



**To:** Michael Ennis-McMillan and Cori Filson, Co-chairs, Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU), members of CIGU, and members of the Skidmore community

**From:** Philip A. Glotzbach, President

**Date:** 2 November 2011

**Re:** Response to the CIGU "Statement of Observations, Concerns, and Recommendations" (18 May 2011)

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Thank you for formulating the concerns and recommendations that you addressed to the Cabinet and me, and to IPPC, in your communication dated May 18, 2011. Having reflected at length about the issues you raised and having discussed them with various groups and individuals, I write at this time to provide a response.

As you know, we acknowledged receipt of your statement last spring, and Cabinet members took up the concerns immediately. But because IPPC had already held its final meeting of the 2010-11 academic year, we were not able to discuss your concerns in IPPC until this fall. Your statement was distributed for IPPC's initial meeting of the year (that committee includes 6 members who are new to the group this fall), and we discussed your correspondence at IPPC's second meeting of the year on 23 September 2011.

Let me say, first and most importantly, that I hear and take seriously your concerns, that Cabinet members hear and take seriously your concerns, and that IPPC hears and takes seriously your concerns. We all recognize that the statement comes from a place of wanting Skidmore to do better in advancing Goal II of the *Strategic Plan* – in other words, to have the reality of experiences on campus better match the aspirations we have articulated for ourselves.

More specific, to the concerns CIGU has raised, I agree that we have developed a body of data that reveals a number of concerns we need to address relating to the experiences of students, faculty, and staff of color at the College. Let me further acknowledge that, as your report states, we have heard many narratives in which “students of color and/or LGBTQ students tell us specifically, detailed, and emotionally painful ways how they are marginalized on campus, in the classroom, and in the community of Saratoga Springs.” We have heard these stories in reports from the Bias Response Group, in exit interviews with students of color, and in public meetings. You indicate your perspective that “as a community, we do not hear or believe the stories that we do not want to hear or believe.” I want to acknowledge here that for too long our campus community has not fully confronted the realities that these narratives and data convey. Although the underlying concerns are prominently addressed in the current *Strategic Plan* and we have made progress, there is still much more work for us all to do to overcome historical patterns of privilege that have prevented us from becoming the fully inclusive and welcoming community we wish to be. We need to move forward in ways that do not require those who have experienced difficult situations to continue to re-live those experiences. And *all* of us must

continue to challenge ourselves to participate honestly in difficult dialogues regarding these issues, to insure that we are actively listening to one another and that we are prepared to change our minds on the basis of what we hear. In short, we must get better as a community at hearing and understanding the information that is available to us, at acknowledging troubling patterns, and in moving to change situations that are inconsistent with our values and goals.

I also agree that we need to attend to the structures we have put in place to advance the work of Goal II and to be sure that we have – or further develop – the institutional capacity to support the work of Goal II on campus. As CIGU well knows, your committee is a key part of the structure we have created at the College to advance the work of intercultural and global understanding.

As you will note below, I look forward to further discussions with CIGU, and with the individuals who comprise the “diversity triad,” to consider whether the structures (now in place for approximately 4 years) are functioning as we envisioned them – and, if not, to consider what changes should be made.

Having acknowledged the frustrations expressed in CIGU’s opening paragraphs, I also want to acknowledge the progress the College has made with regard to Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*. That Goal – like any major strategic initiative articulated in any strategic plan – has been advanced in stages. When the *Plan* was published in 2005, most in our community recognized that our first order of business had to be increasing access for students of color. In that regard, Skidmore has made enormous progress. In the *Plan’s* first year, our student population included approximately 13% students of color, and international students made up less than 2% of our student body. By contrast, the class that entered in fall 2011 included 26% self-identified students of color (20% domestic students of color), 6% international students (with some overlap in students of color), and an additional 6% U.S. citizens holding a second passport – most of whom have spent most of their lives abroad.

