

2023-2024 Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Annual Report

Sponsored by
IPPC Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Institutional Assessments	2
Strategic Planning	2
Values and Vision.....	2
Racial Campus Climate: NACCC Surveys	3
NACCC Faculty Survey	3
Student Success and Engagement	3
Measuring Student Success	4
First-Generation Student Focus Groups	5
Outcome: Serving First-Generation Students.....	5
HHMI High Impact Experiences Assessment	5
Academic Affairs	6
Summary of Department/Program Assessments	6
General Education	7
Applied Quantitative Reasoning	7
Oral Communication	7
Bridge Experience	8
Working Group on Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning.....	8
Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning.....	9
Off-Campus Study and Student Exchanges	9
Sustainability Office	10
Library	10
Library Self-Study	10
Course Materials Affordability	11
The Tang	11
Institutional Research (IR)	12
Advancement.....	12
Operations and Prospect Development	12
Gift Planning	12
The Skidmore Fund (SF)	13
College Events.....	13

Alumni Engagement	13
DEI Fundraising and Engagement	14
Professional Development and Collaboration.....	14
Admissions/Financial Aid	14
Skidmore Test-Optional Admissions Policy Assessment	14
Finance and Administration.....	15
Skidmore Readiness Assessment for Student Information System.....	15
eForms	15
Centralized Names System	15
IT Security Policy	15
Office of Communication and Marketing	16
Maturity Model.....	16
Digital Marketing	16
2023-2024 Social Media Strategy	16
Creative Services in Conjunction with Athletics Communications and Marketing	17
New Athletics Brand Guidelines	17
Skidmore Shop.....	18
Textbook affordability assessment	18
Student Affairs	18
Professional Development.....	18
Athletics	19
Career Development Center	19
Early Student Engagement.....	19
Inclusive Career Exploration	19
Integrate Career Development into the Skidmore Community	20
Transform Employer Engagement	20
Health and Wellness.....	20
Equity in Mental Health on Campus	20
Office of Residential Life.....	21
First Generation Focus Groups	21
Student Academic Services.....	21
Tax Liability Assessment	21
International Student Transfer Out	21

INTRODUCTION

During 2023-2024 academic year, the Skidmore community was actively engaged in assessment activities at all levels of the institution. At the broadest level, key work engaged ongoing institutional initiatives such as strategic planning and preparing for our accreditation process, refining how we measure and track student success, and attending closely to financial and enrollment landscapes. In addition, divisional and department projects furthered our learning about ourselves, operational effectiveness, and serving our students. These initiatives reflect Skidmore's commitment to aligning assessment efforts with institutional priorities, promoting equity, and improving overall student outcomes.

This report is prepared by the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC) Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness (SIE)¹. The purpose of the annual report is to both highlight and document assessment related activities from across the college. Per the charge of the committee, our goal is to use the results from these assessments to guide institutional action both in regard to student learning and operational effectiveness.

The 2023-2024 membership consists of representatives from each division within the college:

- Julie Delay, Director of Human Resources
- Janessa Dunn, Director of Admissions
- Kam Haq, Class of 2026, Student Representative
- Corey-Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of Faculty
- Martha O'Leary, Director of Brand Communications Marketing
- Katharine Rusate, Senior Data Analyst and BI Developer
- Kelly Sheppard, Faculty Director of Assessment, **Co-Chair**
- Joe Stankovich, Director, Institutional Research
- Dwane Sterling, Chief Information Officer
- Jamin Totino, Associate Dean of Student Affairs & Dir of Student Academic Services
- Amy Tweedy, Institutional Effectiveness Specialist, **Co-Chair**
- Joshua Woodfork, VP for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity

¹ Portions of the text of this report was generated by ChatGPT and subsequently edited by the authors.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Strategic Planning

Skidmore College is actively engaging in strategic planning to shape the institution's future, focusing on answering key questions: Who are we? What is essential for our growth? And where do we want Skidmore to go over the next decade? This process is driven by collaborative efforts, community input,

and transparent evaluation of resources and capabilities.



The current strategic planning process is grounded in the achievements of the Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore College 2015-2025, which has already led to transformative projects like the Billie Tisch Center for Integrated Sciences. Skidmore is now adopting a more nimble five-year planning model, emphasizing inclusivity and responsiveness to evolving

challenges in higher education.

Through broad community engagement during 2023-24, including faculty, students, staff, and trustees, the College defined its next set of strategic goals. Key next steps include analyzing community feedback, presenting updates across campus groups, and drafting a concise five-year Strategic Plan by February 2025. This plan will guide the College's efforts from 2025 to 2030, with final approval from the Board of Trustees in May 2025.

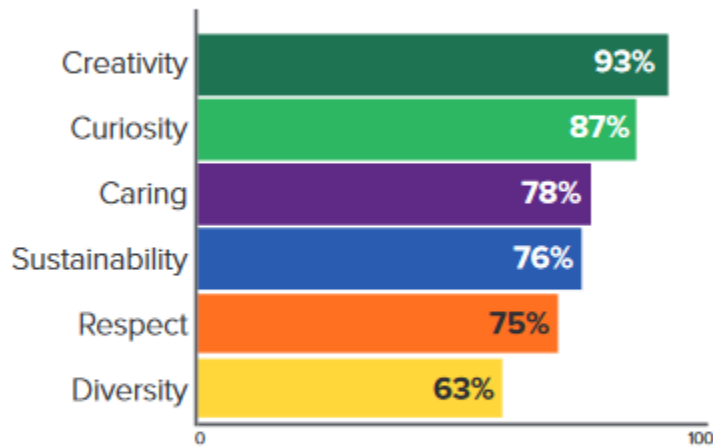
Strategic planning ensures that Skidmore's institutional priorities align with the evolving aspirations of its community, helping to chart a course for continued excellence in undergraduate education.

Values and Vision

The Visions & Values Project Report outlines the core values that define Skidmore College's identity and community aspirations, with a focus on three major themes: people, spaces, and creativity. The project, which spanned multiple years of community engagement, emphasized Skidmore's commitment to fostering close connections between faculty and students, embracing creativity, and encouraging exploration and innovation. It also highlighted values such as curiosity, caring, sustainability, diversity, and respect with an overwhelming agreement among all constituents that creativity is a core value.

Living Our Values

% of people who said "sounds a lot like us" or "sounds pretty much like us"



**The top two values shared across all three primary constituent groups (faculty, staff, and students) were: Creativity and Curiosity.*

***Across all values, very few people (0-2%) rated them as "this isn't who we are."*

These percentages reflect how much Skidmore's community believes these values are part of the institution's identity. The [full report](#) is available on the Skidmore 2030 website along with an overview of key institutional planning initiatives.

