

**SKIDMORE COLLEGE SELF-STUDY
FINAL REPORT**

Presented by:

**Skidmore College
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Presented to:

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

**Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866**

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- A heading indicating the standard or topic under discussion
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SKIDMORE COLLEGE SELF-STUDY

May 2016

Executive Summary

Skidmore chose for this Self-Study to focus on a special topic rather than to address the standards for accreditation one by one. This has given us the opportunity to focus specifically on integrative learning, addressing the questions: How well are our students integrating their learning at college? How well do we as an institution and a community support integrative learning? What evidence do we have, and what could we be doing better? Some of what we found surprised us.

For the purposes of this study, our concept of integrative learning encompasses students' learning across disciplinary boundaries, across time as they progress through their education, across the boundaries that traditionally separate the curriculum and the cocurriculum, and across the border between the campus and the world beyond. In this concept, the students integrate learning from many different disciplines, moments, and sites, shaping—from within everything the College offers—a meaningful and ongoing process that is their Skidmore education.

Deeply integrative learning requires creative structures for both teaching and learning, and we have tried to consider these hand-in-hand. We believe that integrative learning is a crucial part of the liberal arts education. It complements the more traditional siloed structure of the department-based disciplines, and it bridges students' academic life and the cocurriculum. At its best, it incorporates reflection and self-awareness that help to prepare students for their intellectual, professional, civic, and personal lives after college. And just as integrative learning requires creative teaching, it also calls for more strategic collaborations across the campus's administrative boundaries. In this regard, our Self-Study aims both to document what we are doing now and also to support the development of future possibilities, based in part on evidence we present here.

As we prepared for this process, we came to understand integrative learning as it occurs across both time and space. We have considered how intentional we are in cultivating our students' abilities to make connections over time—that is, from the moment they are accepted into Skidmore on into life after college. This includes a capacity for hindsight and forethought: the metacognition involved in reflecting on the past and projecting into the future.

Skidmore students also must integrate any number of different spaces in their educational experiences: for example the classroom, lab, performance spaces, library, museum, gym, studios, and residence halls, of course, and also the small city in which we live (and its regional surroundings); the social spaces on campus where they may experience and navigate different aspects of their own and others' identities; the places abroad and in the U.S. where they study away; the sites of their internships and jobs and civic engagement; the virtual spaces that they are increasingly navigating; and the homes they have left behind. How do we plan for them to draw the connections that will help them make sense of disparate spaces over time? How can their education at Skidmore help them to move with confidence into the many new and unpredictable spaces they will encounter after they graduate? Can we be more intentional with our designs of

spaces, pedagogies, and curriculum to ensure that our students integrate their learning? These are questions we address in the body of this report.

In addition to bridging theory and practice and bridging the disciplines, we aim to have strong connections between our students' curricular and cocurricular lives. When in 2007–2009 we developed our Goals for Student Learning and Development (see Appendix), we made a conscious decision to include the cocurriculum along with the curriculum in our thinking. We have asked in our Self-Study how well we are in fact bridging the curriculum and the cocurriculum, for example in fostering responsible citizenship and broad problem solving through civic engagement, service learning, sustainability initiatives, and internships.

In a much more capacious, conceptual framework, we have also considered how best to bridge the traditional model of the liberal arts college with the kind of college we are in the process of becoming. Just as the library as a house of books has changed into a dramatically different workspace that integrates paper with the new digital universe of research and learning, so also our campus finds itself considering new and creative pedagogies and curricula as we make that transition to a technology-rich college. Part of this process, too, is to consider questions being raised nationally about the value of the liberal arts education in a context that is increasingly digitalized, economically challenging, and globally defined. Our larger framework for our study of integrative learning, then, has been this context and the questions: How well are we bridging tradition and creativity to ensure that our students meet our goals for their integrative learning and development? And what kinds of faculty development and organizational structures will help us do this better?

Our goal throughout has been more to identify weaknesses than to celebrate accomplishments. We have sought to make the Self-Study process useful. Among our primary concerns here is our general education curriculum. Expanding on our tradition of bridging disciplinary boundaries, our Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) has undertaken a substantial review of our general education curriculum with the intent of proposing a new model to the faculty. We aim in this Self-Study to provide data and recommendations that support the curricular review.

One thread—two intertwining threads, really—came into view during our work on this Self-Study. To improve our students' ability and inclination to learn integratively, to draw connections among their disparate “Aha!” moments and create for themselves a coherent understanding of their education—we do need to make this an explicit goal. And if we want that integrative learning to be transformative, we need to continue to inform ourselves about which practices most support the deepest and most transformative learning for our students.

Our Self-Study has five chapters. In the first, “General Education,” we present what we have learned about integrative learning as it bears on the Skidmore curriculum, both in its current form and as we seek to revise our requirements and the concepts that inform them. Chapter II, “The FYE, the Sophomore Experience, and Beyond College” presents what we have learned about how our students are integrating their learning over time on campus and in the context of their post-college planning and lifelong learning. In Chapter III, “Physical and Digital Spaces for Integrative Learning,” we present three case studies of campus buildings and how they relate to our ambitions for integration: one classroom building represents an architectural concept from the past that does not promote integrative learning as we now envision it; one, the Scribner Library, is realizing some of our greatest ambitions and represents the fruits of effective

collaborations to bring an existing structure into a new paradigm; and one, the Center for Integrative Sciences, represents our vision for a new way of conceiving space to support integrative learning in every detail.

Chapter IV, “Diversity and Inclusion,” argues that learning about diversity is inherently integrative, and provides an overview of both the remarkable gains we have made in these areas since our last Self-Study and also the many areas where we still aim to make improvements. In this chapter, we suggest that Skidmore has changed dramatically over the past 10 years to become a much more diverse and inclusive campus. But we have considerable evidence that our vision of a profoundly diverse and inclusive education for all of our students is not yet realized. We have come to see how little we know about what our students are actually learning about intercultural understanding, communicating across differences, and theoretical and practical relationships between power and identity. Finally, in Chapter V, “Responsible Communities: Civic Engagement, Sustainability, and Values and Ethics,” we address the interconnections among these three concepts and the ways that our students are—or are not—learning to take part in responsible communities, integrating theory and practice and understanding both the contingency and the importance of values and ethics.

As we engaged in the research for this report and wrote the drafts, the College was following a parallel process of preparing for the next *Strategic Plan*. Throughout both processes, we have aimed to keep our parallel work in view, so that each would be informed by the other. The four primary goals that inform the current draft of the *Strategic Plan* relate directly to our topics here as well as to our recommendations. Those goals—to foster creativity, inclusion and excellence, wellness and responsible citizenship, and sustainability (in multiple senses) have also informed our thinking in the Self-Study. Integrative learning, we believe, is deeply creative. And as this Self-Study demonstrates, we also believe that each of these goals represents an aspect of integrative learning at its best.

It is our hope that this Self-Study will not only document in a living way how we are meeting the Standards of Excellence for accreditation, but also help us become better educated as a community about the evidential and conceptual bases for our aspirations and for the changes in which we are engaged. In this regard, the Self-Study itself represents accreditation as an integrative learning process.

Introduction

[Insert here: general overview of the College as provided in the Self-Study Design]

Our topic of integrative learning dovetails well with the areas of interest that emerged from our current strategic planning. Over the course of last spring, the President's Office sought community input into the areas where all members of the College community believe we should be planning and devoting efforts and resources. Most of the topics that emerged have been included in our conception of integrative learning from the start: diversity and inclusion, instruction technology, internationalizing the curriculum, science literacy, sustainability, transition to life after college, civic engagement, integrating creative thought more broadly, and academic excellence. Two members of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee also serve on the leadership group of the Middle States Self-Study. We have conducted parallel but interconnected processes in the strategic planning and the Self-Study.

We anticipate some major developments in the next five to seven years. In addition to seeing plans for our Center for Integrated Sciences come to fruition, we also expect to make some significant revisions to our general education curriculum—including a new and creative approach to fostering scientific literacy across our entire student body. We have long had interest in the area of visual resources and visual literacies; we are embarking now on a number of interconnected initiatives related to visual communication, and hope to see more of them realized in the near future. We hope to continue the transformation to a more diverse and inclusive community, improving not only our recruitment but also our support, development, and retention processes, fostering positive changes across the whole community. We aim to continue to collaborate on various initiatives as part of the New York 6 colleges (Hamilton, Union, St. Lawrence, Hobart and William Smith, and Colgate). And we will complete our current comprehensive campaign—Creating Our Future: The Campaign for Skidmore—with a working range of \$220–240 million; in addition to our Center for Integrated Sciences, other significant items in the campaign include increasing our Annual Fund, building new endowment support for financial aid, a new Admissions and Financial Aid Building, support for the Tang Museum, and increased support for Transition and Transformation initiatives aimed at preparing students to make the best use of their liberal education in their post-Skidmore lives.

