2011-12 CEPP Subcommittee on Transition and Transformation
Final Report

Introduction

In Fall 2011, CEPP formed a subcommittee to explore the curricular implications of the institutional initiative that has come to be known as Transition and Transformation ("T&T"). This initiative is part of a larger conversation about the relationship between student engagement and post-baccalaureate preparation that has been under way for some time.[1] In the Goals for Student Learning and Development, approved in 2009, the Skidmore faculty asserted that "we want our students to acquire both knowledge and capacities that enable them to initiate and embrace change and apply their lifelong learning in new contexts. We believe this learning takes place throughout our students' experience, both inside the classroom and out, on campus and off."[2] In 2010, several groups began exploring the theme of T&T, both within the context of the College as a whole and within the curriculum in particular, and CEPP received reports on their activities. That spring, President Glotzbach's *Strategic Renewal* called for College-wide efforts to "help our students understand and articulate more clearly the core values of a liberal arts education…so they can be more intentional in continuing to develop and use those key capacities throughout their lives, and so they will be better able to explain those values to others, including prospective graduate and professional schools and potential employers."[3] A year later, a document by the Transition and Transformation Working Group, entitled *Transition and Transformation: Using a Liberal Arts Education to Shape a Life*, was presented to and discussed with various campus groups.[4] Also in Spring 2011, the Middle States Periodic Report noted that post-baccalaureate preparedness is a major institutional concern, and highlighted the increasing interest of first-year students in certain "high impact" experiences that are considered especially engaging and transferable.[5] The institutional commitment to T&T continues to develop in numerous arenas, including the Alumni Learning Census conducted in 2010, the recent restructuring of Career Services (now called the Career Development Center), the inauguration of the SEE-Beyond Awards for student learning experiences during the summer, and the pedagogical innovations featured in the Spring 2012 issue of *Scope*.[6] In general, alumni have demonstrated keen interest in more effectively linking the Skidmore education to their post-baccalaureate lives. The attention to T&T at Skidmore is part of a much larger discussion in higher education that has generated numerous conferences and publications.[7]

CEPP recognizes that the boundaries between Skidmore and the rest of a student's life are increasingly porous. The educational experience that we offer can both transform students' modes of thought and action during the undergraduate years and continue to shape their futures as professionals and global citizens. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that certain teaching and learning practices have especially meaningful, positive influences within other educational institutions, and that many of them are also highly valued by our students and alumni. However, we also recognize that the T&T initiative raises challenging questions regarding resource allocation, the parameters of faculty work, and even the nature of a Skidmore education.

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[1] For a timeline of the Transition and Transformation initiative through May 2012, see http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/CEPP/T&T_Timeline(May2012).pdf.

[2] "Skidmore College Goals for Student Learning and Development," unanimously approved by the faculty on November 6, 2009. http://cms.skidmore.edu/assessment/goals-for-student-learning.cfm.

[3] *Strategic Renewal: Reframing our Priorities at the Midpoint of the* Strategic Plan, May 2010, p. 7; see . http://cms.skidmore.edu/planning/upload/Strategic-Renewal-5-17-10.pdf.

[4] These included Chairs and Directors, Divisional Roundtables, IPPC, SGA Senate and Academic Council, the Board of Trustees, and a CEPP-FEC forum for faculty only.

[5] *Periodic Review Report*, May 2011, pp. 8-11; see http://cms.skidmore.edu/academic_affairs/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&pageID=741656.

[6] http://content.yudu.com/A1wp00/ScopeMagSpring2012/resources/index.htm.

[7] See, for example, the conference proceedings of "Rethinking Success: From Liberal Arts to Careers in the 21st Century," documented at http://rethinkingsuccess.wfu.edu/.

The subcommittee was composed of four CEPP faculty members from different divisions: Rubén Graciani, Mimi Hellman (Subcommittee Chair), Chris Kopec, and Josh Ness (CEPP Chair). Janet Casey participated early in the process but resigned after assuming her position as Program Director of the Arthur Vining Davis grant. One of the CEPP student representatives, Thomas Rivera, attended some of the meetings. The group met regularly during the late Fall and Spring semesters and reported periodically to CEPP as a whole.

The subcommittee was charged to investigate how educational experiences often associated with T&T may enhance student learning during the undergraduate years and prepare students for post-graduate work and study; to determine the extent to which the College already offers such experiences, and whether delivery and participation are equally distributed among divisions and throughout the student body; and to identify the kinds of institutional support that faculty may require in order to strengthen delivery of and participation in experiences that may enhance students' academic transformation and readiness for post-baccalaureate opportunities.

We undertook two major projects:

- a study of current student participation in a selection of learning experiences often associated with T&T;
- a questionnaire about faculty involvement with and views on a similar range of experiences.

The focus of these projects should not be understood as a recommendation of educational priorities. Indeed, we chose to examine experiences that, while widely supported by many faculty and students across the disciplines, may also be inconsistently understood and engaged within the Skidmore community. *Our projects were conceived and implemented with the intention of documenting practices and attitudes and furthering a conversation, not formulating policy.* The following report was written by Mimi Hellman and Josh Ness in consultation with the rest of the subcommittee.

PROJECT I: Engaged liberal learning practices: student participation and consequences

Any discussion of what constitutes engaged learning and its relationship with post-baccalaureate preparation must consider not only the educational goals and efficacy of particular experiences, but also whether such experiences are equally available to all students and whether faculty delivery is adequately supported. The first subcommittee project investigated current participation in a group of experiences that can be identified as "Engaged Liberal Learning Practices" (ELLPs). Although the methods and outcomes of ELLPs continue to inspire lively discussion in the literature on higher education, they are widely believed to facilitate highly engaged learning, enable the translation of theory into practice, support transitions to post-baccalaureate life, and enrich relationships between students, faculty, and institutional culture.[8]

Process

The subcommittee solicited the data for this study from the Office of Academic Advising, in collaboration with the Office for Institutional Research. The data are derived from two sources: (1) a comprehensive dataset showing patterns of engagement by students in the classes of 2009, 2010, and 2011; and (2) a smaller dataset for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 academic years illustrating more recent trends. We focused on the following seven ELLPs:

- the First Year Experience
- an amalgamation of credit-bearing exploratory research, independent studies, senior experiences, and practica. This group included 200-level exploratory research courses in Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, independent studies supported by departments and programs, 3-4 credit senior research, capstone, thesis, colloquium, senior seminar, and production experiences, and practica courses (e.g., ED 350, GO 383, 384, and SW 382).