Racial Campus Climate: NACCC Surveys

In the fall of 2020, as a founding member, Skidmore College joined 68 other colleges across the nation to form the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA) in order to address shared experiences involving racial climate on campus. As an initial step, LACRELA is partnering with the USC Race and Equity Center in a student-centered racial climate survey — the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC). The College committed to surveying students in 2021, staff in 2022 and faculty in 2023.

NACCC Faculty Survey

The NACCC Faculty Survey was administered to faculty during the fall of 2023. Results will be analyzed and shared with the College constituents during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Student Success and Engagement

Skidmore College's strategic pillars emphasize a commitment to academic excellence, accompanied by a focus on providing access to both curricular and co-curricular opportunities. In alignment with these values, the College is deeply committed to fostering student success through targeted support initiatives and continuous assessment. Several offices across the College have evaluated how effectively these values are being upheld. Based on previous assessments, a number of initiatives were implemented during the 2023-2024 academic year:

- Student Affairs and Academic Affairs collaborated on the development of a new, 1-credit Academic Success course for first- and second-year students offered during the spring semester. The course is designed to promote the development of academic skills such as goal-setting, notetaking, working with primary and secondary sources, and beyond. The syllabus, crafted by the Student Academic Services (SAS) staff in consultation with the Library and the First-Year Experience (FYE), resulted immediately in full enrollment.
- To address the rising attrition rates following COVID-19, Academic Affairs introduced a reporting system to identify students considering transferring (via the Common App). This system triggers personalized outreach to students at risk of withdrawal.
- The FYE enhanced support for academic transitions by integrating a time management module into the FYE Peer Mentor 4th Credit Hour program and providing new training opportunities to faculty focused on pedagogies that address student writing and close reading.
- Skidmore Health and Wellness departments (Counseling Center, Health Services, and Health Promotion) in preparation for a January 2025 move into a new building, the McCaffery-Wagman Tennis and Wellness Center, moved to an integrated care model in Fall 2024. Integrated care provides significantly more holistic support for students and reduces barriers to care, since clinicians can access records across departments when clinically needed, and can schedule appointments for students across departments.
- In response to a student survey in Spring 2023, where students voiced wanting more peer-to-peer support options addressing a variety of concerns, Skidmore increased the number of peer-based support groups available on campus. These groups are sponsored by a variety of campus departments, and include: a Young Persons AA meeting (Health Promotion), a peer-led grief and loss support group (Office of Religious and Spiritual Life and the Counseling Center), and a disabled student affinity group (Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion).

Although Skidmore has a long tradition of assessing student outcomes and institutional effectiveness, there is now a focused effort on using disaggregated data to better target resources aimed at promoting student success.

Measuring Student Success

The IPPC Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness has committed to developing a methodology, process, and visualizations for assessing student success, emphasizing the use of disaggregated data to ensure equity. The goal is to establish systematic metrics across the College to define and measure student success and to both standardize and routinize the analysis of those data. Initial efforts focus on:

- Standardizing metrics across departments,
- Developing transparent data collection and review processes,
- Utilizing disaggregated data to identify at-risk demographics,
- Creating accessible data visualizations to share with college leaders to highlight both areas of excellence and those requiring improvement,
- Identifying opportunities to collect additional data on student engagement and post-graduate outcomes, such as job placement and salary.

The subcommittee has begun identifying key moments in a student's life cycle that reflect success, including academic achievement, high-impact experiences, and professional outcomes. Initial metrics selected include GPA, graduation rates, retention rates, and participation in high-impact experiences (as

recorded in Banner; see report on HHMI High Impact Experiences below). The dashboard will be launched to the College community in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Current analysis demonstrates shallow but persistent achievement gaps for male-identifying students, international students, and Pell recipients. More concerning are larger achievement gaps measured for first-generation students, especially among those who are also domestic students of color or Pell recipients. These results have prompted modifications of the academic alert system to allow support staff to flag at-risk groups and direct them to resources. How alerts translate (or not) to attendance at the Writing Center, SAS, and Peer Academic Coaching session is under investigation.

First-Generation Student Focus Groups

In collaboration with Institutional Effectiveness, the Division of Student Affairs conducted focus groups with first-generation students, who represent almost 12% of Skidmore's student population. These discussions aimed to better understand their experiences and needs. Building on previous quantitative analysis (see above), this qualitative assessment provided additional insights.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, three focus groups were conducted, including a special session for students in the Opportunity Program due to the additional services and programs available to this group. Themes that emerged from these discussions included academic adjustments, access to resources, sense of belonging, and future career planning. These insights will inform interventions and support strategies moving forward.

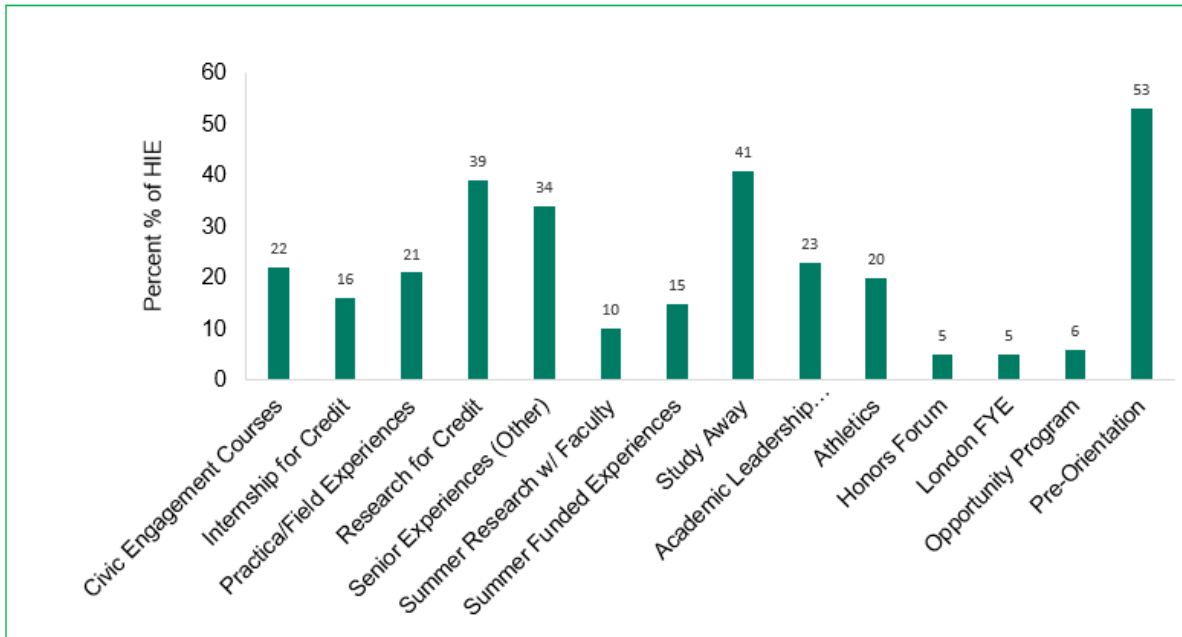
Outcome: Serving First-Generation Students

In response to quantitative and qualitative assessments demonstrating academic achievement and participation disparities between first and continuing-generation students, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs collaborated to develop a new FGEN Initiative. Launching in Fall 2024, the Initiative will include a Faculty/Staff mentoring program that links first-generation faculty/staff with first-generation students; pop-up or just-in-time workshops emphasizing access to high impact experiences across the curriculum and co-curriculum (such as: collaborative research, paid summer experiences, leadership opportunities); and social opportunities to build community and enhance belonging.