Nature and Scope of the Self-Study

In anticipation of the Self-Study, a leadership group was formed during the late summer of 2013, consisting of Dean of Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs (DoF/VPAA) Beau Breslin and Faculty Assessment Coordinator Sarah Goodwin, cochairs, along with Joshua Woodfork, Executive Director of the Office of the President and Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives; Joseph Stankovich, Director of Institutional Research; and Lisa Christenson, Assessment Facilitator. That group met with President's Cabinet to frame the process, and a Steering Committee was formed in early fall 2013, consisting of key representatives from major areas of the College and cochaired by DoF/VPAA Breslin and Faculty Assessment Coordinator Goodwin. The Steering Committee includes two faculty members, staff from throughout the College, and two students. A complete list appears in an appendix (some of the positions have changed from our original Self-Study Design).

The Steering Committee planned and vetted the Self-Study Design and led the College in the Self-Study process. We added our retired Registrar and Director of Institutional Research, Ann Henderson, to the team of people preparing the documentation for the Self-Study. Both institutional assessments and assessments of student learning, engagement, and development are a regular part of our processes, and we provided access to pertinent documentation to the Working Groups as they researched and wrote their sections of the Self-Study during 2014–2015.

We chose to conduct a Self-Study that follows the Selected Topics Model. The topic we chose, integrative learning, is important to us for a number of reasons; in particular:

- It arises directly from our Mission Statement and thus relates to some of the College's historical strengths; it also focuses directly on student learning and engagement.
- It addresses a number of initiatives that are currently under way for which we would plan to gather more information, build a stronger consensus in the College community, and reach some decisions.
- It relates directly to our most recent and our current Strategic Plans;
- It both requires and fosters creative thinking, fulfilling the challenge of our hallmark, Creative Thought Matters: new alliances, structures, pedagogies, and spaces must develop to meet new conceptual categories.
- We are already one of 16 colleges participating in the AAC&U's consortial project on Integrative Liberal Learning, so this will help us to advance what we are learning through that project.

For the purposes of this study, our concept of integrative learning encompasses students' learning across disciplinary boundaries, across time as they progress through their education, across the boundaries that traditionally separate the curriculum and the cocurriculum, and across the border between the campus and the world beyond. In this concept, the students integrate learning from many different disciplines, moments, and sites, shaping—from within everything the College offers—a meaningful and ongoing process that is their Skidmore education.

Deeply integrative learning requires creative structures for both teaching and learning, and we have tried to consider these hand-in-hand. We believe that integrative learning is a

crucial part of the liberal arts education. It complements the more traditional siloed structure of the department-based disciplines, and it bridges students' academic life and the cocurriculum. At its best, it incorporates reflection and self-awareness that help to prepare students for their intellectual, professional, civic, and personal lives after college. And just as integrative learning requires creative teaching, it also calls for more strategic collaborations across the campus's administrative boundaries. In this regard, our Self-Study aims both to document what we are doing now and also to support the development of future possibilities, based in part on evidence we present here. The recommendations are, for us, perhaps the most important part of the Self-Study.

As we prepared for this Self-Study, we came to understand integrative learning as it occurs across both time and space. We have considered how intentional we are in cultivating our students' abilities to make connections over time—that is, from the moment they are accepted into Skidmore on into life after college. This includes a capacity for hindsight and forethought: the metacognition involved in reflecting on the past and projecting into the future.

Skidmore students also must integrate any number of different spaces in their educational experiences: for example the classroom, lab, performance spaces, library, museum, gym, studios, and residence halls, of course, and also the small city in which we live (and its regional surroundings); the social spaces on campus where they may experience and navigate different aspects of their own and others' identities; the places abroad and in the U.S. where they study away; the sites of their internships and jobs and civic engagement; the virtual spaces that they are increasingly navigating; and the homes they have left behind. How do we plan for them to draw the connections that will help them make sense of disparate spaces over time? How can their education at Skidmore help them to move with confidence into the many new and unpredictable spaces they will encounter after they graduate? Can we be more intentional with our designs of spaces, pedagogies, and curriculum to ensure that our students integrate their learning? These are questions we address in the body of this report.

This project is not entirely new to us, but grows integrally from our own collective past. As our mission indicates, historically, we have prided ourselves on offering both pure liberal arts programs and programs with an applied dimension (for example, in Social Work, Theater, and Management and Business, which offer degrees that prepare students directly for the workplace but also have a strong liberal arts dimension). We have also prided ourselves on our interdisciplinary programs. Starting in the 1980s, for some three decades we had a groundbreaking Liberal Studies curriculum built on the concept of drawing connections among the disciplines from the moment students arrived. Our “new” First-Year Experience, now eight years old, includes an interdisciplinary Scribner Seminar; and we have developed several new interdisciplinary programs since 2005 alone, for a total of 10 altogether. One of those is our signature program in Intergroup Relations, the first IGR program in the country to offer an academic minor. Roughly 21% of our students either major or minor in an interdisciplinary field, and many more take courses in those programs. This rich history of interdisciplinary study provides a basis for our exploration here.

Among our primary concerns is our general education curriculum. Expanding on our tradition of bridging disciplinary boundaries, our Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) has undertaken a substantial review of our general education curriculum with the intent of proposing a new model to the faculty. [The rest of this paragraph remains to be written this fall.]

In addition to bridging theory and practice and bridging the disciplines, we aim to have strong connections between our students' curricular and cocurricular lives. When in 2007–2009 we developed our Goals for Student Learning and Development (see Appendix), we made a conscious decision to include the cocurriculum along with the curriculum in our thinking. Our models and sources for the goals included the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's Learning and Development Outcomes, specifically crafted for students' learning on campus beyond the curriculum. We have asked in our Self-Study how well we are in fact bridging the curriculum and the cocurriculum, for example in fostering responsible citizenship and broad problem solving through civic engagement, service learning, sustainability initiatives, and internships.

In a much more capacious, conceptual framework, we have also considered how best to bridge the traditional model of the liberal arts college with the kind of college we are in the process of becoming. Just as the library as a house of books has changed into a dramatically different workspace that integrates paper with the new digital universe of research and learning, so also our campus finds itself considering new and creative pedagogies and curricula as we make that transition to a technology-rich college. Part of this process, too, is to consider questions being raised nationally about the value of the liberal arts education in a context that is increasingly digitalized, economically challenging, and globally defined. Our larger framework for our study of integrative learning, then, has been this context and the questions: How well are we bridging tradition and creativity to ensure that our students meet our goals for their integrative learning and development? And what kinds of faculty development and organizational structures will help us do this better?

Our concept of integrative learning has come to include two dimensions that we have not seen prominently elsewhere in the literature. The first is the idea that students should learn to connect their own scholarship with the faculty's research. In some disciplines, this is obvious and explicit; in others, more difficult to observe and foster. But some of us believe that drawing this connection is integral to our students' growing awareness of themselves as conducting original inquiry—*being* scholars—when they pose questions and seek answers.

The second dimension we have found is the idea that visual communication across the disciplines is inherently integrative. Of course, all acts of communication are integrative: they integrate the speaker, the listener, the context, and the code, to start with just the obvious. No act of communication is complete without all four of those functioning in relation to each other. But in the context right now of multiple initiatives on campus that focus on visual communication, some of us believe that acts of visual communication call for particular analysis through multiple lenses from multiple disciplines: as we make the transition to increasingly visually-based communication, the liberally educated need now more than ever to be able to read, deconstruct, and also create visual artifacts effectively, across the disciplines.

Our goal throughout has been more to identify weaknesses than to celebrate accomplishments. We have sought to make the Self-Study process useful. In practice, that has meant not only looking clear-eyed at disappointing data, but also at times rethinking what we mean by integrative learning and where we think it is happening. We have come up against some uncomfortable questions. We like to say that "Creative Thought Matters," but what happens when creativity is provocative, potentially offensive—or even just when adopting a new approach entails destroying the old? How can we teach our students to challenge unexamined assumptions without reexamining our own? How can we foster mental agility without also

promoting rootlessness? And where, in a College whose history is proudly and consistently secular, can we locate paradigms for teaching and learning about ethical decision making, and about building responsible communities?

One thread—two intertwining threads, really—came into view during our work on this Self-Study. To improve our students’ ability and inclination to learn integratively, to draw connections among their disparate “Aha!” moments and create for themselves a coherent understanding of their education—we do need to make this an explicit goal. This means, then, also making changes. If we want our students, for example, not only to learn about the Civil Rights movement but also to interrogate and potentially change their own assumptions about race; if, further, we want them to be able to communicate effectively across racial identities; then we need to consider the evidence for pedagogies, practices, and spaces that will encourage that integrative learning. If we want them to draw connections between their learning about biology and chemistry and possibilities for more sustainable water management practices or energy consumption, we need to support spaces and programs in which such integrative learning can happen. And if we want that integrative learning to be transformative, we need to continue to inform ourselves about which practices most support the deepest and most transformative learning for our students.¹

And perhaps most importantly, we need a continuing dialogue among faculty and between the faculty and the administration (both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs) to identify and refine these needs for change in an ongoing and creative way. We need to support faculty development for new pedagogies and resources. If we are asking students to change, we must also ask change of ourselves. Integrative learning works in many directions: implicit within it, faculty and staff are learners as well as students. This is what it means to create new knowledge, and to live in a community of learners.

¹J. Mezirow, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

I. General Education

Skidmore's current curriculum builds on our legacy of integrative learning through such programs as the First-Year Experience and the newly created John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative, as well as through seven interdisciplinary programs and scores of interdisciplinary courses, and spaces such as the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery and the Intercultural Center, all complemented by the College's rich co- and extracurricular offerings.