[8] The foundational text is George D. Kuh, "High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter" (AAC&U, 2009). For selected evidence of some of these experiences at Skidmore, see http://cms.skidmore.edu/assessment/high-impact.cfm.

- Honors Forum
- study abroad
- credit-bearing internships (courses coded in the catalogue as IN 100, XX 299, or XX 399)
- faculty-student collaborative research during the summer
- the SGA-sponsored Responsible Citizenship Internship Award (RCIA) for a summer experience

The ELLP designations assigned to courses were based on Catalog descriptions. *The experiences considered should not be interpreted as an exhaustive list of "engaged learning," nor should the inclusion, grouping, or omission of certain experiences be interpreted as an indication of educational equivalency or significance.* Rather, the ELLPs are the subset where (1) there is substantive support among some portion of the faculty that they have pedagogical value; and (2) they could be described based on existing, readily available descriptions (e.g., Catalog descriptions). As a result, this accounting undoubtedly fails to capture some activities. For example, we excluded service learning because the criteria for identifying that element in courses was unclear, and to minimize the likelihood of double counting particular experiences (e.g., a practica with service learning component).

Findings: incidence of participation

Fig. 1 quantifies the incidence of participation by students in the classes of 2009-2011 (n =1903 students). Participation in study abroad and the amalgamation of research, capstone and practica (experiences where there is some consensus regarding value) is widespread, although by no means universal. Credit-bearing internships, summer collaborative research and Honors Forum are accessed by a much smaller subset of students (18.5%, 7.7% and 4.6%, respectively), and RICA by the smallest group of all.

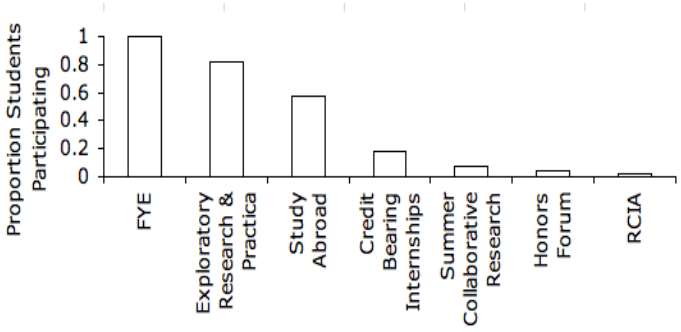

Fig 1. Student participation in selected ELLPs

Figs. 2-3 summarize patterns of engagement for individual students across their undergraduate careers. Here, we use the 2009-2011 data set to tally the total number of ELL experiences per student for all 1903 students and the participation rates across different ELLPs. We exclude the FYE since it is part of virtually every student's career.

The majority of graduates in 2009-2011 had participated in more than two ELL experiences during their four years at Skidmore. The mean number of ELLP per student was 2.88. Almost 10% of the students participated in six or more experiences, and 7% participated in no documented ELL experiences other than the FYE. The counts in Fig. 2 do not discriminate based on type (i.e., a student who participated in research every semester but no other activity would appear as an "8").

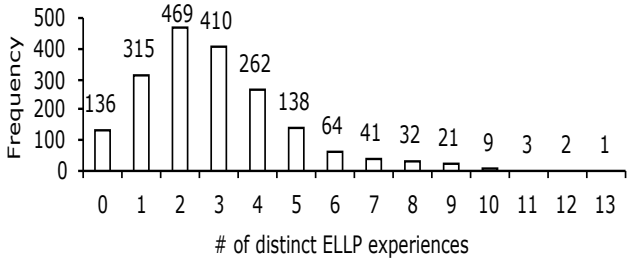

Fig 2. Among-student variation in ELLP participation

In contrast, Fig. 3 tallies the number of different ELL categories experienced by the individual students. Here, we treat the seven ELLPs as distinct varieties and again exclude the FYE. Based on these criteria, we conclude that 65% of the students who participated in multiple ELL experiences did so across more than one category, and no student participated in all seven ELLPs. To be clear, we tally the experiences in this

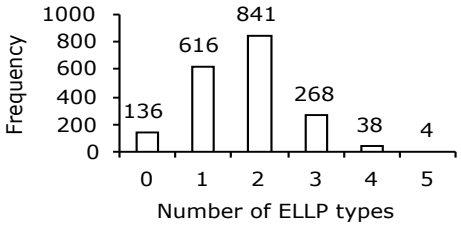

Fig 3. ELLP diversity

fashion not to imply an equivalency between experiences, but rather to quantify the magnitude of participation and the degree to which students engage in multiple experiences.

Findings: credit-bearing internships

Here, we examine participation rates in credit-bearing internships using data from the 2010-11 academic year and following summer. During that time, 61 faculty members from 22 departments and programs sponsored 156 credit-bearing internships. Most of these were pursued by students within (or between) their junior and senior years (Table 1). Participation is greatest in disciplines where praxis is closely tied to learning outcomes for the major (e.g., Environmental Studies) or where practical experience is critical for post-graduate study or career exploration (e.g., marketing, health professions, and communications-related fields) (Table 2).

