will deliver workshops in the residence halls, staff drop-in hours, and conduct resume reviews.
- Reduce student and alumni wait time for career counseling appointments.
- Collaborate with department chairs and faculty members to diversify career development program offerings across expanded group of industries, functions, and areas of interest.
- Grow Career Jam program to increase the number of volunteers and add multiple workshops to extend learning opportunities over a two-day period.
- Create Graduate School Expo to bring schools to campus for students to explore options in continuing their education after Skidmore.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

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

- *Renew the conversation about diversity both within the Skidmore faculty and broadly across the campus community; building upon the work of the Middle States review and other past efforts, establish clear educational objectives relating to this Goal and develop shared expertise in achieving them.*

20. Charge an appropriate group to develop a proposal for a campus-wide diversity and inclusion program.

Administrative Responsibility: President.

21. Increase the cultural competency in all Student Affairs areas.

- Implement the use of a survey tool to establish baseline of current divisional awareness level.
- Conduct follow-up meeting with multicultural organizational development consultant to advance action plans.
- Use divisional meetings to achieve 100% participation in Ally and IGR training.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

22. Share the new climate data from the Health Promotion Student Survey, continue to address campus climate issues.

- Create a strategy for disseminating the survey results.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

23. Identify Office of the Dean of Special Programs programming where we can influence diversity of faculty and participants and determine appropriate methodology for collecting diversity data.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim Dean of Special Programs.

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

24. Enroll an incoming class that is 20-24% domestic students of color and 5-7% international students.

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

- Initiate diversity and inclusion training for members of the campus working with Romney Associates. (Continuing work initiated by Cabinet in 2011-12, expand work in Spring 2013 to include a pilot program for faculty and staff participation in a combined, common program.)

31. Investigate proposed “Commons” in new townhouse complex (former Scribner Village)

- Identify key action items that will advance the highest priority strategic initiatives between now and May 31, 2015.
- In collaboration with key governance committees, articulate the process for developing the College's next strategic plan.

Administrative Responsibility: President, with support from Cabinet.

36. 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

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

45. Continue implementation of the Science Plan.

- Develop initial Program, Concept, Schematic Design, and Phasing Plan.
- Launch fundraising program of \$40-60 million with goal to complete by 2016.

Administrative Responsibility:

51. Develop fundraising plan for Phase I of Athletic Facilities plan.

- Develop preliminary timeline for Comprehensive Athletics Facilities Plan.
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