And yet we are not as intentional about integrative learning as we might be. Our general education curriculum as a whole does not foster intentional integration. In the latest National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), just two out of three first-year students reported that they "combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments" or "connected [their] learning to societal problems or issues."² It is troubling that a full one-third of our students are not seeing that there are connections to be made across courses and experiences, both within the curriculum and in the cocurriculum. What is more, the area in which Skidmore seems to be most lacking, as compared to its peers, is educating students about complex, real-world challenges, precisely the type of issues that demand integrative thinking and reasoning.³ To be sure, most students are contemplative and reflective about their experiences in and out of the classroom, lab, or studio; but the path through the general education requirements does not mandate, or even suggest, that they explore connections among courses, majors, the cocurriculum, their plans for post-college life. Nor is there any explicit expectation that the students apply their learning to complex, real-world problems. That has to change. Indeed, as we engage in a wholesale reconstruction of the general education curriculum, we hope to increase the intentionality and frequency of our students' integrative learning moments.

Towards that end, we examine three case studies in curricular reconstruction: one from the past that stalled and eventually failed, one from the present that is driven by a set of data that suggests students are not progressing as much as we'd like, and one intended to be considered in the future and that is responsive to the changing demands of responsible citizenship and a liberally educated 21st-century mind. Each case study is intended to show the importance of integrative learning and, perhaps more importantly, the value of greater intentionality in this area. The recommendations at the end of each narrative aim to advance the College's mission of providing a first-rate liberal education for its students, a liberal education that increasingly reflects the world's complexity.

² NSSE Survey 2013.

³ In the 2013 NSSE survey, Skidmore students reported consistently lower engagement with complex real world problems than students at peer institutions. The question posed is "how much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in [solving complex, real-world problems]?" 52% of first-year students in the arts and humanities report that they engage with complex, real-world problems, whereas 55% of their peers do. But the real disparity appears in other disciplines—52% of Skidmore science students as compared to 61% of their peers, 44% of Skidmore's first-year social science students as compared to 64% of their peers. Even senior arts and humanities students fall short in this area—41% engage with complex, real-world problems compared to 56% of seniors at peer institutions.

Integrative Learning and Cultured-Centered Inquiry (CCI): The Past

Skidmore's general education curriculum includes a requirement that students engage in cultured-centered inquiry. The College catalog states that "students fulfill this requirement by completing one course in a foreign language plus a second course designated as either non-Western culture or cultural diversity study." In completing the requirement, we expect students to reflect on the Western world in comparison to non-Western cultures and to imagine and explore difference—difference as manifested in cultures, peoples, and languages.

Our assessment of whether students are actually achieving the learning goals ascribed to the CCI requirement reveals some weakness in the current structure. Specifically, we are concerned that students do not have adequate opportunities to strengthen their comprehension and intellectual maturity in areas of cultural difference. Consider the latest NSSE data: just 64% of first-year students claim that "diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.)" were included in course discussions or assignments. By the time they are seniors, only 62% report the same. These data are even more interesting when juxtaposed with the perspectives of faculty. Fifty percent (50%) of Skidmore faculty believe it is important for the typical student to explore issues of difference in lower-level courses, while 67% of the same faculty believe it is important for the typical student to examine these issues in their upper-division courses.⁴ While it would be infeasible and inappropriate to mandate that all faculty include such material in every course, the curricular model should ensure that no student can navigate the curriculum without engaging this vital material in a rigorous way. That we have no such assurance in the current model demonstrates a clear need for curricular reform.

The current curricular requirement has been in place since 2001, and at different times since then it has spawned some controversy and consternation. Some faculty, finding the term "non-Western" Eurocentric, have argued that it is no longer even appropriate. Some have suggested that the faculty ought to reconfigure the requirement to better encompass analysis of identity, inequality, and power. Indeed, even at the time of passage, the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP), which brought the existing CCI model to the faculty floor, indicated that it was not perfect, but that it was the best we could achieve at the time with existing resources.

In 2009, the CCI requirement came under increasing scrutiny when the College's Director of Intercultural Studies disseminated his analysis of the requirement's breadth and effectiveness and concluded that a revision was in order (see appendix for report). He argued that the cultural diversity component of the CCI requirement was particularly lacking. Courses were concentrated in certain departments and some were not offered regularly enough. His recommendations included altering the CEPP guidelines around the requirement, interrogating the "Western/non-Western binary," and including educational experiences in areas beyond identities defined by race and ethnicity. That report prompted a reevaluation of the entire CCI requirement. Reinforcement of the belief that the CCI in practice is weak in U.S. cultural diversity learning came 18 months later when the Office of Institutional Research conducted an analysis of how students fulfill the CCI requirement: 60% of students did so by focusing on the non-Western component. As a consequence, almost two-thirds of our students typically fulfill the

⁴ Climate surveys are also revealing. See Romney Associates, "Report on the Skidmore College Student Climate Survey, 2013" and "2009 CHAS Meta Survey Result."

CCI requirement without considering cultures and inequalities that exist within the United States. Furthermore, a 2009 study of the learning goals presented on the syllabi of courses that fulfill the CCI requirement revealed that at most just 60% (Non-Western courses) or 76% (Cultural Diversity courses) link strongly and clearly to the learning outcomes that are explicit in the CCI requirement.⁵ The purpose of this requirement seems to be confused and confusing.

Armed with these data, CEPP decided in 2012 it was time to reevaluate the entire CCI requirement. Faculty were consulted, open forums were held, and the committee eventually settled on a new designation—Considering Difference—that would replace both the non-Western and Cultural Diversity tracks. The final proposal was motivated by a concern that the current CCI requirement is based on a Western/non-Western binary that both privileges the binary and obscures other significant dimensions of difference (such as gender, class, disability, etc.). Moreover, the Western/non-Western binary also entails a quiet presumption that the “self,” which is broadened through study of an “other,” is Western with European origins, a presumption at odds with Skidmore’s increasingly diverse student body (see Chapter IV, p. XX). When the proposal was brought before the faculty later that year, it failed to receive the necessary votes for passage. Shortly thereafter, CEPP explored a similar proposal and it was quickly determined that there were not nearly enough courses on the books to support a Considering Difference requirement as it was being conceived. CEPP was back at the beginning of the process.

These fits and starts have been valuable as CEPP has recently begun anew to identify the best approach to studying culture, identity, and difference. When the committee determined that the current course offerings were not adequate to deliver the proposed requirement, it also determined that the time was ripe for an examination of the entire curriculum. One direct consequence of the failed revision of CCI was a renewed energy to either ratify or reconstitute our current general education curriculum. Another positive result of the three-year discussion about CCI was a more educated faculty and staff. Skidmore’s *Strategic Plan* for 2005-2015 calls for greater awareness of, and attention to, “intercultural and global understanding,” and the discussions that emerged from a call for curricular revision lent themselves to that institutional priority. The fact that the curriculum remains the same should not diminish the good work on the part of the faculty, staff, and students to engage with critical issues of diversity, inclusion, difference, and excellence.

As Skidmore embarks on a wholesale reconstruction of its general education curriculum, the CCI requirement is again at the forefront of deliberations. Our students have changed, just as the world is becoming increasingly globally interconnected in complex ways. The integration of ideas, principles, practices, and approaches to study is even more important now that the College is more diverse and inclusive. To that end, we offer two broad recommendations for any revised CCI (or related) requirement:

- First, students should learn not only about the construction and consequences of difference in a particular context, but also about methods and approaches to learning about difference that are transferrable to other contexts—the essence of integrative learning. The goal is to better facilitate lifelong learning in a global environment that is rapidly and unpredictably changing.

⁵ “Analysis of Non-Western and Cultural Diversity Syllabi,” 2009.

- Second, students should learn about the ways in which the unequal distribution of goods/influence/power flows along the lines of difference. That is, courses and experiences that fulfill this requirement should consider issues of stratification, inequality, and social justice. The aim is for a multi-dimensional approach—a more nuanced understanding—of the ways in which difference is manifest.

To be successful, any new cultured-centered inquiry requirement will foster certain personal intellectual skills. Students will be able to identify superficial or stereotyped assertions related to difference. They will also critically assess the assertions they encounter; they should patiently, humbly, and courageously construct more complete knowledge about groups marked as “marginal” or “powerful.”

Perhaps most importantly, students should reflect on their own circumstances and how they influence knowledge acquisition and understanding. Indeed, a principle goal of any general education requirement, and especially those that focus on difference, is a heightened self-consciousness about the nature and characteristics of one’s own perspective. Put differently, students should interrogate their own assumptions and place them in relation to distinct cultural frameworks. A key recommendation is for students to embark on critical self-reflection. One proposal that we believe has particular promise is to have each student, after the student has fulfilled the entire CCI requirement, complete a reflective essay on the principle of difference. The reflective essay will be evaluated by the student’s advisor and will be centrally focused on the integration of courses, knowledge, ideas, and thoughts. It will act as self-reflective way-station on the student’s individual journey towards liberation, an important moment of intellectual maturation.

Whether or not we adopt this last, specific recommendation, we must be open to creative and innovative ways of achieving the learning we are describing here. It is one of the key transformations that we expect of a liberally-educated person, and it is not one that can be effected with just one required course checked off on a list. Ultimately, the purpose of culture-centered inquiry is not just understanding and theory, but the practice of behaviors that inform the life of a just and equitable community on both a local and a global scale.