HHMI High Impact Experiences Assessment

Skidmore College joined a Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) learning community investigating using practices that focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and access (DEIJA). As part of the track to use data-informed improvement of DEIJA outcomes, Kelly Sheppard, Faculty Director of Assessment and Associate Professor of Chemistry partnered with the IPPC Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness (SIE) to examine student participation in high impact practices as defined by the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative.

Percentage of Graduates Participating



Research Question

Are students across different dimensions of identity at Skidmore participating equally in high impact practices? If not, why not?

The data of 2,397 graduates was analyzed during the 2023-2024 academic year. Findings include institutional efforts to remove financial barriers to increase participation in summer funded experiences were successful. In addition, there is uneven participation in high impact experiences among students of color, first-generation students, and students who identified as men.

The assessment also highlighted gaps in the tracking of student participation in these experiences, with some activities, such as paid employment, being captured through creative data collection methods. Nevertheless, many other high-impact experiences remain inconsistently recorded in the College's student information system.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Summary of Department/Program Assessments

Assessment activities in academic departments and programs of their student learning goals continued this past academic year with 36 of the 38 academic departments/programs submitting a report. Of those, five were self-studies and two were accreditation reports/self-studies. Of the departments and programs submitting assessment reports, 87% did direct assessment while 77% did indirect assessment of student learning. Assessment continues to be especially challenging for smaller departments and interdisciplinary programs where faculty members are stretched thin. Faculty Director of Assessment (FDA) Sheppard has been working with such departments and programs to think about how to integrate

assessment into the work already being done, so it is not an extra lift but is built into the culture and workload. Regarding the impact of generative A.I. on assessment of student learning, most departments and programs either had no response or indicated that they had not yet engaged in the discussion. A few departments and programs noted the negative impact on assessment due to students submitting A.I. generated work rather than their own work (e.g., on written assignments). Other departments and programs reported on specific uses of A.I. to aid in student learning or to help in the assessment work (e.g., creating a common voice for a rubric based on the program's discussion and using A.I. potentially to analyze syllabi). The responses were reported to the Center for Leadership, Teaching and Learning (CLTL) A.I. Think Tank to inform their program for the 2024-2025 academic year as well as to the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP). Similar to the Information Literacy review last year, a few additional departments and programs identified that students were having difficulties critically engaging with sources. The concern was reported to CEPP as a potential longer-term impact coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the results were reported to the CLTL A.I. Think Tank to help inform their work during the 2024-2025 Academic Year. The FYE program is offering a critical reading strategies workshop in the Fall of 2024 to Scribner Seminar faculty and other faculty teaching first-year students to improve their critical reading strategies early in their careers at Skidmore.

General Education

Applied Quantitative Reasoning

The Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Review Team assessed seniors on their quantitative reasoning skills based on the learning goals of the Applied Quantitative Reasoning requirement. Overall, students performed the worst on learning goal 1 (Use statistical and/or mathematical models to characterize empirical data) questions. Students who majored in STEM disciplines scored higher than students who did not. Students who identified as women performed worse than those who identified as men on questions focused on learning goals 2 (Understand, model, and predict the behavior of populations or systems) and 4 (Use quantitative reasoning for informed decision-making). Among students placed using the Quantitative Reasoning Placement Diagnostic, when STEM major and number of AQR credits was accounted for, there was no statistical difference between students placed at the AQR level directly or in MA 100 or the FQR level. The results were reported to the CEPP. The QR Review Team will be conducting an item analysis of the QR assessment test to determine if there are questions that need to be revised, especially related to learning goal 1, before proceeding with additional interventions. In addition, the QR Review Team will be analyzing how performance on the assessment correlated with student perception of and confidence with quantitative reasoning that will help inform how to address the gap between students who identified as women and those who identified as men.

Oral Communication

Since the 2016-2017 Academic Year, 12 departments/programs assessed students' oral communication skills. The current general education curriculum requires that students develop their oral communication skills through their majors. Accordingly, each academic department/program over the 2018-2019 academic year developed oral communication learning outcomes for students that were then used to develop curricular maps. The departments/programs identified where they would assess oral communication in their curriculum as part of that work. The graduating cohorts in the years assessed were primarily before the expectation of oral communication to be explicitly taught in the

majors. The graduating class of 2024 was the first cohort to complete the revised all college curricular requirements. Therefore, the outcomes of the oral communication assessments represent a baseline to compare to subsequent cohorts concerning oral communication skills, especially given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, students presented well across the divisions of the college, though one department did note minors did better than majors. A couple of departments identified that students could improve how they communicated the central message of their presentations. The departments identified adjustments in teaching that would address those concerns for follow-up in future years.

Bridge Experience

Over the 2023-2024 Academic Year, Bridge Experience Director Ron Seyb started collecting student projects from Bridge Experience courses. The goal is to collect additional projects over the 2024-2025 academic year. The repository of student work will serve two functions. The collection will provide the means to directly assess student learning in the Bridge Experience course and the types of projects developed in the classes. In addition, the Bridge Experience student project repository will provide project examples to help faculty members develop or refine their Bridge Experience courses. The Bridge Experience Director is also developing a faculty survey to help inform professional development for Bridge Experience courses, complementing the student surveys administered in previous years.

