

Memorandum

To: Muriel Poston, Bob Turner, David Karp, David Vella, Mike West, Beau Breslin, Kim Marsella  
From: Sue Van Hook  
Date: August 30, 2007  
RE: Engaging the Skidmore Community in Focus the Nation

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From the FtN website: [www.focusthenation.org](http://www.focusthenation.org):

Focus the Nation is coordinating teams of faculty and students at over a thousand colleges, universities and K-12 schools in the United States, to collaboratively engage in a nationwide, interdisciplinary discussion about “**Global Warming Solutions for America**”. Focus the Nation will culminate January 31, 2008, in the form of national symposia held simultaneously at over a thousand campuses, places of worship, businesses, and other venues across the country. On that day, each Focus the Nation team will invite local, state and federal political leaders and candidates for office to come to campus and participate in a non-partisan, round-table discussion of global warming solutions. US Senators and members of congress, state representatives, mayors and city councilors, all will be receiving dozens of invitations to speak about global warming, from over a thousand institutions nation-wide. Every campus will also vote on their top five national priorities for global warming action, producing a campus-endorsed policy agenda for the 2008 elections.

From Skidmore’s Focus the Nation committee:

**Goal 3 of Skidmore’s Strategic Plan:** Informed Responsible Citizenship is why we have committed to participate in FtN (brainchild is Dr. Eban Goodstein, former Economics Prof).

We are planning events for January 31, 2008. We also realize a one day discussion is not enough to reach everyone on our campus. We see this as a year-long effort that includes many different activities. The committee has put forth **4 goals:**

1. Understanding- All members of the Skidmore community will understand the causes and consequences of global warming. (Keynote speaker, Jeff Goodell, author of Big Coal, Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand, Panel discussion Skidmore faculty)
2. Individual Awareness and Action- All members of the Skidmore community will recognize that they are making choices at all points of the day and that the sum of their decisions can have significant impact and that they are morally culpable. (Thermostats down, lights off, human powered transportation, carpooling, bussing, quick showers, etc – student clubs, faculty collaborations with clubs ie. SNAC, Monica’s and Una’s courses on food, Nutritionist.
3. Institutional Action Skidmore College will make an institutional change that reduces our carbon missions. (Publicizing geothermal, bus route subsidies, new initiatives?)
4. Educational- students will develop an appreciation of how to achieve societal change .

To accomplish these goals we have decided to focus on three themes: Recycling, Energy Use, and Our Food Supply.

Part of our commitment involves developing model legislation and voting on top 5 national priorities to address climate change. We are asking you to become involved. There will be a meeting for all interested in mid-September. Please stay tuned or speak to one of the committee members.