Quantitative Reasoning: The Present

Skidmore faculty adopted the current quantitative reasoning (QR) requirement in 1989. It was updated in 1999, but has not been substantially changed since that time. The requirement involves two components which we employ using a basic scaffolding approach (QR1 and QR2). The QR1 requirement asks students to demonstrate competence in basic mathematical and computational principles and can be satisfied in one of five ways.⁶ Most students satisfy the QR1 requirement through standardized testing or through the College’s self-designed quantitative reasoning test. Those students who do not are required to take MA100: “QR Reasoning,” a remedial skill-building course. The QR1 requirement establishes a minimal baseline for

⁶ (1) Scoring 630 or better on the MSAT I exam;(2) scoring 570 or better on any mathematics SAT II exam; (3) achieving a score of 28 or higher on the ACT mathematics exam; (4) passing Skidmore’s quantitative reasoning examination before the end of the first year; or (5) successfully completing MA100 before the end of the sophomore year.

knowledge in areas such as arithmetic, consumer issues, practical geometry, linear equations and linear growth, compound interest and exponential growth, data presentation and description, and basic probability and statistics. Once satisfied, a student can then enroll in a QR2 course, a course that builds upon the skills that students have mastered in QR1. Students must fulfill the QR2 requirement by the end of the junior year. Though students are able to complete the two-part requirement without exception, the assessment data we reference above suggest that the existing QR sequence is not producing the type of computational and numerically literate citizens we imagined.

In the spring of 2014, we conducted a modest but compelling study of seniors who were in their capstone courses. The assessment included questions from the Quantitative Literacy and Reasoning Assessment (QLRA), a test generated by a number of small liberal arts colleges (Bowdoin, Colby-Sawyer, and Wellesley) that explores students' ability to understand graphic information, statistical analysis, and proportional relationships. In all, 92 non-science majors and 52 science majors were tested. The results were disturbing. Skidmore's non-science majors correctly answered only 44% of the questions, while the science students performed slightly better, correctly answering 60% of the questions. More disturbing perhaps is the self-reporting on the part of non-science majors: 52% reported that they never or only sometimes use numerical data to evaluate real-world problems (greater than 80% of science majors reported doing so).

These data followed on the heels of our most recent NSSE findings, which also caught our attention. Student engagement around quantitative reasoning is less than we'd like it to be. When asked three questions about the use and understanding of numerical and graphical information, Skidmore's first-year students report a score of 26.5 out of a possible high score of 60 (the higher the score, the more engagement with quantitative information). First-year students at other schools fared slightly better. Even so, it was in the seniors that we saw the biggest difference in terms of student engagement. Skidmore seniors report statistically significant lower engagement with quantitative information than students from other baccalaureate institutions: 25.8 as compared to 30.8 from other schools. Those disparities were further confirmed when the sample was disaggregated by discipline. Skidmore's social science and arts/humanities majors report significantly lower engagement with quantitative data than those at other schools: 8% of Skidmore seniors in the humanities departments often or very often use quantitative lenses to evaluate contemporary issues, whereas 26% of humanists at other schools claim to do so.

These data points are troubling. They suggest that students at Skidmore are not using QR skills in their coursework or integrating the lessons around quantitative competence in their academic, cocurricular, or extracurricular lives. In an age in which quantitative literacy is among the most important acquisitions of any college-aged student, most Skidmore undergraduates seem not to be interacting with numerical information, nor performing basic QR at an appropriate level. Indeed, Skidmore's Alumni Learning Census reveals that our alums rank QR skills among the least important and least enhanced by the College.⁷

Such perceptions do not bode well. Students need QR skills if they are to function in the modern world. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) lists quantitative literacy as one of its essential learning outcomes. QR is also one of the areas (along with oral and written communication, technological competency, and information literacy) in which the Middle States Commission on Higher Education requires students to demonstrate

⁷ Alumni Learning Census (ALC) Summary Data, classes of 2001—2010.

proficiency. Moreover, a 2013 AAC&U survey found that 55% of employers believe that colleges should place more emphasis on students' ability to work with numbers and understand statistics.

Further, the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) has investigated the quantitative skills college graduates should possess upon completion of their baccalaureate degrees. In a report published in 1994 by the Subcommittee on Quantitative Literacy Requirements of the MAA Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics,⁸ the subcommittee offered four conclusions:

1. Colleges and universities should treat quantitative literacy as a thoroughly legitimate and even necessary goal for baccalaureate graduates.
2. Colleges and universities should expect every college graduate to be able to apply simple mathematical methods to the solution of real-world problems.
3. Colleges and universities should devise and establish quantitative literacy programs each consisting of a foundation experience and a continuation experience, and mathematics departments should provide leadership in the development of such programs.
4. Colleges and Universities should accept responsibility for overseeing their quantitative literacy programs through regular assessments.

At Skidmore, the Science Literacy Subcommittee formed in 2011 explored the relationship between science literacy and the existing all-college QR requirement and its findings were consistent with those that emerged from NSSE and the QLRA. In its final report from 2012 the subcommittee recommended the following actions to more closely explore the interaction between the QR requirement and the science literacy learning outcomes:

1. Assess the current QR requirement, particularly QR2, in regard to whether it is achieving identified goals.
2. Determine student-learning outcomes for QR that align with the Goals for Student Learning and Development.
3. If we keep the current QR1+QR2 requirement, reexamine the rigor of the QR1 requirement and require every QR2 course to be recertified in light of the learning goals that are designed.

The combination of data and the disconcerting trend of our students who admit to a lack of engagement with the quantitative world have led Skidmore to consider revamping its current two-part QR requirement. A QR working group, which included the Associate Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Biology, and three faculty from QR-intensive departments (Mathematics and Computer Science, and Economics), and led by the QR Director met throughout the 2014–2015 academic year to develop a recommendation for revising the QR sequence. That group's recommendation has two primary components: that the existing QR1 requirement be replaced with a new Foundational Quantitative Reasoning (FQR) component; and that the existing QR2 requirement be replaced by an Applied Quantitative Reasoning (AQR)

⁸"Quantitative Reasoning for College Graduates: A Complement to the Standards," Mathematical Association of America, online at <http://tinyurl.com/p95uf7v>.

requirement. The FQR will elevate the threshold for allowing students to test out of the requirement through their SAT or ACT scores. In addition, the FQR test administered by the College will be revamped to focus more intensely on basic statistics, algebra, and related skills required by other disciplines. The goal of baseline computational and numerical literacy is still the same, but the exam will be more suited to measuring those skills. Finally, the opportunities for students to take the test will be reduced from four to three. This more stringent requirement for the exam will direct more students with weak skills to the MA100 course.

The larger change in our Quantitative Reasoning requirement comes in the second component—the Applied Quantitative Reasoning Requirement (AQR). Inspired by the need to see students engaged directly with quantitative information, AQR courses “include the study and use of quantitative methods as a primary organizing principle” and motivate students to “develop and use quantitative skills in an applied setting to consider, model, and solve discipline-specific or interdisciplinary real-world problems...” The course will also give students the opportunity to interpret and communicate their results. The Quantitative Reasoning Working Group cites the following learning goals as essential to realizing the AQR requirement. Students must:

1. use statistical and/or mathematical models to characterize empirical data;
2. understand, model, and predict the behavior of populations or systems;
3. interpret and communicate results orally and/or in writing; and
4. use quantitative reasoning for informed decision making.

A recommendation in favor of an applied and more rigorous QR requirement, fueled by compelling data that demonstrates many of our students are neither quantitatively nor numerically literate, represents a call for greater integrative learning. Students should be able to understand basic computational information and apply it to whatever academic or nonacademic setting they find themselves in. The proposed new AQR requirement speaks directly to the importance of acquiring quantitative skills that are essential for making one’s way in the world. It is thus also crucial to our students’ integrative learning as they draw connections between data and conclusions, between knowledge and behaviors, between information and problem solving. We contend too that addressing complex, real-world problems requires not only excellent quantitative skills but also creative ways of putting those skills to use in communicating with others to bring about effective change.

Information Literacy: The Future

Information Literacy is a prerequisite for informed, responsible citizenship. Thus, we see the task of building and reinforcing these skills as fundamental in our broader mission of graduating liberally educated students. That has always been the case, of course, but the unbridled growth of digital sources has exacerbated the importance of knowing how to find, evaluate, and disseminate information. Students who don’t become at least moderately information literate will no doubt fall behind in almost every area. We have some evidence to suggest as much. The results of the Teagle Foundation Systematic Improvements Grant on “Increasing Student Engagement through Writing” confirmed the need for our students to take a more deliberate approach to “distinguishing between evidence and opinion,” and furthermore

concluded that our students had “[p]roblems with sources and citations, doing literature reviews and citing sources appropriately and correctly.”⁹

Information Literacy is defined by the American Library Association (ALA) as equipping individuals with the tools to “learn how to learn.” Information literate people, the ALA continues, know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.¹⁰

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) is a bit more precise; it argues:

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. An information literate individual is able to determine the extent of information needed; access the needed information effectively and efficiently; evaluate information and its sources critically; incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base; use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.¹¹

The process of becoming information literate involves paying attention to the integration of disparate pieces and sources of information. Indeed, integration is essential to master content, extend investigations, and become self-directed.

