Draft of Guiding Principles for Effective Learning Environments
11/27/2023

Who Put Together This Document?
The Working Group on Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning.

What Is the Charge of This Working Group?
The Working Group on Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning was created with the charge "to develop a mission-driven and formative assessment methodology to center and prioritize teaching and learning that is supportive of all students."

How Was This Working Group Formed?
This Working Group emerges from an initiative funded by a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to think deeply about the ways that we support the learning of all of our students. FEC distributed a Willingness to Serve survey in October of 2022. In consultation with the chairs of ATC, PC, CEPP, and CAFR, the Working Group was officially established in December 2022. The Working Group is composed of nine faculty members, the DOF/VPAA, and two students.

What This Document Is
- A distillation of the work the Working Group has done so far to identify the guiding principles and values the Skidmore community already holds.
- A draft of guiding principles that the Skidmore community believes are essential for creating effective learning environments, both within and beyond the classroom.
- A work in progress that the Working Group will revise based on feedback.
- A launchpad for future collaborative work that will aim to connect these guiding principles to existing (and future!) college practice.

What This Document Is Not
- A proposed change to policy.
- A binding agreement that faculty will vote on.
- A final summary of the Working Group's work.

How Did the Working Group Come Up with These Principles?
These guiding principles are the result of months of work when members of the Working Group:
- met multiple times with various governance committees (i.e., ATC, PC, CEPP, FEC, and CAFR)
- conducted student focus groups
- surveyed faculty, students, and staff
- studied current pedagogical theories and practices
- reviewed policies at peer and aspirant institutions
- compiled relevant language from Skidmore documents (e.g., the Faculty Handbook, Strategic Plan, and Skidmore's website).

How Will this Document be Used in the Future?
- This document will be the base for a Committee of the Whole discussion during the December faculty meeting and feedback will be used to refine the guiding principles.
- The Working Group–in collaboration with stakeholders across campus–will use these guiding principles to evaluate our current policies and systems to see if they effectively align with our guiding principles
- If the Working Group identifies areas where we can better embody these guiding principles, we will work with the relevant stakeholders to propose alternate models and practices for consideration.

Guiding Principles

Effective learning environments center student learning through:
- Clear structures and intentional design
- Exploring concepts and practices across disciplinary, theoretical, cultural, and/or social differences
- Fostering belonging
- Ongoing pedagogical and/or professional growth and development
- Acknowledging and working to alleviate the impact of structural inequities on learning