Working Group on Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning

As part of the HHMI Inclusive Excellence 3 Initiative grant, the Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning Working Group used the development of guiding principles regarding what we collectively value in good teaching and learning environments to assess our current policies and practices to evaluate faculty on their teaching. As part of their assessment, they analyzed the Faculty Handbook; the student rating form (the qSET); department/program policies and qualitative student evaluations (the long forms); the model personnel policy, peer observation policy, and peer observation rubric from the Dean of Faculty's Office; the faculty annual report form; and guidance on use of teaching statements and putting together evaluation files to determine how well each aligned to the guiding principles. In addition, chairs, program directors, and former members of the Appointments & Tenure Committee (ATC) and the Promotions Committee (PC) were surveyed. Based on their analysis, they determined our current systems use multiple measures to evaluate teaching: student feedback, peer observation and assessment, and self-evaluation (the "three-legged stool" of teaching evaluation). However, many of the tools in this system, including student ratings and annual reports, are flawed metrics that do not align well with our guiding principles for teaching and student learning. Moreover, policies and protocols are often hazily defined and sporadically applied, with frequent gaps between policy and practice as well as inconsistency across ranks and departments/programs. Due to these inconsistencies, our current systems do not offer a clear path to formative development for faculty. This is particularly so for non-tenure track faculty and tenured faculty. For faculty of all ranks, our current systems seem more set up to identify problematic teaching than to offer timely interventions and formative feedback to support all faculty in becoming more effective, rigorous teachers to the benefit our students and their learning. The Working Group is reporting their findings to key governance committees (*e.g.*, ATC, PC, CAFR, FEC, and CEPP) and the Dean of Faculty's Office to elicit feedback and suggestions to inform the next steps in the project to address the concerns raised.

Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning

In response to faculty concerns regarding the use of generative A.I. and interest in learning about it and how to use it effectively in the classroom, the Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning CLTL) developed a series of programs as well as an A.I. Think Tank. The programming included *Fear Not, for AI am With You: Strategies for Teaching Writing in the AI Age* with the director of the Writing Center, Caitlin Jorgensen, *Amplifying Student Engagement with AI - A Pedagogical Workshop Designed to Develop Best Practices for Integrating AI-based Classroom Activities* lead by Matt Lucas, Harder Chair of Business Administration, and Chelsea Taylor, Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, and an *Active Feedback AI Workshop* with Jennifer Rose, Senior Lecturer, University of Manchester, U.K., to introduce participants to the latest AI research and share AI prompts to develop resources and draft instructions for active feedback assignments. As expanded upon below, the CLTL partnered with the Library and the Student Government Association (SGA) to host a panel on affordable course materials. Previous work identified the need to help faculty develop universal design for learning (UDL) approaches and address student mental health concerns and bias in the classroom. The CLTL provided multiple programs to meet those professional development needs. In addition, the CLTL developed a Teaching Support Network and a UDL Consultants network along with learning communities centered on *Racial Justice, Black Pedagogies in Higher Education*, and *Tell Me Who You Are: Reflections on Race, Culture, and Identity* to further address those identified needs.

Off-Campus Study and Student Exchanges

Off-Campus Study and Student Exchanges Office (OCSE) undertook a study to examine which students' study abroad during their sophomore year and how that impacts their progress towards graduation. On average, about 5% of sophomores study abroad. They do so typically either during the Spring semester or travel seminars. Approved Programs were more popular options than the *Skidmore In...* programs. As seen with most high impact experiences at Skidmore and consistent with national trends, students who identified as women were more likely to participate than those who identified as men. Domestic students of color also under-participated in study-abroad during their sophomore year. Students receiving Skidmore grants were significantly underrepresented abroad (38% abroad vs. 47% on campus). Pell eligible and first-generation students were only slightly underrepresented. In terms of graduation rates, students who studied abroad their sophomore year completed college at the same level as those who did not (85.8% v. 85.4%, respectively). The cumulative GPA for those who did study abroad during the sophomore year was higher than those who remained on-campus (3.525 v. 3.416%, respectively). The potential barriers identified included the policy requiring students to declare major prior to studying abroad, the perception that programs abroad only accept juniors or above, and the limited GPA history students have after their first two to three semesters at Skidmore. Given the data indicated that there are no negative consequences on student success by studying abroad during the sophomore year, OCSE will move forward with exploring sophomore fall abroad programs and addressing the three major barriers. OCSE anticipates significant discussion with the CAS, CEPP, the Enrollment Management Group, and other relevant committees on campus.

Sustainability Office

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Office of Sustainability at Skidmore College engaged in a range of assessment activities aimed at advancing sustainability on campus. A key focus was the annual assessment of the Campus Sustainability Plan (CSP), which tracked metrics related to energy, waste, food, water, lands, and engagement. This assessment revealed limited progress in areas like energy, waste, and food over the past eight years, highlighting the need for stronger institutional strategies. Data for the report was collected from various sources, including invoices and institutional databases, and the results were shared publicly through the Campus Sustainability Subcommittee webpage.

Another significant project was the completion of the Sustainable Landscape Plan (SLP), a \$60,000 capital project that addressed sustainable landscape design and stormwater management as part of the Campus Master Plan. This project included stakeholder input, an inventory of the campus landscape, and the development of prioritized projects. It also initiated a campus tree inventory update, which involved student interns over the summer.

In addition to these major assessments, the office conducted a waste audit in October 2023, which revealed that significant portions of waste could have been diverted from landfills. The office also submitted reports for the Tree Campus USA program and the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership, focusing on grounds management and renewable energy use. Students in the Gardenside sustainability living learning community class completed evaluations on course content and learning outcomes.

The assessment findings, particularly the limited progress on CSP goals, underscored the need for institutional leadership, financial investment, and strategic planning to advance sustainability efforts. Looking ahead, the Sustainability Office plans to conduct further assessments, including a sustainable food assessment and the third Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) report, to continue evaluating and improving sustainability practices at Skidmore College.

Library

Library Self-Study

Work began in earnest on our self-study in June 2023 and the library team continued drafting throughout the fall semester. We finalized the [self-study report](#) by January 2024. An external review team comprised of library directors from Amherst College, Colgate University, and Eckerd College visited Skidmore in April 2024, meeting with library team members, campus faculty and staff, as well as administrators. Though the final report was submitted in early June, the library team did not receive it until later in the summer. As a result, we are only now beginning to debrief together as a team in September 2024. Our initial discussions have surfaced concerns with inaccuracies or misconstruals contained in the report, so the library team intends to submit a written response to the DOF/VPAA in the coming months. Nevertheless, we are identifying valuable feedback (including helpfully provocative feedback) related to instruction, outreach, operational policies, and services that point to goals for us to tackle in the 2024-25 academic year. We intend for these shorter-term goals to lay the groundwork for longer-term assessment goals and priorities for our midpoint review.