Table 1. Credit-bearing Internships by Class Year

	2010-2011 & summer 2011 (n=156)	**Fall 2011**
First-Year	**10.3%** (n=16)	-
Sophomore	**12.9%** (n=20)	**6.4%** (n=3)
Junior	**34.2%** (n=53)	**14.9%** (n=7)
Senior	**42.6%** (n=66)	**78.7%** (n=37)

Table 2. Academic Distribution of Credit-Bearing Internships

	2010-2011 & summer 2011 (n=156; 61 faculty; 22 dept)	**2011-2012 (incomplete account)** (n=118)
Management & Business	**21.1%** (n=33)	**14.4%** (n=17)
Health & Exercise Sciences	**15.4%** (n=24)	**21.1%** (n=25)
Environmental Studies	**9.0%** (n=14)	**11.9%** (n=14)
English	**8.3%** (n=13)	**5.9%** (n=7)
Psychology	**8.3%** (n=13)	**16.1%** (n=19)
Foreign Languages & Literatures	**4.5%** (n=10)	**1.7%** (n=2)
Arts Administration	**5.1%** (n=8)	**2.5%** (n=3)
Studio Art	**5.1%** (n=8)	**4.2%** (n=5)
Government	**4.5%** (n=7)	**1.7%** (n=2)
Other: Biology, Music, History, Art History, Theater, and more		

Based on existing surveys of student participants in credit-bearing internships and the SGA-sponsored Responsible Citizenship Internship Award (RCIA), we find evidence that former interns perceive the internships to reinforce and develop specific competencies, including those that are closely linked to the College's *Goals for Student Learning and Development* (Table 3). The internship experience also helped students make decisions regarding their post- baccalaureate aspirations (Table 4).

Table 3. Links between internship experiences and student-reported gains in learning, including those areas associated with Skidmore's *Goals for Student Learning and Development* (provided in rightmost column).

		Credit-Bearing Internships			**RCIA Internships**		
		Moderate, Large, or Very Large Gain	Large or Very Large Gain		Moderate, Large, or Very Large Gain	Large or Very Large Gain	*
	Readiness for more demanding research	**69.3%**	33.9%		**47%**	35%	*Demonstrate advanced learning and synthesis…*
	Ability to read and understand primary literature	**50.0%**	32.8%		**77%**	56%	
	Ability to integrate theory and practice	**67.2%**	57.8%		**37%**	21%	*Integrate and apply knowledge and creative thought…*
	Ability to analyze data and other information	**65.7%**	31.3%		**86%**	56%	*Gather, analyze, integrate, and apply varied forms of information…*
	Learning ethical conduct	**68.8%**	42.2%		**86%**	51%	*Examine one's own values and their uses as ethical criteria in thought and action…*
	Skill in how to give an effective oral presentation	**38.1%**	27.0%		**93%**	70%	*Communicate effectively…*
	Skill in writing	**42.2%**	26.6%		**63%**	33%	
	Self-confidence	**69.8%**	46.0%		**91%**	72%	*Embrace intellectual integrity, humility, and courage…*
	Learning to work independently	**73.5%**	51.6%		**86%**	53%	*Think critically, creatively, and independently…*

Table 4. Outcomes of credit-bearing internships and the SGA-sponsored Responsible Citizenship Internship Award (RCIA) as they relate to clarification of post-baccalaureate aspirations. Numbers show percentage of students responding in the affirmative.

		Credit-Bearing Internships			**RCIA Internships**	
		Moderate, Large, or Very Large Gain	Large or Very Large Gain		Moderate, Large, or Very Large Gain	Large or Very Large Gain
	Clarification of career path	**75.4%**	41.6%		**79%**	52%
	Understanding of the preparation, methods, and work in your field	**78.4%**	56.9%		**79%**	58%
	Understanding of how professionals work on real problems	**87.4%**	69.9%		**88%**	64%
	Understanding of how professionals in your field think	**87.3%**	63.5%		**95%**	69%
	Learning technical skills and techniques in your field	**76.2%**	54%		**79%**	60%

Findings: participation and demographics

We also organized data regarding the participation of white, ALANA and international students in ELLPs based on our knowledge of experiences accumulated by graduating seniors in the classes of 2009, 2010 and 2011. We asked whether levels of participation in ELLPs were disproportionate among those three groups (i.e., different from what would be expected if all participated equally after accounting for differences in the sizes of the three populations, which are 78.3, 19 and 2.6% of the student body, respectively).

Statistically speaking, realized participation in study abroad, introductions to exploratory research in the natural sciences, senior research, independent studies, and practica is consistent with expectations based on the size of the three cohorts (Table 5). However, participation in summer collaborative research, senior research in the natural sciences, honors forum, and RCIA is significantly less than expected for ALANA students. There is weaker evidence that the incidence of participation in a credit-bearing internship or independent study is also disproportionately distributed among these three groups. In total, ALANA students were less likely to participate in seven of the eleven ELLPs we identify here (near what we might expect based on random chance), but the differences in participation were statistically robust ($p<0.05$) for four of these ELLPs.

There were also some differences in participation based on gender (Table 5). Specifically, men participated in seven of the eleven identified ELLPs, less than expected based on enrollment demographics (39.6% of the students of the 2009, 2010, and 2011 classes). Still, gender differences were less pronounced in any one ELLP (with the possible exception of Honors Forum and study abroad), relative to the ALANA-International-White comparisons.

Students whose financial status was described as "high need" represented 12.3% of the classes of 2009, 2010, and 2011. These students participated in five of the eleven identified ELLPs with less frequency than expected based on enrollment demographics, a pattern consistent with the random

expectation (Table 5). Nonetheless, some trends were pronounced. High-need students were disproportionately likely to participate in research in the sciences, practica, and summer collaborative research, and less likely to participate in Honors Forum and internships (whether credit-bearing or supported via RCIA).

Table 5. The ratio of observed to expected participation in selected ELLPs based on student identities in the classes of 2009-2011. Students were described based on race (ALANA, international, white), gender, and financial aid. Gender and financial aid were treated as binary variables (i.e., male or female, high need or not). Expected participation rates are based on the demographics of the student body. Values less than one indicate less participation than expected if participation were proportional to representation in the student body. Note that values less than 1 should be *expected* in half of the instances.