Integrative learning and the cultivation of students with skills in information gathering, synthesis, and dissemination happens virtually everywhere on a college campus, but it is the library that occupies a special place for this type of student learning and development. It is the first among equals in a school’s attempt to educate students about the importance of information. At Skidmore, 92% of the graduating class of 2014 had received at least one library instruction session during their undergraduate years. As for the students viewed by class year, 41 % of first-year students, 28% of sophomores, 12% of juniors, and 22% of seniors have attended at least one library instruction session in the previous year. These sessions can be embedded in existing courses or they could stand alone. The library faculty and staff regularly volunteer their time to work closely with the teaching faculty and its students.

A few departments dominate the total number of library instruction sessions, however. Introductory courses in English, Management and Business, and Health and Exercise Sciences are the courses that most frequently tap the library faculty and staff for these sessions. One key is for us to expand the circle and encourage other departments and programs to take advantage of this important opportunity. There have been an increasing number of student one-on-one sessions with library faculty, but we would like to see that increase at a faster rate as well.

⁹ Skidmore College’s Teagle Foundation Systematic Improvements Grant Final Report, “Increasing Student Engagement through Writing,” 2013, page 3.

¹⁰ The American Library Association Presidential Commission on Information Literacy (January 10, 1989)

¹¹ <http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/infolit/intro>

Towards that end, we propose the following recommendation: a more comprehensive and consistent program is necessary if we intend to develop individuals who approach the information landscape with curiosity, enthusiasm, cautious deliberation, and ethical intent. We need a program that combines broad educational approaches with specific, department/program-level education. In light of financial and staffing constraints, an approach that utilizes existing and emerging technologies, such as integrative online tutorials, is the most viable option for delivering this content. Online tutorials also provide tools for consistent, quantitative assessment, which will be critical as we improve and expand our offerings.

First, requiring a framework for an Information Literacy component in the sophomore year would address this need at a point in a student's Skidmore career when the ability to do effective research becomes critical. The idea is that the library would provide a baseline, and then departments and programs would be responsible for providing a deeper level of engagement based on the particulars of the major (or minor). Consistent with the way in which the College combines responsibility for writing instruction through the broad expository writing program and the individual departments and programs, information literacy would begin with a general program—a set of online modules to be taken by all students—followed by a more individualized level of engagement at the department/program level.

Second, complementing our existing suite of instructional offerings with a series of online tutorials that explore the information literacy concepts, inspired by ACRL and described below, will allow us to instill culturally significant ideas and teach practical, effective strategies that will not only support students' work in other courses but also contribute to their lifelong learning.¹²

1. *Scholarship as a conversation.* Students will consider the history, current usage, and future of the scholarly record. They will learn how to create scholarly work while building upon existing scholarship, understand the importance of attribution, and grasp the role of the internet in establishing new forms of communication and methods for dissemination. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the research and publication process, and their literature reviews and annotated bibliographies will encourage them to become active participants in the scholarly conversation. This in turn will nurture collaboration and establish their role in the continuum of academic scholarship.
2. *Searching as exploration and research as inquiry.* Students will engage with the research process by learning how to find material to support their own scholarship. A focus on exploration as a means to examine the breadth and depth of a topic, as well as the search for serendipitous connections, will give students practical tools and a new understanding of how their own research, and that of others, develops and contributes to a larger scholarly conversation.

¹² Scribner librarians have been collaborating with other members of the newly formed (2013) NY6 Information Literacy Blended Learning Project to establish best practices and share innovative ideas about the development of online learning tools. As a direct result of that collaboration, we have developed a series of modules on the Information Cycle. We intend to continue this work, with the understanding that the ability to effectively analyze and utilize information sources is not new, but it is of paramount importance for students who will emerge into an increasingly diverse and challenging world.

3. *Authority as contextual and constructed.* Students will learn to evaluate information, identify bias, and consider the “filter bubble” through which their searches are interpreted. They will also learn to differentiate between primary and secondary sources and to distinguish between popular and scholarly publications.
4. *Format as a process.* Students will examine the ways that different information resources are intentionally developed in different formats to address both the creators’ process and the interrelationship with the targeted audience. As the world of new media expands and develops and Visual Literacy becomes more mainstream, students will not just question the initial format of information, but also consider the impact of format on interpretation.
5. *Information as value.* Students will consider the question of ownership, the recognition of copyright, and the thorny issue of monetary value, within the information environment. They will also address how to avoid plagiarism along with the ethical importance of correct citation. Furthermore, they will examine the significant benefits of Open Access, the potential harm of censorship, and the ways in which information can be shared or shut down.

Being information literate is critical for making one’s way in the world and for being prepared to move from knowledge and theory to implementation and change in an integrated way. The College thus has a responsibility to ensure that all students graduate with a thorough understanding of what it means to be an information-literate citizen who can use information wisely, critically, and creatively for the advancement of knowledge and the common good. To this point, we have not been as intentional as we might, but with the creation of a new general education curriculum under way, it is a propitious time to reimagine our approach to information literacy.

Conclusion

Skidmore is at a critical moment in the evolution of its curriculum. In order to maintain our reputation as an institution that creates future leaders, we must be sure that our students are fully prepared to enter a world fraught with the uncertainty borne of complex interrelationships. The education we provide must set a high bar for students as it relates to the integration of knowledge across disciplines with a combination of wisdom and skills that allows them not only to participate in the global community but to take responsibility for its future. The current general education curriculum is more than a generation old and no longer attends to the needs of a liberally educated 21st-century student. Data from a number of different sources paint a somewhat troubling picture of a disconnect between the College’s general education requirements and the Goals for Student Learning and Development.

Most troubling perhaps is the lack of intentionality around integrative learning. Some students at Skidmore are adept at making interesting connections within the curriculum and between the curriculum and the cocurriculum. But a redesigned set of general education requirements will help us to ensure that more, and ideally all, students will reach this mark. Specifically, we intend to build and employ a model of general education with renewed energy and focus on the problems of culture-centered inquiry, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy that makes more intentional the linkages across curricular levels, disciplinary boundaries, and the curricular/cocurricular divide. Though the way forward will no doubt be

challenging—as change is always difficult in a community of independent thinking scholars—we see no alternative if we are to fulfill our mission.

II. The FYE, the Sophomore Experience, and Beyond College

Overview

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Skidmore does not have a general education curriculum that is intentional about requiring and supporting a sequence of integrative learning opportunities for our students. That said, one of the key findings of this report, and an important framing point, is that integrative learning is happening throughout Skidmore College—even if those involved do not refer to it as such. We discovered, largely through a survey of chairs and program directors conducted specifically for our work, that the term *integrative learning* is considerably less current here than *interdisciplinary learning*, which is a mode of integrative learning rather than a synonym for it. Nonetheless, what is clear is the prevalence of integrative opportunities across the curriculum and cocurriculum and an understanding that such learning stretches into the years following graduation. In our view, a great number of the College's policies and programs, and perhaps all of its curricular emphases, can be effectively mapped onto the integrative learning paradigm. Hence an absence of this terminology is not at all indicative of a lack of the thing itself; on the contrary, we found integrative learning to be very much alive and well at Skidmore. And yet there is ample evidence we could be doing more to make it a more intentional and effective dimension of the Skidmore experience. Our questions, broadly, are: Does integrative learning follow a sequence for our students over the arc of their time here? Are there integrative possibilities in both the curriculum and the cocurriculum at each stage of their Skidmore experience? How can we better understand the nature of our students' integrative learning *as a group*, so that we can be sure that not just certain majors or certain experiences benefit our students in this way, but that all of them are drawing connections between disciplines, between theory and practice, between the present of their undergraduate lives and the future of their post-college careers and undertakings in a world that needs their full engagement as thoughtful citizens?

More complicated was the question of evidence. As we saw in the previous chapter, data from the 2013 administration of NSSE show that our students are reporting having experiences that we identify as integrative learning at a rate that we consider too low.¹³ Scores generally ranged from 64 to 90% of Skidmore first-years and 62 to 92% of seniors reporting Often or Very Often to the various questions; these scores suggest that some of these experiences are typical for almost all of our students, but others for less than two-thirds. (An example in the first category would be connecting ideas from courses to prior knowledge, which almost all students report doing; in the second, including diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments, reported by under two-thirds. Other questions elicited responses on a range between these poles.) The NSSE data do show that with the exception of integrative learning that includes diverse perspectives, our students report having more of the experiences than did students at our peer institutions. Only with respect to the inclusion of diverse perspectives are our numbers lower than our peers'. But as we noted in the previous chapter, we find the numbers as a whole unacceptably low: *all* of our first-years should be examining the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on an issue, not just 72%; all of them should be connecting their learning to

¹³ See the NSSE 29013 Final Report for completed data; also Table XXX in appendix

societal problems or issues at some point, not just 64%. And connecting ideas between courses, learning things that change their understanding of a concept—these are the very heart of a liberal education.

We sought to go beyond NSSE data in understanding what our students are learning. Since the term *integrative learning* is of relatively recent use on our campus, assessments generally have not captured attitudes keyed to that specific concept, so that we must rely on a broad range of indicators to gather as complete a picture as we can.

