Concluding reflections

Within the bounds of good sense and fairness, and within the frameworks that the faculty as a whole or the academic departments and programs have formally embraced, individual Skidmore faculty are responsible for deciding just how to conduct their courses, what materials and perspectives to include, and what educational goals are to be achieved. The suggestions contained in this document cannot and should not infringe upon that extraordinarily important principle of academic freedom or upon the many case-by-case decisions that good instructors must make in relation to their students.

With that central principle in mind, we encourage faculty to continue to discuss teaching priorities and strategies and the challenges of enhancing and sustaining academic standards and expectations in an effort to come to further areas of general agreement. Individual Skidmore faculty experience has already shown that classroom structures and protocols that are philosophically grounded and carefully explained to students actually lead to less, not more, faculty monitoring of students and imposing of penalties. Such structures can enable both faculty and students to set aside the administration of the rules and focus their full attention on the academic substance of the course. The academic tone and tenor of the College will be strengthened by strong and more uniform expectations from the Skidmore faculty as a whole. In turn, we believe that the majority of our students, including some number of those who are currently underachieving, will rise to the occasion and achieve academic excellence.