ELLP	ALANA	International	White	Male	High-Need
Summer Research (Collaborative)	0.81	2.23	1.01	0.93	1.27
Honors Forum	0.29	2.58	1.12	0.54	0.68
Study Abroad	0.98	1.06	1.00	0.73	0.94
Exploratory Research (Sciences)	1.07	0.80	0.99	0.84	1.32
Senior Research (Sciences)	0.79	1.82	1.02	0.97	1.18
Senior Research (Other)	1.10	0.23	1.00	0.77	1.01
Senior Experience	0.91	0.91	1.03		0.82
Independent Study	1.15	1.29	0.95	1.10	1.06
Credit-bearing Internship	0.78	0.83	1.06	1.04	0.78
Practica	1.13	0.89	0.97	0.95	1.17
Responsible Citizenship Internship Award recipient	0.43	6.14	0.97	1.17	0.62

We could characterize gender differences in ELLP participation as pervasive but shallow, and the ALANA disparity in ELLP participation as localized and pronounced. High-need students demonstrate a third pattern: enhanced participation in some ELL experiences (particularly in the sciences) but participation at rates markedly lower than expected in others (particularly internships and Honors Forum). We believe these data regarding inter-group differences in participation are compelling, with several qualifications that any further study should take into account:

- The extent to which differences in ELLP participation reflect differences in access (e.g., awareness, support, or encouragement) is unclear and needs to be addressed.
- There are certainly instances in which participation in one ELLP alters the capacity to participate in subsequent or concurrent ELLPs. This engagement is time-intensive (e.g., time allocated to a practica could be time taken from a senior research project).
- Participation may alter students' perceptions of the value of these activities, stage subsequent activities (exploratory research precedes senior research), or qualitatively alter a mentor's capacity to endorse the students for other activities. These factors may also influence the patterns of participation demonstrated in Figs. 2-3.
- Students have multiple identities. We recognize, for example, that participation by a male, high-need ALANA student may be influenced by a variety of factors, or that we

may inadvertently infer a relationship between participation and one identity (e.g., race) that is in fact driven by another identity (e.g., gender).

- Some patterns of participation are more consistent over time than others. We used data from the 2010-2011 academic year (all students, not just the graduates of 2011) to explore whether current participation deviated from that expected based on proportional representation. Student participation in summer research is becoming more representative. For example, participation by ALANA students was 81% of the expected rate for the classes of 2009, 2010 and 2011 (Table 4), and was 85% of the expected rate in the summers of 2011 and 2012. There is also evidence that some patterns are becoming more pronounced. For example, ALANA students represent 20.9% of the student body during the 2010-2011 academic year, but only participated in 13.5% of the credit-bearing internships from fall 2010 through summer 2011 and 12.8% of the credit-bearing internships in fall 2011. The difference is particularly pronounced for RICA internships, wherein ALANA students were 14.3% of the recipients in summer 2010 and 3.6% of the recipients in summer 2011. We find similar patterns with students with high financial need. This group represents 17.6% of the student body, but only participated in 9.6% of the credit-bearing internships in fall 2010-summer 2011 and 6.4% in fall 2011. High need students received 15.4% of the RICA internships awards in summer 2010 and 3.6% in summer 2011.

The ELLP footprint: curricular presence and faculty work

Faculty discussions of at least some of the ELLPs examined in this study often include debates about the proportion of institutional value that is placed on them in comparison with other kinds of learning experiences, and whether the provision and encouragement of ELLPs represents a redefinition of, or even a departure from, the goals and methods of a liberal arts education. Further questions arise regarding the resources and faculty time that these experiences require. These issues are very important and demand much more attention. While their complexities are beyond the scope of this report, we can offer one further statistic that may be useful.

Based on the calculations and assumptions detailed in the footnote below, the percentage of credits accrued by the classes of 2009, 2010 and 2011 for *curriculum-based ELL experiences during the academic year* is 4.4%.[9] In other words, although it may sometimes seem that such experiences are becoming a dominant presence in the definition of a Skidmore education, they in fact constitute a small fraction of a student's total academic experience. To take a specific example, students in the classes of 2009, 2010 and 2011 participated in 423 credit-bearing internships. This may seem like a large number, but it represent barely 2 tenths of 1 percent of the collective academic credits (even when generously attributing three credits to each of those credit-bearing internships).

[9] The descriptions of the classes of 2009, 2010 and 2011 include 1903 students. If we assume that students enroll in 18 credits per semester for 8 semesters, and that the average ELL experience carries three credits, then the three classes collectively accrued 274,032 (=1903 * 18 * 8) credits. Again, this does not include the FYE because it is intended to act an ELLP with near-universal student participation. We further assume that the elements of the study abroad or domestic exchange experience that befit the ELLP designation are often external to the curriculum itself. Therefore, an accounting of the footprint of ELLPs within the curriculum would not include study abroad except insofar as other ELLPs, such as an independent study or practicum, occurred during the abroad experience. Moreover, other ELL experiences such as Honors Forum, summer collaborative research, and summer RCIA internships occur outside of the curriculum. This limits the ELLPs that occur within the academic year to capstones, research experiences (exploratory and for seniors), credit-bearing internships, and practica.

Accounting for the footprint of ELLPs in terms of faculty time is far more challenging. All of the ELLPs studied involve participation by faculty. This may include direct participation (e.g., collaborative research), supervision (e.g., independent studies, individualized discussion and evaluation of credit-bearing internships), and the composition of recommendations (e.g., to prospective supervisors, mentors and funding agencies external to the College, study abroad programs). Some departments provide teaching credit to support the provision of capstone experiences or to aggregate some of the mentoring elements of senior research. However, other activities, such as the supervision or evaluation of an honors thesis, are understood as part of the overall faculty role and receive no teaching credit or other compensation.

PROJECT II: Faculty Questionnaire on Aspects of Teaching and Learning

The second subcommittee project was a questionnaire that explored faculty involvement with and views on some of the same ELLPs investigated in the first project, as well as others that are often cited in the literature on engaged liberal learning. The majority of the questionnaire focused on the following seven experiences:

- collaborative projects with faculty
- culminating senior experiences
- independent study
- internships
- practical work in a particular field
- service or community-based learning
- study abroad

For each experience, we first asked whether the respondent worked with/supervised or encouraged students to participate in each experience. We then asked how the respondent regarded the experience in relation to Skidmore's Goals for Student Learning and Development as well as the learning goals of their home department/program; whether the experience should be credit bearing; and whether it can provide skills and knowledge that students can apply to post-baccalaureate work/study, both in general and in areas related to the respondent's home department or program. We also asked the respondent to evaluate current institutional support for each experience. Additional questions asked about the importance of faculty in helping students in general, and majors in particular, reflect on the value of their learning experiences and plan for post-baccalaureate work/study. We also provided four narrative boxes in which respondents could recommend changes in institutional support for specific experiences or student reflection in general, share an anecdote about engaged learning, or comment on any aspect of the questionnaire. The data analysis performed by IR was very extensive, and we report only those elements that we believe are most salient for future conversation and investigation.