We addressed this problem by casting our net widely. When possible we have compiled statistics and other “hard” forms of data, but we also recognize that evidence of integrative learning is lurking in plain sight, though sometimes in formats difficult to assemble and present. Among other things, we have been open to including, for instance, self-reported comments by department chairs and program directors about the integrative aspects of their curricula; participation numbers for ExploreMore;¹⁴ and listings of workshops and cocurricular programs that support faculty, students, and staff in guided reflection about their experiences. Demonstrations of intentionality and reflection have been crucial to our sense of what constitutes appropriate evidence that integrative learning is taking place, and that it is occurring regularly and at appropriate moments for the students.

Given the challenges of mapping all of the possible avenues for integrative learning in the undergraduate and post-graduate arenas, we have also chosen to include here a series of case studies. By tracing the arcs of particular student careers across their four years and into post-college life, we aim to reveal not only the many ways that integrative learning opportunities permeate the Skidmore culture at different stages, but also the various paths through which an individual student might navigate those opportunities. To our minds, this exercise aptly demonstrates the genuinely integrative quality of the Skidmore experience that is available to our students. What it does not do is determine what portion of our students are taking advantage of these experiences, nor how we might deliberately foster greater integration for all of our students.

Inquiry and Evidence

The First Year

Our students’ life at Skidmore begins with the First-Year Experience (FYE), which is explicitly designed as the springboard for all first-years to integrative learning in the curriculum. Several components evidence this integrative quality. A Reflection and Projection (RAP) document initiates incoming students into the process of exploration and reflection, as they are asked to articulate their goals for liberal learning; the RAP may be updated in the second semester to allow students to consider whether their aspirations have changed in light of their first-semester experiences. Given how central the RAP is in fostering an integrative approach from before students arrive on campus, we would do well to look into its effectiveness: what

¹⁴ ExploreMore is a two-week advising block devoted to helping first-year students and sophomores explore potential majors and minors, offered through the Office of Academic Advising. Sessions are designed to help students learn about pathways within majors/minors, special opportunities for engagement (collaborative research, independent studies, credit bearing internships), and real or potential post-Skidmore trajectories.

proportion of students complete it? How do faculty gauge the sincerity and depth of these reflections? These are questions worth pursuing.

The FYE opens with a summer “reading” that is integrative in nature and that also informs some shared experiences in the first year. The Class of 2019 read Alan Lightman’s classic, *Einstein’s Dreams*; the Class of 2017 tackled Wes Moore’s *The Other Wes More: One Name, Two Fates*; and the Class of 2013 explored both a DVD from the Bill T. Jones Arnie Zane Dance Company examining America’s 16th president through dance as well as Eric Foner’s book, *Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World*. The seminar model itself, as described in the FYE Faculty Handbook and in the Course Goals for a Scribner Seminar, combines content material with active mentoring intended to facilitate students’ cross-disciplinary exploration and reflection; a seminar budget also enables cocurricular and social activities that further enable integrative learning. Scribner Seminar faculty serve as their seminar students’ advisors throughout their first year and into their second, until the students declare a major. The Scribner Seminar Peer Mentor program allows older students to mentor first-year students through course-based training concerning student challenges, campus resources, and curricular and cocurricular opportunities; the required Peer Mentor Workshop (ID201) is structured around reflection exercises in which PMs consider their own integrative learning experiences as well as those of their mentees. Topics the Peer Mentors are trained to address with their seminar students include academic integrity, substance abuse, sexual misconduct, mental health and wellness. They can be real partners with the faculty in conveying values and information and in seeing early warning signs.

The FYE program is approaching 10 years old. As we noted in our 2011 Periodic Review Report, the program is robust and healthy.¹⁵ A recent assessment of how well and where the seminars are addressing the program’s goals for its students’ learning was not entirely satisfying because the reports from faculty were so universally positive that there was no room for fine distinctions. But a direct embedded assessment in such a wide range of disciplines and subjects would be impossible, and we learned from our assessment of first-years’ writing in the seminars that an artificially-created prompt simply did not work: the students were not invested in their writing. We are relying, then, on faculty reports, as well as routine aggregation of student evaluations, that the seminars are meeting our goals for the students. We continue to staff them entirely with tenure-line and a few full-time regular faculty, and class sizes remain small, around 15 students. To be sure, we make regular adjustments of one kind or another, in particular to the Peer Mentor program, guiding students through some of the challenges of the first year. As our catalog states,

In their first year at college, students build connections to academic and residential communities, identify intellectual interests, and encounter faculty expectations for excellence. The First-Year Experience program provides curricular and cocurricular opportunities that facilitate entering students’ successful integration into the Skidmore College community. [Through our programming,] students learn to balance freedom with responsibility, solve problems, and develop strategies for academic achievement.¹⁶

¹⁵ Insert information on the two program assessments from 2007.

¹⁶ Insert online catalog reference

Some of the most significant changes we have made to improve resources for our students in these seminars also affect students in other years: changes in Student Academic Services, improvements in support for English-Language Learners.

The Curriculum

After the FYE, students move into the general education curriculum and take gateway courses to majors as part of their exploration. A number of our existing requirements are explicitly integrative in nature:

- Quantitative Reasoning is poised to become even more explicitly concerned with applying QR to new contexts; see Chapter I in this Self-Study.
- Arts: as the catalog states (online), “Students actively engage in the making or performing of artworks as modes of creative invention, interpretation, expression, and discovery.” Students are not only translating ideas into creations, they are also practicing creative thought as a mode of integrative thinking.
- Culture-Centered Inquiry: In its current form, this requirement is explicitly integrative, particularly in its understanding that in the required courses students “learn that culturally based perspectives and values are not universal, and in doing so enhance their ability to interact with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds.” As outlined in our Periodic Review Report and in Chapter I here, this requirement is viewed by many as somewhat flawed in the ways that it is framed, and various assessment data—as outlined in Chapter IV below—show that we have been uneven in meeting our goals for this learning. But the College does aspire to this important integrative learning for our students: it is spelled out in our Goals for Student Learning and Development, and as Chapter IV here details, the College dedicates significant resources to address these goals.

In 2011–2012, the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) studied the curricular implications of an institutional initiative known as “Transition and Transformation,” comprising mainly high-impact practices (which are integrative by definition).¹⁷ The report details students’ participation in Skidmore’s FYE, exploratory research/independent study/senior experiences/practica, Honors Forum, study abroad, credit-bearing internships, collaborative summer research, and the Responsible Citizenship Internship Award for summer internships during 2010–2011 and 2011–2012.

¹⁷ 2011–2012 CEPP Subcommittee on Transition and Transformation Final Report

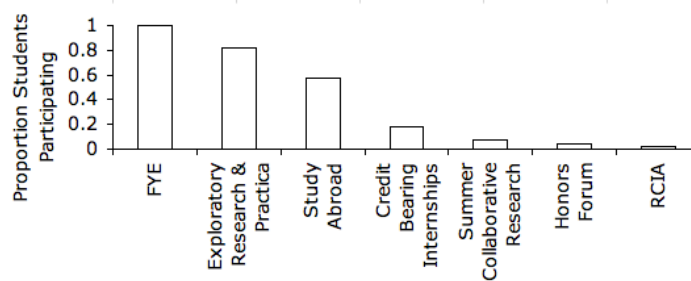


Fig 1. Student participation in selected ELLPs

From the report: 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 the RCIA by the smallest group of all.

The report also summarizes patterns of engagement for individual students across their undergraduate careers. The majority of graduates in 2009–2011 participated in more than two high-impact practices during their four years at Skidmore, with a mean of three high-impact practices for each student. Almost 10% of students participated in six or more practices and 7% participated in none after the FYE. In addition, 65% of students who participated in multiple practices did so across more than one category; no student participated in all seven practices.

Certain specialized integrative curricular opportunities are also tracked by the Office of Academic Advising. These include internships for credit, which are hands-on integrative learning experiences guided by a faculty mentor; they require intentional planning and ask the student to make explicit links to his/her coursework. Between 2008 and 2014 nearly one in five Skidmore students participated in at least one internship before graduating:¹⁸

Graduated Class of	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
N (total)	600	641	620	642	624	601	701
N (at least one internship)	135	111	132	105	123	128	198
% (at least one internship)	22.5%	17.3%	21.3%	16.4%	19.7%	21.3%	28.2%

Survey data show links between internship experiences and student-reported gains in learning, including those associated with the Goals for Student Learning and Development.¹⁹ Students also report that the internship experience helps them clarify their post-college goals.²⁰

Collaborative research allows students to engage in credit-bearing research projects in collaborative teams, practicing the kinds of lab-based scientific research some of them will go on

¹⁸ US News & World Report survey submission

¹⁹ Appendix Internship Table 1

²⁰ Appendix Internship Table 2

to pursue after college. Skidmore has participated in the national Survey of Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE) to assess the value of collaborative research.²¹ Summer Collaborative Research is funded and often entails integrative learning experiences; participating students present their work to the community at the end of the experience. Most notably, SEE-Beyond and other summer-funded experiential opportunities provide a broad variety of integrative learning models, including research, internships, artistic residencies, workshops, etc. These are explicitly tied to students' educational and post-baccalaureate goals (via the proposals), and require a reflective report at the end.