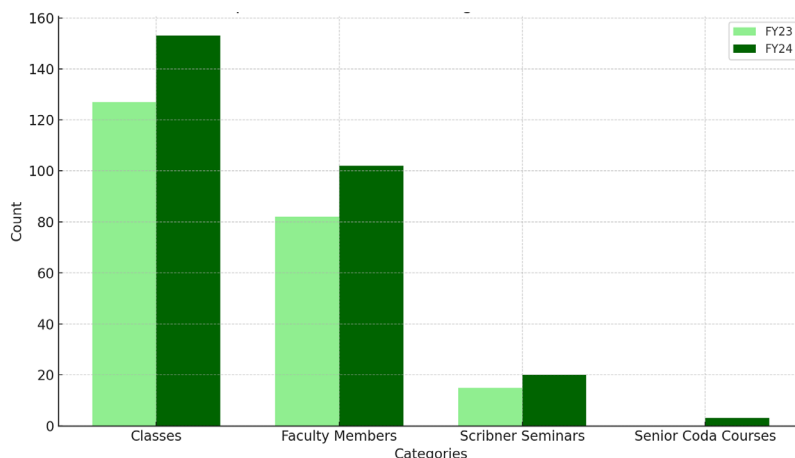
Course Materials Affordability

Following on our September 2022 Student Textbook Affordability Survey, Scribner Library partnered with SGA to conduct interviews with academic chairs and program directors to ascertain the ways that course materials costs impact students across the curriculum. We also met with campus partners including the Skidmore Shop, Financial Aid, and LEDS, as well as the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning. Our work culminated in a [panel discussion hosted by CLTL in January](#). One outcome of our work is an [information sheet](#) distributed to faculty in August 2024, providing tips on reducing course materials costs for Skidmore students. Outreach to students based on our research findings will go out via social media in the first two weeks of classes.

The Tang

The Tang Teaching Museum's assessment for 2023-24 highlights significant achievements in curricular integration, student engagement, and public outreach. The museum saw a notable increase in faculty participation, with a record number of classes visiting the museum for academic purposes, as well as strong student involvement through internships, student-organized events, and the popular art-loan program. The Tang hosted numerous events featuring artists and scholars, reinforcing its role as a hub for interdisciplinary learning and creative expression. In addition to curricular integration, the Tang Museum's outreach efforts in FY24 included a significant increase in K-12 programming, with 1,204 students and community members participating, marking an 88.1% increase from the previous year. The museum also enhanced its digital media presence, reaching more than 3,100 Instagram users and over 1,600 website visitors weekly, broadening its impact beyond the campus. Importantly, the museum maintained its commitment to inclusiveness, showcasing work from diverse artists and engaging the campus and broader community in cultural conversations. Future goals include addressing space constraints, expanding K-12 programs, and collaborating with faculty on upcoming exhibitions that support scholarly inquiry and creative endeavors.

Comparison of Curricular Integration (FY23 vs FY24)



Institutional Research (IR)

The Institutional Research (IR) department at Skidmore College has been actively engaged in various assessment activities throughout the 2023-24 academic year, supporting both internal operations and broader college-wide initiatives. Key projects included transitioning to the ClassClimate Cloud system for course evaluations, enhancing GPA disparity analysis by student identities, and streamlining data sharing with departments via cloud storage. IR also worked on improving faculty teaching load data accuracy and administered the Non-Returning Student Survey. Additionally, the department conducted a five-year review of Skidmore's test-optional admissions policy and participated in national studies, such as the College Board's Admissions Research Consortium (ARC). Looking forward, IR plans to focus on disparities in retention and graduation rates, conduct further surveys, and support the college's Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) self-study

ADVANCEMENT

Operations and Prospect Development

Advancement Operations completed their database implementation process as of April 29th, successfully converting to Blackbaud's Raisers Edge. Conversion was necessitated following notification in 2022 that ThankQ would no longer be providing customer support to its North American clients, as well as an internal assessment conducted in 2022 which determined that the current constituent relationship management system (CRM) was no longer meeting the division's business needs. After an internal evaluation was completed by the advisory committee (selected "super-users" of the CRM), Blackbaud was selected in FY23. Looking forward, this conversion will significantly improve portfolio management and prospect management capabilities within the fundraising realm. Furthermore, with the front and back-end reporting capabilities, this will enhance Advancement's access and insight into data, and provide a foundation to build on and improve internal processes. In the upcoming fiscal year, Operations will focus on streamlining processes at the departmental level, building out new reporting to enhance departmental insight, and developing new scoring systems to improve alumni engagement and major gift cultivation.

Following an internal assessment of regional travel, Prospect Development deployed a regional gift officer structure in August 2023 to increase alumni engagement in states that were not regularly covered, provide more clarity and equity in territory distribution, and decrease travel costs by hiring remote gift officers tangential to their regional location. Future monitoring of fundraising dollars and constituent engagement in previously under-covered states will evaluate the success of this updated structure.

Gift Planning

MarketSmart, an automated marketing system implemented to help identify new legacy donors, continued for its second year. Approximately 500 constituents indicated last year they were interested in including Skidmore in their estate plans and 22% updated their plans in 2024. Throughout the division's collaboration with MarketSmart, the projected ROI has consistently remained positive. The

executive leadership will continue to monitor and measure ROI annually to ensure MarketSmart continues serving the division's needs.

The Skidmore Fund (SF)

SF led the College in celebration of its 2nd Charter Day (May 23), which recognizes the day that the Skidmore School of the Arts became Skidmore College. Strategic and targeted activity focuses on providing an incentive for donors to make contributions before the May 31 deadline, giving volunteers an additional rallying point for year-end outreach. The SF successfully built upon and surpassed last year's results to over 600 donors and more than \$1.1M.

The Skidmore Fund planned to inspire Skid4Life gifts from alumni by having members of Advancement host tabling events throughout Reunion weekend to engage with alumni, encouraging them to sign up for an indefinite recurring gift. Reunion classes in the 4s and 9s cycle competed for the most indefinite recurring gift commitments over the weekend. The goal with these tabling events is to raise awareness of Skid4Life, while establishing a pattern of giving with alumni that continues throughout the four years following their Reunion. This event resulted in 10+ new Skid4Life participants. Reunion fundraising for the 4s and 9s in total raised over \$1.6 M in giving through the Skidmore Fund and \$22M in gifts overall, surpassing the \$15M goal.

Fundraising Goals/Results for FY '24

	FY '24 Goal	FY '24 Final
New Gifts and Commitments	\$36,000,000	\$36,900,000
Skidmore Fund	\$8,161,000	\$8,272,000

College Events

College Events planned and executed a traditional series of campus/community events with a goal of maintaining and building relationships with partners and community members both internally and externally. These included the Harder Lecture (President of the LEGO Group Americas Skip Kodak visited Skidmore March 5 and 6 for the F. William Harder Lecture in Business Administration), Community Leaders Breakfast (April 11, 100+ community leaders from Saratoga joined President Conner for a networking event), and the Kenneth A. Freirich Entrepreneurship Competition (Eight student groups presented their business plans to alumni and community members on April 12). In May, the College celebrated Commencement and the College Events team in collaboration with the Registrar's Office implemented an AI-generated voice activation system which assisted in logistics, timing, and pronunciations.