<u>Process</u>

The subcommittee developed the questionnaire in consultation with Joe Stankovich and Leanne Casale at the Office of Institutional Research, and several drafts were discussed in meetings of the entire CEPP membership. At the recommendation of IR, we used Qualtrics software. John Berman reviewed the final version informally on behalf of the IRB and deemed it exempt from formal review. Shortly before distribution, Mimi Hellman announced the project at a faculty meeting and encouraged participation.

The questionnaire was distributed via an email list compiled by IR. Email distribution enabled us to avoid duplicate submissions and send reminder messages to non-respondents without cluttering the inboxes of those who had already responded. All responses were anonymous and response data will be kept confidential by IR; *no responses have been or will be traced to individual email addresses*. The questionnaire was available for ten days and two reminders were sent to non-respondents.

Participation and demographics

The questionnaire was distributed to 348 faculty members. The email list included all FT and PT faculty who taught at least one course in 2010-11 or 2011-12, with the exception of those who taught only physical fitness classes. We received 132 complete surveys for a response rate of 38%. Demographic questions included full- or part-time status, tenure status, division, and gender expression. Compared with the faculty population as a whole (Table 6), the greatest discrepancies were in tenure status (non-TT under-represented), FT/PT (PT under-represented), and two of the divisions (humanities over-represented, studio and performing arts under-represented).

Table 6. Questionnaire participation. Boldface indicates disproportionate participation.

	faculty population	survey respondents
female	57%	57%
tenure/tenure-track	50%	**81%**
part time	**28%**	5%
humanities	25%	**36%**
natural science	26%	28%
pre-professional	10%	8%
social science	15%	17%
studio & performing arts	**24%**	11%

Findings: faculty participation and encouragement

Respondents were asked how frequently they (a) work with or supervised students in or (b) encourage students to participate in each of the seven ELLPs.[10] A majority identify themselves as working with/supervising students in internships, study abroad, faculty-student collaborative projects, culminating senior experiences and independent studies (Fig. 4). Approximately 40% participate in practica or service/community-based learning. A majority describe themselves as often or occasionally encouraging students to participate in *all* of these ELLPs, and the ELLPs with the greatest aggregate encouragement are also those with the greatest aggregate participation. However, the reported frequency of encouragement *of students* exceeds the rate of participation *with students* in almost all cases (except for independent studies, where >85% of the reporting faculty both encourage and participate). Differences are most pronounced for practica and service/community-based learning: two-thirds of the respondents encourage students to participate (66% and 67%, respectively), but only a minority work with students in these capacities (41% and 47%, respectively).

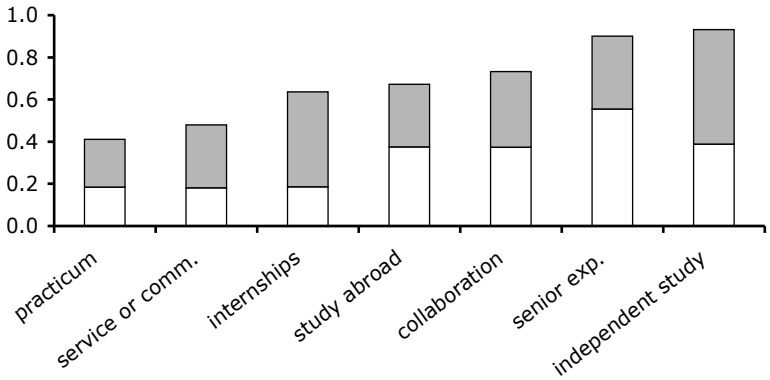

Fig 4. The proportion of faculty that describe themselves as participating often (white bars), occasionally (filled bars) or never (negative space) in particular ELLPs.

[10] The scale: never, occasionally, often.

Faculty participation is inconsistent across ELLPs, division lines, and demographic lines. For the purposes of the following analysis, participating faculty are those that self-identify as participating often or occasionally. A narrow majority of respondents in the Humanities and the Studio and Performing Arts participate in faculty-student collaborative projects, whereas reported participation is much higher by faculty in the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Pre-professional disciplines (71.4, 94.4 and 100%, respectively). Respondents in Pre-professional disciplines and the Visual and Performing Arts report a greater frequency of participation in practica than do their counterparts in the Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities (67%, 54%, 38%, 35 and 32%, respectively). Respondents in Pre-professional disciplines report a greater frequency of participation in service/community-based learning than do their counterparts in Studio and Performing Arts, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities (90%, 62%, 51%, 48% and 32%, respectively), and greater faculty participation in internships (90%, 58%, 64%, 62% and 61%, respectively). Pre-professional respondents also more frequently encourage students to participate in those activities. Participation in culminating senior experiences and independent studies is consistent across the divisions. There is also some evidence that faculty participation and encouragement vary with gender; participation by male respondents in practica and service/community-based learning is barely half that observed for female respondents, and most male respondents (73% and 69%) describe themselves as *never* participating in those two ELLPs.

Findings: value of ELLPs

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree, on a five-point scale, with assertions that each ELLP:[11]

- can contribute to Skidmore's Goals for Student Learning and Development (GSLD)
- can contribute to the learning goals of the respondent's home department/program
- should be credit-bearing
- can provide skills and knowledge applicable to post-baccalaureate work/study *in general*
- can provide skills and knowledge applicable to post-baccalaureate work/study in areas *related to the major of the respondent's home department/program*

- Consensus among divisions. *There is no intersection of division and assertions regarding ELLPs for which the average response was biased towards disagreement or disapproval* (i.e., a score <3). The greatest shared enthusiasm is for culminating senior experiences: respondents strongly agree with the assertion that it can contribute to the GSLD (mean score = 4.62), can contribute to learning goals of the home department/program (4.63), should be credit-bearing (4.65), is applicable to post-baccalaureate work in general (4.63), and is applicable in areas related to the major (4.72).