Data from the 2013 administration of NSSE and FSSE show that Skidmore students participate in high-impact practices at roughly the same rates as do students from peer schools. There are, however, some surprising differences in the data, along with similarities:

- Skidmore seniors reported participating in internships, learning communities, and faculty-lead research projects at rates similar to those of students from selected peer or baccalaureate arts and science schools.
- Skidmore seniors reported holding leadership positions at significantly lower rates (50%) than did students from selected peer (70%) and baccalaureate arts and science schools (65%).
- More Skidmore seniors reported participating in study-abroad programs (59%) than did SRs from baccalaureate arts and science schools (44%) but similar to SRs at selected peer schools (54%).
- Significantly more Skidmore seniors reported completing a culminating senior experience (85%) than did seniors from selected peer (78%) or baccalaureate arts and science schools (77%).
- Forty-six percent (46%) of first-years at Skidmore reported that at least some of their courses had a service-learning component, compared with 46% of first-years at selected peer and 53% of first-years at baccalaureate arts and science schools. Further breakdown of these data show that 2% of Skidmore first-years reported that 'most' or 'all' of their courses had a service-learning component, compared with 5% of first-years at selected peers and 7% at baccalaureate arts and science schools. For seniors, 56% reported that at least some of their courses were service-learning (Selected Peers 65%; baccalaureate arts and science 69%).
- Roughly two-thirds of faculty felt that it was important for students to participate in various high-impact practices such as internships, study abroad, and research with faculty, while only half felt that it was important for students to participate in service learning as part of a course.
- One-third of lower- and one-half of upper-division faculty reported that at least some of their courses had a service-learning component.

In 2013, Skidmore participated in an additional module of NSSE questions on transferable skills, which reflect integrative learning (Appendix). Skidmore students generally scored well on these questions, higher than students at comparison schools.

²¹ 2010-2011 SURE III Survey. A collaborative Project Funded by the HHMI

Beyond general education, Skidmore's most explicitly integrative curricula reside in the Interdisciplinary (ID) programs. By their very nature, ID Programs integrate learning across disciplinary boundaries; in most cases they also compel students to articulate their individualized approaches to content areas and coursework options, thus fostering reflection and intentionality. Typically, these programs also require the students to draw explicit connections between the knowledge they are acquiring and the ways that they can draw on that knowledge in complex, real-world situations. These programs include Arts Administration, Asian Studies, Environmental Studies (in which students have to choose between the natural science and social/cultural tracks), Gender Studies, Intergroup Relations, International Affairs, Latin American Studies, Media and Film Studies, Neuroscience, and Self-Determined Majors. Skidmore's decades-long investment in these programs speaks to our commitment to integrative learning as a concept. Of the 2014 graduating class, 14% majored and 20% minored in an interdisciplinary field.²²

Recent direct and indirect assessments of these programs as part of the annual assessment process show that students make connections among courses in different departments and between their coursework and cocurricular activities, but that we could be more intentional in helping them make and strengthen those connections.

Many traditional disciplines also encompass various kinds of integrative learning, from encouraging students to draw on other disciplines' methodologies to suggesting or requiring experiences in which the students connect with their discipline's public value and real-world applications. Our Working Group for this chapter surveyed department chairs and program directors to ask where in their curricula they could locate integrative learning as defined by the AAC&U materials; we received 34 responses, and several keynotes emerged.²³ For instance, in many of our departments and programs, integrative learning encompasses the crossing of disciplinary boundaries and the interrogation of issues in an interdisciplinary fashion. Some disciplines stress this integration of learning as early as introductory courses. For example:

- The gateway course in Classics stresses the integration of work in language, literature, history, art history, archaeology, and philosophy.
- The foundational sequence in the Management and Business major requires students to build linkages among management, marketing, accounting, and the liberal arts, and their learning goals for the major are explicitly and substantially integrative.

Many programs draw upon interdisciplinary learning at multiple stages within the major:

- The Sociology gateway courses introduce students to key topics, including social structure, inequality, norms, roles, identity, institutions, theory and research, which are presented in an interdisciplinary and integrative framework.
- Neuroscience has students integrate knowledge from various disciplines, including biology, chemistry, psychology, physics, and computer science, in particular in a required Integrative Seminar typically taken in the sophomore year.
- The Religion curriculum rests upon multivalenced exploration of religious beliefs and practices in a variety of cultural, social, historical and demographic contexts

²² <https://www.skidmore.edu/ir/facts/completions/MajorsandMinorsOfGraduatingClasses.pdf>

²³ We offer only illustrative examples here. The full report is attached as a supplement.

(including field work), emphasizing not only how people are religious, but why they are.

- The study and making of Theater involves examining events in the world, ideas, philosophies, cultures, rituals, etc., and putting them on stage, often in a disruptive way by asking students to break down traditional borders among the disciplines. As in the other arts disciplines (and noted above, regarding the Arts requirement), students in Theater explicitly and constantly draw connections among knowledge, theory or method, and the practice of the art.
- Social Work requires a credit-bearing internship that is closely supervised, with carefully designed goals, evaluations, and aggregated assessments that all explicitly support the expectation that their student majors will effectively learn to apply disciplinary learning in real-world contexts.

Integrative learning also occurs in all facets of Scribner Library's instruction and reference programs, which train students to understand the organization of information (in general terms and more specifically within the context of our "collections"); to negotiate massive quantities of materials; to choose the most pertinent resources; and to use information correctly. This happens in two credit-bearing courses, LI100 and LI371/372, as well as in Bibliographic Instructions experiences.²⁴ The renovation of Scribner Library and its new accommodation of Information Technology has also allowed for increased opportunities for integrative learning in curricular contexts. Highlights include the addition of a Media Room with 8-foot diagonal screen and seating for as many as 30, allowing for near-theater-quality projection for group screenings; increased visibility for the GIS Center for Interdisciplinary Research, which enables disciplines to come together and generate ideas about how to represent data visually; the brand-new (spring 2015) MDOCS lab for hands-on creation of documentaries and related projects encompassing digital and visual communication (see below, p. XX); and co-location of Academic Technologies and the Help Desk, both of which hire numerous students who have the opportunity to further their own technology skills while also assisting with technology projects directly connected to the academic mission(s) of the College.

Finally, the senior seminar or capstone course in multiple disciplines incorporates learning from courses taken earlier:²⁵

- In the Dance capstone, studio work, choreography and dance history coalesce into a year-long experience which fuses theory and practice.
- The Economics senior seminar requires students to apply micro- and/or macro-economic theory and statistical tools, as well as specialized learning in other disciplines (e.g., mathematics, international affairs or environmental studies), to a semester-long area of study.

²⁴ First year students (41%) continue to comprise the largest portion of the instruction audience, followed by second year students (28%), and then seniors (22%) and juniors (12%) for the 2013-2014 AY. The majority of Skidmore students graduate having attended at least one library instruction session during their academic career. For the Class of 2014, 92% (658) received formal library instruction.

²⁵ For more examples, see: Summary of Integrative Learning in the Disciplines, based on a survey to department chairs and program directors, October 2014

- The senior seminars in multiple languages in Foreign Languages & Literatures incorporate both a high competency in the language and, for most, the experience of spending a semester abroad in a country that speaks the target language. Indeed, study abroad is an important dimension of many majors and can be crucial to students' integration of global and applied contexts for their learning (as we explore further in Chapter IV below).

Assessment data show that students integrate learning from other disciplines or prior coursework with some degree of variability. The 2013–2014 assessment of student learning in Latin American Studies found that the vast majority of students were able to tie their work in the capstone to other course work or cocurricular activities. Sample courses mentioned were in Environmental Science, Archeology, Government, Anthropology, International Affairs, History, Spanish, and American Studies. On the other hand, the American Studies report of the same year found that students were not doing a good job of carrying over information, ideas, and skills from one course to another. As a result, the faculty met to discuss how to better provide building blocks for students and to consider changing the sequencing of courses and the use of electronic portfolios. Future assessment projects will re-address this problem and determine if the steps taken were effective.

Cocurriculum

From the moment students arrive on campus, various aspects of the cocurriculum bring important integrative learning opportunities to bear on student growth. For example, the Career Development Center explicitly helps students articulate and demonstrate the connections among academic life, cocurricular life, and off-campus experiences through such programs as the Four Year Career Development Initiative (“What’s NEXT”); the Sophomore Year January Program; Summer Funded Internships (and follow-up reflection); and the online career assessment program (“MyPlan”).

The process of applying for merit fellowships, scholarships, and grants, typically starting in the junior year, similarly helps students link their coursework, cocurricular activities, and residential experiences on campus. With administrative support, applicants strive to describe their accomplishments and growth in ways that go beyond the transcript and the resumé, pointing to a body of work that demonstrates their development and potential; they often comment on how the application process clarifies the relations among their undergraduate activities as well as their future goals. These National Merit Scholarships and Fellowships include Fulbright awards and Goldwater/Mitchell awards.²⁶

Of course, numerous opportunities available through Student Affairs (and in collaboration with Academic Affairs and other campus divisions) help students integrate apparently disparate parts of the undergraduate experience. These include partnerships that connect cocurricular opportunities with courses (e.g., Social Work’s “Bridges to Skidmore” Program, treated in Chapter IV); cocurricular experiences related to specific academic interests

²⁶ Our success with these programs is rising, partly due to our commitment to increasing our institutional visibility. We now have dedicated support for student applicants and a formal process for outreach and preparation; approximately twenty to thirty students submit applications each year. Since 2010 Skidmore has had four honorable mentions and two recipients in the Goldwater competition and two finalists for the Carnegie Junior Fellows Program.