Alumni Engagement

The Office of Alumni Engagement transitioned from "Alumni Relations and College Events" to its own dedicated office under the new leadership of Carly Connors, Executive Director, Alumni Engagement. The Office of Alumni Engagement team is working to complete an Alumni Engagement plan for FY25

that will revitalize alumni networks in key areas nationally such as NYC, Boston, and Chicago and focus on regional events and activities. On-going tracking was implemented to assist in regional travel planning. Further partnership between Prospect Development and Alumni Engagement will better align fundraising initiatives. Success will be determined based on ROI of events and annual metrics.

Alumni Engagement executed several Presidential regional events and planned regional activities focused on volunteers, recent graduates, and building a constituent pipeline. President Conner continued to be introduced to alumni, parents, families, and friends through a combination of virtual and in-person events.

DEI Fundraising and Engagement

Throughout this FY, Advancement focused on multiple initiatives to increase and enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within various programs, including strategic fundraising with constituents and broad-based audiences. The Alumni Association Board approved two new chair positions: LGBTQIA+ and Alumni of Color/International. Affinity groups also were created under these new appointed chairs, and success of these affinity groups, once aligned on goals, will be determined by engagement metrics.

Professional Development and Collaboration

In an effort to improve onboarding and collaboration, two professional development workshops were offered to all Advancement colleagues. The first workshop, held in August 2023 and led by Cheryl Bonini Ellis '73, featured a case study requiring team members to align on an accountability order for the individuals involved within a specific timeframe. This exercise aimed to help build cohesive, high-performing teams. Another professional development workshop was offered in October 2023, led by Holly Gordon Wolk. Participants completed a Gallup CliftonStrengths assessment prior to the workshop. The session included a comprehensive demonstration on the importance of recognizing and strengthening inherent strengths, and understanding individual contributions to a team. Furthermore, cross-functional teams were implemented in November 2023 with all members of Advancement to collaborate on ways to achieve the department's overarching FY24 goals. Additionally, the Office of Advancement enjoys robust participation in the annual "In It" series offered by the College.

ADMISSIONS/FINANCIAL AID

Skidmore Test-Optional Admissions Policy Assessment

In 2016, Skidmore College supported a test-optional admissions policy for first-year and transfer applicants. Within this policy, applicants are not required to submit SAT or ACT test scores for equal consideration during the admissions review process, although they may have the option to submit if they best represent their academic potential. With strong leadership by the Director of Institutional Research, Joseph Stankovich, the results of a five-year review were presented to the Enrollment Management team in August 2023. Findings from this review revealed that the percentage of enrolling students entering without submitting the SAT nor ACT has been increasing, and the majority of the enrolling class is now test-optional. There were very small impacts of the test optional policy on first-

year GPA and first-to-second year retention. The introduction of the test optional policy affirms that test scores are not the leading indicator for initial academic success at Skidmore College. For the Fall 2024 term, approximately 68% of the enrolling class did not submit an SAT nor ACT. These findings support Skidmore's commitment to remain test optional.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Skidmore Readiness Assessment for Student Information System

Our current platform is outdated and relies on infrastructure which is on-prem, costly and expensive to maintain. Moving forward in alignment with industry best practices, we will be exploring the idea of a Student Information System in the cloud. This will not only decrease our reliance on our infrastructure resources at the college but provide us with a system that is more in keeping with the technology and capabilities of modern software. We expect this transition to bring additional functionality, increased productivity and decreased consumption of third-party applications to provide for our needs.

Of paramount importance to us was ensuring organizational readiness for a transition of this nature, selecting a system which will support our needs/growth and preparing our environment for a project of significant magnitude.

eForms

In an effort to support increased productivity and decreased waste we have moved towards using electronic forms. It is estimated that 50 plus forms which exist in paper format will be transitioned to the digital platform by the time we are fully operational. Once the eforms are being used to collect information we can pick up further benefit by automatically comingling the entered data with relevant information streamlining processes and increasing technical capabilities.

Centralized Names System

Our previous infrastructure made completing name changes a challenging feat from a technical perspective. We previously relied on a series of one-to-one integrations between disparate systems to achieve propagation of a name change throughout our myriad of applications. We have moved from that one-to-one connection architecture to more of a "hub and spoke" model where changes are made centrally and then distributed to all client systems from an authoritative source. This change increases the consistency associated with making a change and decreases the overall complexity of the architecture.

IT Security Policy

With the goal of increasing the organization's IT Security maturity we have moved forward 3 IT Security Policies for review. These policies provide umbrella coverage for the organization, guidelines on how we execute security protocols and clarity to the user community on what is and is not expected in their usage of Skidmore technical resources.

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

Maturity Model

The Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) conducted an assessment based on an organizational Maturity Model: a framework to assess and measure the effectiveness and capacity of the team and its capabilities. With the information gathered, the team customized the rubric to areas of focus detailing the specific needs necessary to move the Office and the Institution forward. Throughout the spring semester, every member of OCM engaged in surveys, focus groups, and brainstorming to identify five priority areas for growth:

- Operations – project management, tools/processes, and internal communication.
- Reputation – how we collaborate with others, our client relationships, and community involvement.
- Governance – policies and practices for web, brand, social media, and more.
- Education – a current skills audit, a projection of future needs, and plans for team training to close gaps.
- Measurement – setting KPIs and operationalizing consistent data collection and reporting.
- Mission and Culture – a refreshed mission and vision and action steps from the culture work outlined above.

The collective goals have been outlined in 2024-2025 planning and tactical progress will be measured against established benchmarks. For example, all of OCM is committing to a unit-wide project management tool, [Trello](#), to improve collaboration and streamline operations. Tools existed prior, but their use was sporadic or siloed. To improve governance, new best practices and policies are being drafted.

This division-wide strategic plan was informed by team culture, aligned with team strengths and gaps, and will be measured by annual performance reviews, the model is a framework for assigning responsibility and inspiring individual accountability for the collective development of a high-performance team. In May 2024, OCM's leadership team set goals and tactics for each of the priority areas and assigned them across the division. Progress will be measured each quarter throughout the 2024-25 year.

Digital Marketing

2023-2024 Social Media Strategy

This strategy, tailored to the College's main social media channels, is a key element of the OCM's comprehensive effort to increase brand awareness. While primarily intended for those involved in flagship social media initiatives, it's also accessible to campus partners seeking to leverage best practices, and insights, and benefit from broader awareness of the College's marketing efforts.