  Relatively speaking, service/community-based learning has the least overall support, but even here respondents agree with assertions that it can contribute to the GSLD (mean score = 4.03), is applicable to post-baccalaureate work in general (3.99), and is applicable in areas related to the major (3.88). They also generally agree with the assertion that it can contribute to the learning goals of home departments (3.76) but are more ambivalent about whether it should be credit-bearing (3.46). In sum, the most accurate generalization is that there is support throughout the faculty for *all* of the ELLPs studied, even as some experiences may receive more support in certain sectors of the curriculum.

- Differences among divisions. Respondents have a range of views regarding culminating senior experiences, independent studies, practical work, and service/community-based learning that are unrelated to division. However, the divisions hold differing views regarding collaborative projects, internships, and study abroad. For example, the social scientists are least likely to view internships as contributing to programmatic learning goals or worthy of credit. The natural

[11] The scale: 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree.

scientists (and to some extent the pre-professional disciples) see stronger links between collaborative research and learning aspirations. The natural scientists see weaker links between study abroad and various learning aspirations than do colleagues in other divisions. The single least enthusiastic intersection of division and ELLP learning outcome involves faculty in Studio and Performing Arts evaluating whether service/community-based learning should be credit bearing (mean score = 3.29).

- Demographic differences. When treated as three groups, the perceptions of tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track respondents are indistinguishable. Female respondents are more likely to conclude that internships can contribute to the GSLD, and that service- or community-based learning can contribute in many ways (to the GSLD, department/program goals, should be credit-bearing, applicable to post-baccalaureate work in general).

- Perceived value and realized participation and/or encouragement. There is robust statistical evidence for the expected correlations between participation in or encouragement of particular ELPPs by an individual faculty member and a belief that these activities are valuable for the students and consistent with the College learning goals. Those who *never* participate *or* encourage are less likely to identify an ELLP as valuable; those who *occasionally* participate *and* encourage see greater value; and those who *often* participate *and* encourage see great value. But we cannot infer causality from this correlation; faculty may participate and encourage because they see value in an activity, but it is also possible that, for at least some, participation changes the perception of value.

Findings: institutional support

Respondents were asked to evaluate existing institutional support for the ELLPs in one of the following terms: insufficient, optimal, too much, not sure. Most chose one of the first three options for internships, collaborative projects, study abroad, senior experiences, and independent studies, but a majority were unsure whether existing institutional support for practica and service/community-based learning is appropriate (Fig. 5).

None of the ELLPs is considered excessively supported by a majority of respondents (Fig. 6). Study abroad stands out for having 50% describe existing support as "optimal." A majority of respondents evaluate existing support for faculty involvement in independent studies, culminating senior experiences, and collaborative projects as insufficient (77%, 60% and 52%, respectively). Among those who did not select "not sure," a majority describe existing support for faculty involvement in independent studies, collaborative projects, culminating senior experiences,

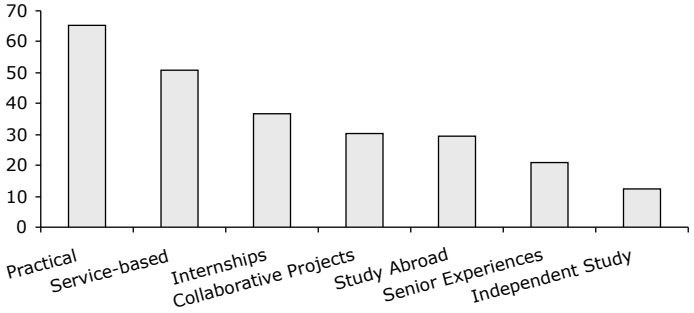

Fig 5. The percentage of respondents uncertain whether existing institutional support is optimal, insufficient, or excessive.

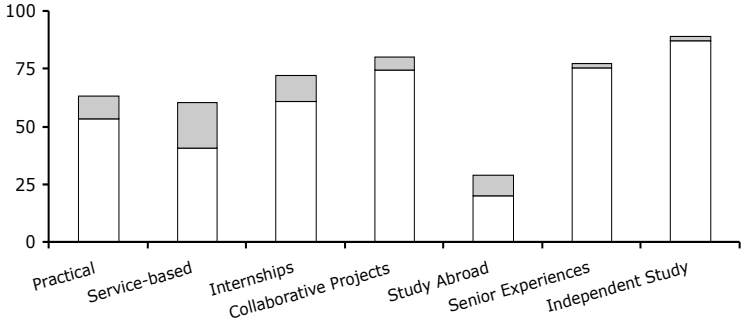

Fig 6. Faculty evaluations of institutional support for ELLPs. White bars indicate percentage of faculty that describe existing support is insufficient, filled bars the percentage that describe existing support as excessive, and negative space the percentage that evaluate existing support as optimal. The subset of respondents who were unsure about evaluating existing support are omitted (see Fig 5).

internships, and practical work as insufficient.

Non-tenure track respondents are more likely to describe existing support for study abroad and internships as insufficient, and are unanimous in articulating a need for greater support of faculty involvement in internships. Within the divisions, those in the Natural Scientists and Pre-Professional programs are significantly more likely to describe existing support for collaborative projects as insufficient (relative to their peers in the Social Sciences, with Humanities and Visual and Performing arts being intermediate), and Humanities respondents see a greater need for additional support of faculty involvement in culminating senior experiences than do those in Studio and Performing Arts (with the remaining divisions intermediate). Female respondents see a greater need for additional support of faculty involvement in service/community-based learning than do their male counterparts. Tenure track respondents are more likely than tenured or non-tenure track ones to describe the resources allocated to study abroad as excessive.