We have made considerably less progress in increasing the numbers of faculty members of color and international faculty members. In 2005-06, ALANA faculty members represented 11% of our total faculty, since then those numbers have fluctuated between 12% and 13%. The fact that we have not been able to move beyond this plateau is deeply concerning. During this same time, the percentages of ALANA representation among the members of our staff have risen from 5% to 7% - progress, but still not sufficient in relation to our objectives. Furthermore, I must acknowledge immediately that we recently have seen the departure of several faculty members of color. In short, significant work remains to raise the diversity within our faculty and staff to levels approximating the diversity of our student body.

Let me turn now to the specific suggestions CIGU has offered. First, let me express the appreciation of Cabinet and IPPC that CIGU afforded us the courtesy of reporting the suggestions first to the Cabinet and IPPC, before sharing them more broadly with the campus community. As you know, at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of IPPC, when the group discussed your statement, IPPC expressed unanimous support for CIGU’s distributing the recommendations broadly within the community. I hope that, in addition to attaching the full statement (with recommendations) to CIGU’s 2011-12 Annual Report, CIGU also can engage the broader community in discussions – and action – regarding the important efforts outlined in Goal II of the *Plan*.

Let me also note that the preamble of the new “Strategic Action Agenda: Reaffirmation, Recommitment, and Renewal,” identifies work on diversity and inclusion as our first priority for this year. Specifically, this document – which arose from Cabinet planning discussions over the summer and was endorsed by the IPPC – reaffirms that Goal II, the priority initiatives included under it, and the related action items for this year all flow directly, first, from our historical commitment to academic excellence, second, from the *Strategic Plan*’s central commitment to the success of *all* our students, and third, from our commitment to a climate that welcomes and includes diversity. Furthermore, many action items identified in that document directly address issues relating to this theme.

I now turn to CIGU’s specific recommendations and indicate what actions have been completed, those that are under way, and areas where work remains to be initiated:

**1. Review the “diversity triad” structure and the supporting role of CIGU to determine whether any changes should be made. Particular questions should include budgetary support and any structural impediments to effectiveness.**

I have committed to undertake the indicated review this year, and that commitment is reflected in this year’s “Strategic Action Agenda” (item 21). Last spring, I met with Winston Grady-Willis, Herb Crossman, and Mariel Martin prior to Winston’s departure, and I also have met with you, the current co-chairs of CIGU, Michael Ennis-McMillan and Cori Filson. I certainly welcome CIGU’s input here – with regard to process and, most importantly, with regard to the substance. I am eager to hear CIGU’s sense of how the structure is working – what works well, what doesn’t, and what could be improved.

Perhaps it would be helpful for me to clarify here, as well, that the concept of the “diversity triad” as a group in and of itself is an evolution not anticipated by me at the time I created the positions of (a) Assistant Director for EEO and Workforce Diversity, (b) Director of Intercultural Studies, and (c) Director of Student Diversity Programs. My intention was to identify the three individuals holding the three different positions with responsibility for diversity and inclusion in their specific areas, and it was suggested that those three individuals might benefit from meeting together. It also was important that the individuals holding those three positions would sit on the original Intercultural and Global Understanding Task Force (IGUTF), which I created to advise me on implementing Goal II of the *Strategic Plan* (and which I also chaired). CIGU, the successor to the IGUTF, was also charged “to advise the President and other College offices and bodies as appropriate regarding issues related to intercultural and global understanding.” I believe it will be helpful, in reviewing the “diversity triad” and CIGU this year, to consider whether some further clarification or role and purpose would enhance the community’s understanding of the work of these individuals and bodies and, most importantly, enhance our collective ability to advance Goal II.

**2. Further institutionalization of IGR, including administrative staff support and course releases for faculty members involved in the program.**

- The faculty director of IGR has been provided with additional administrative support, two course releases to be used in support of the program, the title of Director, and a budget. Planning is ongoing regarding the goal of recruiting additional faculty into the program (as in teaching an IGR course) by the end of the academic year. In fact, the Dean of the Faculty has provided additional financial support aimed at increasing the number of faculty members who teach in this program. The Director of IGR also now sits as a member of the Academic Staff. We will encourage departments to send a representative to the January workshops. There are ongoing conversations among the Director, CEPP, and the Curriculum Committee, regarding whether IGR should be a program, a minor, etc.