Our current social media strategy is for the following platforms and their advertising networks: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, Reddit, and YouTube. Each platform comes with its own set of goals for the year to ensure appropriate messaging is being delivered to the targeted audiences.

Through these channels, we educate followers about our Institution and ensure we touch upon our 5Cs messaging strategy that highlights Community, Creativity, Curriculum, Campus, and Careers at the equal or measured intervals all while targeting the right followers via relevant channels.

We engage with our audiences differently on each platform based on the ‘culture’ of that platform and the context in which messages are received. With this, content decisions are based on the demographics of our audiences on each platform.

Performance on the aforementioned social media platforms is measured through KPIs such as recorded impressions, engagements, video views, etc. Results are benchmarked against a set of peer and aspirant schools. And given the varying usage of the platforms in the cohort, we measure where there is consistent crossover — Facebook and Instagram.

This strategy, updated for the current fiscal year and customized to the College’s main social media channels, is a key element of OCM’s comprehensive program to increase brand awareness. The plan:

- Outlines the social media landscape, platforms, and mediums – and how those operate at Skidmore, specifically.
- Defines our social media intentions (to educate, expand, (re)engage, and entertain).
- Examines our various audiences (demographics) across various platforms and considers how best to engage them.
- Organizes messaging and content in alignment with content areas, sources, and formats.
- Details how we assess performance in the social media sphere.
- Set a 2024-25 strategy that includes specific measurable goals and tactics designed to address specific needs and experiment with new opportunities.

Creative Services in Conjunction with Athletics Communications and Marketing

New Athletics Brand Guidelines



Branding work with Athletics (as a form of measuring alignment/effectiveness) over the year included: In collaboration with Athletics and other campus constituents, OCM worked to create and finalize revisions and adoptions of seven unique athletics brand marks as well as a new type family. Elements within the previous

brand family were updated focusing on clarity and an increased presence in the digital space.

With new/updated branding approved, various members of the OCM created a one-page style sheet and 12-page style guide, the latter containing unique solutions and color breakdowns for placement on digital and a variety of different base substrates. Updated marks are, and will continue to be, woven into the Skidmore Athletics' presence, including uniforms, fencing, signage, and other facility placements. In conjunction with Athletics, we're also aligning new branding with the various team stores for current and upcoming sports seasons.

These revisions and updates ensure consistency and equity across all 19 varsity teams and align the Athletics look to complement the College's brand standards at large. These items were crafted and curated implementing feedback from various groups within Athletics and other campus partners. The elements have been shared with Athletics and are available in .pdf and .ai format upon request.

Skidmore Shop

Textbook affordability assessment

In collaboration with a representative from the SGA and the Lucy Scribner Library, the Skidmore Shop co-led an effort to address the affordability of textbooks and other course materials (such as supplies, lab wear and more). Over the past two years, through gathered survey results, participation in panels hosted by CLTL, and student feedback this partnership has demonstrated the College's commitment to course material affordability. Additionally, the Skidmore Shop team regularly engages with departments to promote awareness of the resources and services available at the Shop.

This task force has developed (and continues to perfect) a strategy that includes:

- Ensuring copies are available on course reserve at the Scribner Library.
- Improving planning and communication with faculty allowing more time to source cost-effective options.
- Educating the community on the challenges and opportunities regarding material costs.
- The Shop intentionally maintains minimal margins (25%-35%) on essential academic items and full margins (50%+) on non-essential products. The course materials team diligently sources affordable books and other academic supplies, notifies professors of cost-effective options, and negotiates with vendors for the best pricing and shipping terms to pass on savings to students.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Professional Development

An assessment training was offered in the fall of 2023 for all Student Affairs staff. This workshop was led by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Student Academic Services and the Institutional Effectiveness Specialist. The workshop included an overview of types and methodologies of assessment, as well as time to brainstorm assessment projects with individual departments. Over 15 members of Student Affairs participated.

Athletics

During the 2023-24 academic year, the Athletics Department at Skidmore College focused on several key assessment activities related to their student-athlete programs. One of the major initiatives was the *Lead Like a Thoroughbred* leadership training program, led by Dr. Greg Shelley. This new initiative aimed to provide progressive, module-based leadership training for student-athletes, tailored to different class years and team captains. Feedback was gathered through surveys, and the results showed that students found the training highly relevant and valuable. The program's first year was deemed successful, and plans are in place to continue assessing its effectiveness in subsequent years.

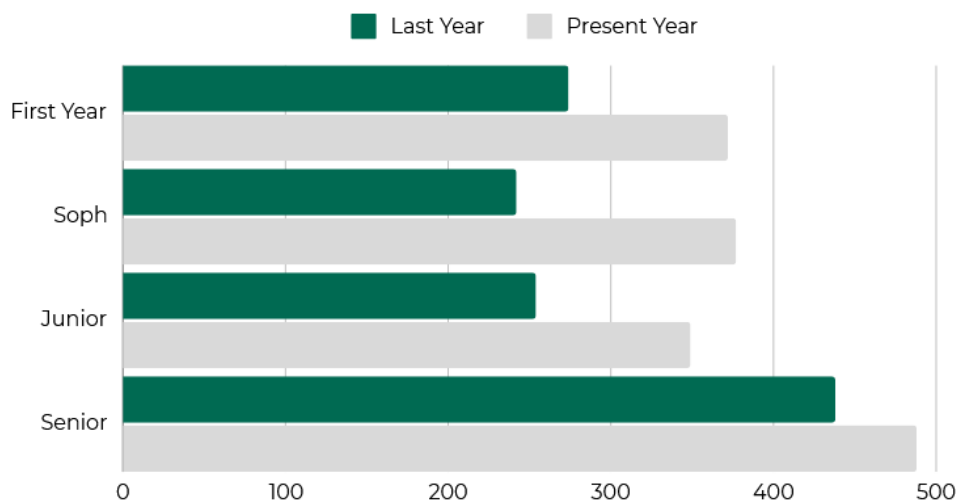
Additionally, the department assessed the impact of the *Thoroughbred Society*, which recognizes student-athletes with high academic achievements (a 3.67 GPA or higher each semester). Data from the 2023-24 academic year showed an increase in both the number of students inducted into the society and those achieving a 4.0 GPA. To further motivate students, new distinctions were introduced, such as awarding gold pins for a 4.0 GPA and silver pins for a 3.75 or higher. This program continues to be a significant motivator for academic success among student-athletes.