Findings: faculty roles

Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate, on a five-point scale, the importance of faculty in:[12]

- helping *all students* reflect on the value of their learning experiences
- helping *majors in their home department/program* reflect on the value of their learning
- helping *all students* plan for post-baccalaureate work or study
- helping *majors* plan for post-baccalaureate work or study

A majority of respondents describe faculty as very important in helping majors in their home department/program reflect on the value of their learning experiences (very important: 54%, important: 37%), and very important in helping their majors plan for post-baccalaureate work or study (60% and 29%, respectively). A majority of respondents also describe helping *all* students (i.e., including non-majors) reflect on the value of their learning experiences as being very important (very important: 54%, important: 37%), but they are less likely to strongly endorse the importance of helping *all* students plan for post-baccalaureate work/study (very important: 39%, important : 44%).

Responses are largely indistinguishable across different faculty identities, although as a group the untenured tenure-track respondents, those in the Studio and Performing Arts, and female respondents are marginally (but not statistically significantly) more likely to endorse the importance of these faculty roles relative to their tenured or non-tenure track counterparts, those in other disciplines, and male respondents. No significant differences emerge from tenure/gender interactions or tenure/division interactions. There is some evidence that female Natural Scientists and male Social Scientists see a greater role for faculty in helping *all* students reflect on the value of their learning experiences relative to their intra-disciplinary gender counterparts, but the numbers of respondents are too small to support any useful conclusions.

Findings: narrative boxes

The questionnaire provided opportunities for respondents to add narrative comments on:

- recommendations for changes in institutional support for each ELLP
- recommendations for changes in institutional support for faculty involvement with students' reflections on their learning and/or post-baccalaureate planning
- the most engaging college learning experiences they have observed
- any other comments on the subject of the questionnaire

Respondents entered a total of 470 narrative comments, the vast majority (353) focusing on institutional support for specific ELLPs. They include substantial reflections, concrete suggestions, and criticisms of the questionnaire itself. It is difficult to identify patterns, and even those that do seem clear should not be taken as representative of the Skidmore faculty as a whole, but there are some noteworthy trends.

[12] The scale: 1 very unimportant, 2 unimportant, 3 neither unimportant nor important, 4 important and 5 very important.

In general, the nature of the comments parallels the numerical ratings. Regarding institutional support, the greatest number of positive comments concerns study abroad (current support rated optimal by 50%). The most uncertainty is about practica and service/community-based learning (65% and 50% not sure, respectively). Although some question the place of service/community-based learning in a liberal arts curriculum, the collective ambivalence seems to stem mainly from a lack of clear definitions for these experiences and uncertainty about whether they are relevant to a respondent's discipline.

There are many calls for some kind of compensation (course credit, course release, stipend, or increase in existing funding) for faculty involvement with collaborative projects, culminating senior projects, and independent study (rated as insufficiently supported by 52%, 60%, and 77%, respectively). There is also concern about inequities in discipline, division, or field-specific expectations for faculty involvement in these activities. Some respondents question whether undergraduates are mature enough academically to contribute substantively to faculty research, or to learn more deeply through independent work than through classroom-based experiences. Some respondents question the academic rigor of internships and study abroad. There is also concern about the institutional expectations and personnel implications of faculty involvement with all the types of work addressed in the questionnaire.

Calls for stronger support for faculty advising and/or student reflection appear in comments on several ELLPs, notably independent study, internships, study abroad, and service/community-based learning. This theme continues in responses to the more general question about support for faculty involvement with student reflection on learning and post-baccalaureate planning (a total of 50 comments). As discussed above, respondents strongly endorse this role in regard to all students and especially in regard to majors. The comments offer numerous specific suggestions, including stronger connections between faculty and the Career Development Center, stronger alumni networking for both faculty and students, e-portfolios, and faculty access to information about professional prospects in specific fields. But there is also concern that post-baccalaureate planning does not fall not within the role or expertise of faculty, or that an emphasis on professional outcomes could undercut liberal arts learning. It appears that, in some cases, post-baccalaureate planning is equated with the process of finding a job.

Responses to the question about the most engaging learning experiences that respondents have ever observed yielded a total of 48 comments—many of them quite moving in their demonstrations of pedagogical imagination and investment. The many qualities that respondents associate with student engagement include taking initiative, exercising agency and independence, developing close relationships with faculty, reflecting on learning, facing challenges that demand substantive commitments of time and effort, dealing with difference, questioning positions, working on projects that develop over time, and synthesizing different learning experiences or applying them in new contexts.

Finally responses to the opportunity to share additional thoughts (a total of 19 comments) include calls for further investigation and discussion of tensions between classroom-based learning and ELLPs. There are also concerns about the institutional status and implications of the T&T initiative and its place in a liberal arts curriculum, as well as reiterated points about faculty workload and compensation.

Recommendations

The two projects described above begin to define the complex place of T&T within the Skidmore curriculum, but they raise many questions and will be useful only if they become a basis for further investigation and robust, inclusive debate. In particular, we recommend the following:

<u>Develop a more creative, inclusive definition of the faculty role in T&T</u>

T&T is an institutional conversation that has numerous stakeholders and is unfolding in multiple arenas. While its concerns reach beyond the curriculum, it is fundamentally about student learning and the faculty must continue to discuss its implications for teaching and advising. The goal should not be universal agreement or any kind of mandate, but rather a creative, inclusive approach to faculty work that recognizes the challenges faced by young adults in the 21st century and affirms both the Goals for Student

Learning and Development and the unique missions and methods of individual departments and programs. Future discussions might benefit from attention to a few salient points:

- *T&T can be about a student's undergraduate years as well as her/his post-baccalaureate life.* It is not simply about instrumentalizing knowledge or skills and graduating with a jobs; it is about a multifaceted, cumulative, integrated, reflective learning process that unfolds over a sustained period of time with the support of numerous personnel and resources. Moving forward, a key concern will be to shape faculty roles in relation to those of other groups (Student Affairs, Academic Advising, CDC, etc.).
- *Individual faculty members are not expected to engage every pedagogical implication of T&T.* Supporting this process is a collective enterprise; everyone must be free to define her/his own position and role, or even to choose not to participate in the conversation. A faculty member's preference to not participate should not constrain the freedom of others to do so.
- *T&T can be as much about classroom-based teaching and learning as it is about independent work and experiences outside the classroom.* The most widely accepted definition of "high impact" learning is expansive enough to include a very wide range of experiences. As Nancy O'Neill summarizes:
  - They are effortful
  - They help students build substantial relationships
  - They help students engage across differences
  - They provide students with rich feedback
  - They help students apply and test what they are learning in new situations
  - They provide opportunities for students to reflect on the people they are becoming.[13]

This description can apply to virtually any learning experience in which both students and faculty are active immersed in some kind of learning challenge (intellectual, ethical, interpersonal, creative, physical, etc.) and able to articulate its relevance to life in the world beyond the learning space. Indeed, if that is T&T, the Skidmore faculty already embraces it in far richer ways than any study can capture.