**3. Further institutionalization of other programs proven to move the College forward with its diversity priorities.**

I understand that CIGU would like to see further institutional support for sending representatives from Skidmore to NCORE (something we have done in the past and will continue to support in the future), along with a budget to support an RFP process similar to one implemented by the former IGUTF (a request I am willing to consider, pending some further conversation about projected outcomes and budgetary details). The Cabinet and I would welcome further elaboration from CIGU as to what programs are referenced here. In the meantime, I note that the following programs are either now in place or in process:

- Individual programs sponsored by Student Affairs and the Bias Response Group, including *Everyday Leadership* (bystander intervention training program for student leaders) and a recent two-day visit by Frances Kendall, Consultant for Organizational Change (interrupting bias).
- For several years, Academic Affairs has held diversity hiring workshops for chairs involved in hiring; those efforts have been intensified this year. The Dean of the Faculty conducted this fall's Diversity Hiring Workshop for departments and programs currently engaged in faculty searches. This is an ongoing program.
- Item 20 in the “Strategic Action Agenda” indicates continuing support for the ADA Advisory Committee.
- Item 22 in the “Strategic Action Agenda” includes providing further support for IGR (see 2., above).
- Item 22 also calls for developing “a program of events for faculty development.” This work will be ongoing throughout the year.
- Item 24 in the “Strategic Action Agenda” indicates that we will “re-launch the Multicultural Career Alumni Network (MCAN) in collaboration with the Alumni Association” to provide additional career support directed specifically at alumni of color.

- Item 26 in the “Strategic Action Agenda” indicates that we will engage a consultant to provide “diversity and inclusion training” for the campus, beginning with the Cabinet. The consultant has been retained, and this work will commence later this year.
- There is ongoing work with the city of Saratoga Springs, including a new community initiative aimed at creating dialogs relating to diversity and inclusion among various segments of the Saratoga Springs community.
- The College has provided support for the Black Faculty-Staff Group, which hosted a community-of-color dinner last spring.
- Please see the comments in item 4 below regarding support for pedagogy in the multi-cultural classroom.
- In conjunction with the Consortium on Higher Education and Success (CHAS), Skidmore has taken the lead on and will host a forum in Spring 2012 focusing on recruiting and retaining faculty of color.

**4. Establish clear expectations that faculty members attend pedagogy workshops focusing on diversity-related issues in the classroom.**

I have identified Diversity and Inclusion as a major institutional priority for the current year – in the preamble of the “Strategic Action Agenda,” in conversation with the Academic Staff at the Academic Staff retreat in August, and again in my address to the opening Faculty Meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Other members of the academic administration have voiced their strong support for this institutional priority as well. In addition, we note the following specific initiatives:

- Visiting consultant Frances Kendall met with a faculty group on Monday, 26 September 2011 for a conversation about interrupting bias in the classroom.
- We will continue to implement the month-by-month pedagogy program for faculty and will include discussion of the multicultural classroom in the new Faculty Learning Community program.
- Michael Ennis-McMillan is in the process of setting up a resource portal for pedagogy on the CIGU website.
- The proposal for revising the culture-centered inquiry requirement is working its way through CEPP.
- A group (from Student Affairs and Academic Affairs) is discussing how to disseminate and present the data we have from CHAS, NSSE, PRR, CIGU, etc.

**5. Develop selected faculty lines dedicated to diversity-related academic fields.**

This is a question of resources that is under ongoing consideration, but we are doing our best to encourage departments to think about their open positions and their curricula in ways that encourage the development not only of a diverse pool of applicants but also of candidates

who can bring expertise relating to issues of diversity. I acknowledge that this is an area in which we need to develop further strength within our faculty.