Career Development Center

Early Student Engagement

The Career Development Center at Skidmore College observed significant increases in student engagement across all class years due to early career development initiatives. Sophomore engagement rose by 56%, junior engagement by 37%, first-year engagement by 36%, and senior engagement by 11%. These efforts empower students to explore their interests early, maximize their college experience, and reduce stress. By fostering early engagement, students gain access to vital resources and opportunities that help them thrive academically and professionally.

Number of Students Engaging with CDC by Class Year



Inclusive Career Exploration

The Career Development Center at Skidmore College has made significant progress in fostering inclusive career exploration by creating environments that encourage all students to participate equitably in

career development activities. Key DEI initiatives include programs like *HispaniCareer Connect*, *First to Future* for first-generation students, *Black Excellence Career Affair*, and an *International Student Mentoring Session*. These efforts aim to provide targeted support, mentorship, and networking opportunities that address the unique challenges faced by underrepresented groups, helping to bridge gaps in access and success for diverse student populations.

Additionally, the Summer Experience Fund has played a crucial role in promoting equity by funding unpaid and low-paid summer experiences for students, thereby increasing opportunities for career exploration and professional development. The fund saw a 24% increase in the number of students supported, growing from 136 students in Summer 2023 to 169 in Summer 2024. This initiative helps students overcome financial barriers to access valuable experiential learning and networking opportunities, contributing to their career readiness.

Integrate Career Development into the Skidmore Community

Skidmore College's Career Development Center has made significant strides in integrating career development into the community by collaborating with various departments, student groups, and programs. These efforts have led to new initiatives like the Student Athlete Alumni Career Panel, The Black Excellence Career Affair, and the Data Science & Technology Mini Conference. These events increased student engagement and created opportunities for personalized support. The center also expanded its outreach, delivering over 35 presentations and boosting student appointments by 11%, further embedding career development into the student experience.

Transform Employer Engagement

The Career Development Center at Skidmore College has transformed employer engagement by connecting students with around 120 employers through fairs, information sessions, interviews, and networking events. These efforts open doors to experiential learning and post-graduate opportunities for students. Alumni also play a key role, volunteering at events like Career Jam, where 70 volunteers connected with over 250 students. Additionally, the ZEN Mentoring Program pairs juniors with alumni, resulting in a 69% increase in mentee/mentor pairs, fostering both personal and professional growth for students.

Health and Wellness

Equity in Mental Health on Campus

In the Fall of 2023, Skidmore partnered with the Steve Fund to join the fifth cohort of the Equity in Mental Health on Campus (EMHC) initiative. The EMHC is designed to help campuses identify and promote the mental health and well-being of students of color, beginning with a campus-specific needs assessment. The needs assessment data was collected in Fall 2023 by a working group of staff, faculty and students and included a data toolkit using reports summarizing multiple aspects of the campus climate around mental health (broadly defined). The data toolkit included: pre-existing institutional survey data (NACCC, 2021), archival data, historical data about Skidmore's founding, enrollment data over time (2010-2023), and utilization data for key campus services, including the Counseling Center.

The Steve Fund also conducted two listening sessions with Skidmore students of color via zoom in late Fall 2023. The listening sessions asked participants about their perceptions of campus resources, and their perceptions about how the campus did or did not prioritize students' mental health, with a focus on supporting students of color. Participants were additionally asked to describe how they experienced

the campus's racial climate and where they find social support. Listening session data was used to enrich and augment the historical and quantitative data.

In May 2024, the Steve Fund submitted the needs assessment report to the college, which included a campus cultural narrative, a data summary and five campus recommendations. The EMHC report states, "campus cultural narratives serve as an institutional 'story' that implicitly or explicitly speaks to campus values, beliefs and commitments to racial equity and justice over time." The five recommendations in the EMHC needs assessment included specific suggestions for how the College can promote the mental health and well-being of students of color, actively recruit, train and retain a diverse and culturally competent faculty and staff, elevate the cultural competency of the College as a whole, offer a range of supportive programs and services in varied formats and leverage community and external stakeholders.

Office of Residential Life

First Generation Focus Groups

The First-Generation Student Focus Group project at Skidmore College aimed to understand the experiences and needs of first-generation students, who make up 12% of the student body. Three focus groups were conducted in 2023-24, revealing themes related to transitions, academic experiences, access to resources, and sense of belonging. Key findings showed challenges with college adjustments, academic success, and resource access, particularly among students not in specialized programs. Action steps include creating pre-orientation programs, dedicated support staff, mentoring initiatives, and targeted communication to support first-generation students.

Student Academic Services

Tax Liability Assessment

International Student and Scholar Services experienced an increase in work around processing tax payments to cover student liability. This work involved offering tax preparation workshops, providing students with tax preparation software, and working with Financial Aid and Financial Services to review returns and process payments. This work is labor intensive and seemed out of the scope of our work. Indeed, it was a responsibility once housed in Financial Aid. Staff benchmarked a variety of institutions, particularly those in the NY-6 and discovered no other college pays tax liability for international student income. The central reason revolves around equity for other high need students, domestic or otherwise.

SAS coordinated meetings with Financial Services, Financial Aid, and the Bursar to evaluate the situation and discuss potential alternatives, including discontinuing the program. As a result of this assessment, SAS concluded that, regardless of the direction taken by other offices, continuing to assist students with tax liability was not in the scope of their work. SAS therefore encouraged discontinuing the services. Financial Aid resisted the latter and agreed to resume responsibility for providing the service to students. SAS will continue to provide tax preparation workshops and will supply students with subscriptions to tax preparation software.

International Student Transfer Out

An Institutional Research report found that "Skidmore's first-to-second fall retention numbers have dropped in recent years, falling below 88% for the F19 and F21 entering cohorts. Compared to F12-F14

when retention was generally 93-95%, this dip is concerning (though not entirely unexpected given the challenges of COVID). Although more first-year and sophomore students have been going on leave in recent years, many students are withdrawing from Skidmore with the goal of transferring to other institutions.” Within this context, SAS examined student roster data and confirmed that many international transfer-out students were bridging to other larger institutions, particularly those located in urban areas where international travel is more accessible.

As a matter of process, students transfer out of Skidmore using the Common App. This process requires a Dean’s Certification (integrity check) provided by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Requests for the Dean’s Certification begin appearing mid- to late-fall, and clearly signal a student’s intent to transfer. Skidmore has now implemented a new process, such that when a request is received the Associate Dean stages a gentle intervention attempting to connect students to academic, co-, or extracurricular resources or opportunities.

In 2024-25 we will again examine the data regarding transfer-out students and the interventive process. Our hope is that we experience fewer transfer-out results. SAS will also seek anecdotal data from students regarding their future educational intentions and goals.

References

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (GPT-4). <https://chat.openai.com/>