<u>Strengthen visibility, resource sharing, and support for faculty participation</u>

Faculty engagement with T&T might be strengthened if documentation and resources related to the rich range of existing practice could be made available in a centralized, accessible location (virtual, not physical). We wonder whether some of the unevenness in responses to the questionnaire stems more from a lack of information and models than from a lack of interest or commitment. For example, while respondents are not unsupportive of service/community-based learning, many appear to be unfamiliar with exactly what it entails and how it is supported.

Timely, anticipatory communication between faculty and other stakeholders is also crucial. While academic units and administrative offices will necessarily approach the subject in different ways and autonomy is often essential, precious time and resources can be wasted through unintentional duplication of work, belated exchanges of materials, and unawareness of best practices and potential synergies. The most logical locus for supporting such communication is the group that will replace the Assessment Steering Committee. We recommend that this group make a strong commitment to facilitating the reporting, support, and, when appropriate, integration of T&T-related initiatives across the College *while they are in process*, not just after they have been completed.

There is a strong sense that faculty need greater support to participate in many of the ELLPs. Most ELLPs are unconventional learning experiences, and the College has a reward structure that, understandably, focuses on rewarding the practices that make up the bulk of the curriculum. Faculty may feel unable to take on additional responsibilities that they perceive to be unrecognized and/or unrewarded within the community, even as they may recognize the educational value of that work. Some are

[13] Nancy O'Neill, "What Makes a Practice High-Impact?" *Peer Review* 12/4 (Fall 2010).

incapable of taking on any additional responsibilities: they cannot add more hours to the day than those already allocated to the College. Therefore, if there is consensus that a given experience is valuable to students but burdensome for faculty, faculty involvement should be incentivized, richly supported with easily accessible resources, and rewarded—even as we protect the freedom of faculty to shape their teaching practices as they see fit.

Equalize student access

Project II indicates that, although the faculty views may vary, there is considerable support for ELLPs. However, the findings of Project I suggest that there may be some uneven patterns of student participation in certain ELLPs based on gender, ALANA identity, and financial need. No study is required to understand that high-need students may be unable to participate in unpaid summer internships, or that some students may not have the opportunity-yielding networks that come with socioeconomic privilege and a family culture of professional ambition. But it is not clear that all faculty are aware of the potential for inequity or prepared to help students overcome it—or even that all faculty consider ELLP access essential or regard the encouragement of ELLPs as part of their roles as academic advisors. Further investigation and discussion is needed to determine whether demographic differences in ELLP participation are persistent and significant, and, if so, how they should be addressed. This concern is fundamentally related to Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*: to support a diverse student body, we must ensure that all students can choose to experience any of the opportunities that may enrich their educations and support their post-baccalaureate transitions. The SEE-Beyond Awards are a step in this direction: the first round of awards in Spring 2012 funded 21 experiences that spanned the disciplines and provided opportunities to a diverse group of students who are demographically representative of the overall population.

Engage the e-portfolio conversation

There is a substantial conversation under way in higher education regarding the potential and challenges of using electronic portfolios as tools to help students document, integrate, strengthen, and reflect on their diverse academic experiences during the undergraduate years, and also to plan for post-baccalaureate opportunities.[14] Some departments at Skidmore already use paper or electronic portfolios to support student learning and/or curricular assessment, but there has been no sustained, inclusive discussion of the educational value, professional relevance, or resource implications of this practice. In July 2012, Katie Hauser (Art History) served as a delegate to conference on e-portfolios sponsored by the Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL) and reported to incoming CEPP chair Michael Arnush, the Faculty Assessment Coordinator, and the Assessment Facilitator. We recommend that her report, and the perspectives of departments that already use portfolios, become the basis for a more purposeful exploration.

Learn from FSSE

Skidmore has never participated in the faculty counterpart of NSSE, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Conducting these two surveys jointly can reveal useful resonance and difference between faculty and student perceptions of teaching and learning. According to the FSSE administrator:

> The survey is designed to measure several aspects of faculty life: 1) faculty perceptions and expectations of how often students engage in educational activities empirically linked to high levels of learning and development; 2) the importance that faculty place on various areas of learning; 3) the nature and frequency of faculty-student interactions; and 4) how faculty members organize their time, both in and out of the classroom. The information that faculty members

[14] See, for example, http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-wi09/pr-wi09_eportfolios.cfm and www.aaeebl.org/international_j_of_eportfolio.

provide helps participating institutions identify areas of strength and improvement, as well as leads to constructive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of students' educational experience.[15]

The scope of the survey obviously extends beyond the themes of T&T, but it includes a number of relevant items and it could be instructive to compare views on T&T-related items with views on other educational concerns. It is our understanding that the College has recently registered for the joint administration of NSSE and FSSE in Spring 2013.

Close the loop

It should go without saying that the efforts of all College committees, and especially the time and energy that faculty members spent on ambitious projects designed to further productive conversations, are valuable only if the results of this work are disseminated and discussed with a meaningful degree of accountability for responsive action. But resources are finite, committees turn over, reports are filed away, discussions get snagged on points of contention, and good work does not always produce results. One of the long-term results of this, of course, is a loss of credibility and investment. While acknowledging the many commitments that always fill CEPP's plate, we hope that this report will help shape substantive community conversation and an affirmation of the centrality of faculty vision and voice as Skidmore shapes a curriculum for the 21st century.

[15] For more information, see http://fsse.iub.edu.