**6. Provide tenure-line target-of-opportunity hires for individuals from underrepresented groups who exhibit promise in terms of teaching, scholarship and service to the College.**

We have made such hires in the past and we are prepared to do so again, depending on budget and opportunity. Our high bid is to encourage departments to structure their searches in such a way as to encourage rich and diverse pools of candidates. (See item 5 above as well.) Additionally, the Associate Dean of the Faculty currently is researching best practices for the retention of faculty of color. Furthermore, at our invitation, CHAS is planning to host a conference on the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color in spring 2012 at Skidmore.

**7. Reinstate the NYU Minority Dissertation Fellowship and Consortium for Faculty Diversity (CFD) initiatives.**

The NYU Fellowship and CFD initiative will be a high priority for Academic Affairs in the next budget cycle. We understand that they will need to be new initiatives from a budgetary standpoint – i.e., new funds will need to be allocated within the budget to reinstate these programs. We have continued our membership in CFD. Indeed, the Associate Dean recently participated in a CFD conference at Gettysburg College.

**8. Include a full-day diversity training as part of the FYE program for both students and Scribner seminar faculty.**

Student Affairs conducted a one-day training – the "*Everyday Leadership*" initiative – in August, and we have implemented an important diversity and inclusion module in our ID 201, Peer Mentor Training Program. This module is led by Mariel Martin and Rochelle Calhoun. We also assigned the summer reading based on these themes, continued the "Checking Privilege" program, and asked faculty to wrestle with climate issues in their Scribner Seminars.

It is important to note, however, that the *Everyday Leadership* program, which was offered to student leaders in all classes who returned to campus early, has the advantage of adding capacity to address issues of diversity and inclusion across the student body. There is a cogent argument for focusing such resources on upper-class students, rather than on entering students, since it is the former who largely establish the climate into which the first-year students come. In the future, we will continue our diversity and inclusion work with first-year students, but we believe that it will be most efficacious to direct much of our effort toward upper-class students.

In addition, we need to acknowledge that student leaders are with us for a limited time, and so we must continue to work with new populations of students each year. By contrast, our

faculty represents a much more stable population across time, so we need to ensure that the developmental programs for faculty referenced in 4. above are both effective and ongoing.

**9. Review current support for international faculty members (e.g., support for visa issues, etc.) and provide an appropriate support structure that addresses issues of attraction and retention of this cohort, including a presence on the Skidmore Website.**

We have created a new position in Student Affairs to support international students as well as faculty with regard to visa, F1, and J1 documentation. That position has now been filled. Academic Affairs will continue to be in conversation with international faculty members to assess their needs and determine how best to assist them. The VPAA and the Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Vice President for Finance and Administration, are exploring the implications of some of the changes we hope to implement regarding visa support for international faculty.

Beyond the initiatives described above, the Cabinet, in collaboration with the IPPC and other appropriate groups, will continue its planning efforts in support of the broad objectives of Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*. Special Programs has brought and will bring a number of speakers this year (e.g., Daniella Talmon-Heller, Zana Briski, Angela M. Brown, et al.) and the Tang is mounting several exhibits relevant to these issues.

Let me conclude with a paragraph taken from this year's "Strategic Action Agenda": "I hereby reaffirm my personal commitment, as President, to provide leadership in this area to help the College move forward toward a better future. If we are to 'be the academic community we seek to become,' we must continue to increase the capacity of *each* of us – every member of our community, including every member of the faculty, staff, and administration – to engage in meaningful dialogue about issues relating to race, class, sexual orientation, disabilities, and other markers of difference that can divide us as a campus community (and indeed that can divide our nation and the world). ... I ask that everyone in the Skidmore community embrace this undertaking and seek opportunities to increase our ability to engage in these difficult conversations, always within a context of mutual respect." Even as we direct our attention to the specific objectives we have identified for this year, we must remain focused on our long-term goal of creating a diverse and inclusive community that supports our highest aspirations for the education of our students and our interactions with one another.