(Pre-Law Club, Pre-Health Club, Women in Business); and cocurricular programs that require extensive training and are often connected to academic or career aspirations (Peer Advocates in Sex and Gender Relations, Peer Health Educators, Skidmore College Student Volunteer Emergency Medical Services).

Information Technology also offers important avenues for strengthening integrative learning through cocurricular means. For example, digital e-portfolios (such as those used in Asian Studies 375) help students reflect on and narrate relationships between curricular journeys and cocurricular experiences. The use of e-portfolios has increased over the last several years. Other IT programs, such as the NY6 Instructional Technology Apprenticeship, enable various means of collaboration at a distance.

Beyond College

We often remark that a Skidmore education is a transformative experience that helps to prepare students (future alumni) for life after college. Our goal has been to provide students with both knowledge and capacities that enable them to initiate and embrace change and apply their learning lifelong in new context. We believe that this learning takes place throughout our students' experience, both inside the classroom and out, on campus and off, helping to prepare them for ongoing personal growth, economic productivity, and responsible citizenship during and after College.

Students' career development success is best achieved when they can articulate and demonstrate the connections between their academic life, their cocurricular life, and their off-campus experiences. The Center for Career Development helps students identify their career goals (through self-reflection activities), research and explore career options (through mentoring, networking, extensive resources, and counseling), gain experience in their chosen field (through job shadowing and internships), and make the transition beyond the campus into their professional lives. What follows below are examples, supported by evidence that Skidmore is providing our students (future alumni) with these types of experiences.

Examples of Transformation: The Career Development Center initiatives

- What's NEXT—Skidmore's Four-Year Career Development Initiative (Know, Explore, Transform)
- Assess goals and learning outcomes of new initiatives and programs (e.g., Liberal Arts—Sum of Your Parts Career Panel assessment summary)
- MyPlan—Online career development self-assessment program, linking students' skills, values, interests, and personality to career options
- Sophomore Year January Program (interdisciplinary)
- Summer Funded Internship Program (student reflection essays)
- Walk on Wall Street (yearlong initiative to expose and prepare students to enter the competitive field of finance through tours, alumni panels, professional training, information sessions, and on-campus recruiting)
- Job Shadowing list (125 sites available)
- Career Advisor Network (2,477 advisors)

- Networking events to help students articulate how their learning and experiences support and demonstrate their career goals (Career Jam, Evening of Transition and Transformation, Real World Etiquette Dinner)
- Grad School Expo—exposing students to variety of graduate school programs and initiatives

Outcomes: New Graduate Outcomes

Data that we have gathered from recent graduates indicate that the students see fairly strong bridges between their learning at Skidmore and their employment or graduate studies. In the Class of 2013 survey²⁷ (and representative of the past 3 years), 83% of respondents reported using interpersonal skills gained at Skidmore often or occasionally in their current employment or graduate study pursuits. 82% reported using critical thinking, 75% reported using both knowledge and creativity, 72% reported interacting across social identities, and 64% reported quantitative reasoning. And again, in the Class of 2014 survey, 81% of respondents agree that their current employment status relates to their long-term career goals.

Alumni who are five years out are pursuing graduate study at a much greater rate than the more recent alumni: in other words, graduate study is a very common pursuit for young graduates, but not typically right after college. 40% of those responding to the Class of 2010 Outcomes Survey are either currently pursuing graduate study or have completed graduate study. This number is a dramatic increase from the 20% pursuing graduate study reported in the year-out follow up data. The class of 2010 went on to study at many leading institutions including American University, Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of Oxford, University of St. Andrews, and Yale University. We infer that these alumni—nearly half—are in some ways extending their undergraduate education to advanced degrees. But to understand more fully how our alumni are integrating their college learning with their lives after college, we turn to a more complete source of information: the Alumni Learning Census.

Outcomes: Examples of Transformation: The Alumni Learning Census

The Skidmore College Learning Census is an ambitious project to gather information about our alumni's learning while in college. Part of our overall assessments of students' learning and development, the Learning Census was administered to all of our alumni over a five-year period, and it sought their responses to questions about their learning and development in the curriculum and in their cocurricular life.

More specifically, we were interested in soliciting information from graduates regarding (1) the relationship between the College's Goals for Student Learning and Development and their Skidmore curricular and cocurricular experiences; (2) patterns of behaviors in their current lives that relate to those desired goals; and (3) the potential connections between their current employment and their Skidmore academic program.

To date, we have administered the survey to former students in five reunion cohorts on an annual basis and have tracked changes in responses over time. Only by closely examining real outcomes—the experiences of our graduates themselves—could the College productively gauge

²⁷ This question was not asked in the 2014 administration of the survey, so we included the 2013 data

the quality and value of a Skidmore education after college. This is also part of a larger initiative to keep communication channels open between the College and its alumni.

What follows below is the evidence aggregated from the ALC data from the classes of 2001-2011 that Skidmore is providing our alumni (former students) with these types of learning experiences, derived from the College's Goals for Student Learning and Development. Alumni were asked to rate on a 5-point scale how *important* they thought it was that they developed these skills or knowledge and how much their development in each area was *enhanced by Skidmore*.

	2001 - 2010 Alumni Learning Census	Enhanced	Importance
1	Write Effectively	4.2	4.8
2	Present Ideas with Self-Confidence	3.9	4.7
3	Communicate Well Orally	3.8	4.7
4	Think Analytically	4.2	4.7
5	Persist at Difficult Tasks	3.9	4.6
6	Take Responsibility for My Own Learning	4.0	4.6
7	Respect the Views or Perspectives of Others	3.9	4.6
8	Formulate and Solve Problems in My Field of Professional Practice	3.7	4.6
9	Manage the Practical Aspects of My Life (Personal, Professional, or Community)	3.4	4.5
10	Evaluate Information in Order to Use it Effectively in Making an Argument	4.0	4.5
11	Find Creative Solutions to Problems	3.9	4.5
12	Develop a Commitment to Lifelong Learning	4.0	4.5
13	Bridge Theory and Practice to Analyze Real-World Problems	3.6	4.5
14	Appreciate Cultural Differences Between People	3.6	4.5
15	Learn a Subject at Deep Level	4.1	4.5
16	Learn Independently	4.0	4.4
17	Evaluate Information from Multiple Sources and Apply to New Situations	4.0	4.4
18	Maintain Healthy Living Habits	3.0	4.4
19	Get Along with People Whose Attitudes and Opinions are Different from Mine	3.6	4.4
20	Clarify My Own Beliefs and Values	3.8	4.4
21	Work with People of Different Cultures	3.2	4.3
22	Collaborate with Others to Solve Problems	3.8	4.3
23	Act Effectively as a Citizen within a Larger Community	3.7	4.3
24	Apply Theories or Concepts to Practical Problems	3.6	4.3
25	Appreciate the Interrelatedness of Disciplines	4.2	4.3
26	Appreciate the Arts	4.3	4.2
27	Understand My Own Limitations	3.4	4.2
28	Assess Prejudicial Attitudes Based on Race, Gender, Class, etc.	3.6	4.1
29	Communicate Visually (with Images, Graphs, or Movement, etc.)	3.5	4.1
30	Place Current Problems in Historical/Cultural Perspective	3.6	4.1
31	Understand International Affairs (Economic, Political, Social Issues)	3.4	4.1
32	Communicate Through Creative Expression	3.8	3.9
33	Apply Scientific Principles and Methods	3.2	3.5
34	Use Quantitative Tools (Computers, Statistics/Math, Scientific Method) to Solve Problems	3.0	3.5

Intersections

Skidmore nurtures institutional moments and spaces in which curriculum and cocurriculum are consciously brought together to enable integrative learning that sets the groundwork for related post-baccalaureate experiences. These intersections expose the full range of integrative learning across our Working Group's self-designated categories (curriculum, cocurriculum, and beyond college). At the broadest level, certain academic majors—such as Art History, and Environmental Studies, as well as the pre-professional majors such as Health and Exercise Science, Theater, Social Work, and Education Studies—include required cocurricular dimensions and/or interactions with external constituencies, forging curricular experiences that extend beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom and facilitating reflection about life goals. In more localized contexts, specialized courses train students explicitly for cocurricular involvement (e.g., Peer Health Educators) and/or lead to final projects requiring presentations to an off-campus and non-academic community (e.g., MB107: Business and Organization Management). And, of course, the Tang Museum's entire charge is to cross curricular and cocurricular boundaries while also contributing to students' ongoing learning beyond college; this is accomplished through a wide variety of initiatives, including co-sponsored class assignments, inventive student and faculty projects, exhibition collaborations, public dialogues, field trips and tours, mixers with alums, career nights, pre-orientation programs, student-organized programs, Tang Guides opportunities, and extensive museum internship and work study arrangements.

In sum, when it comes to integrative learning, the distinction between the curriculum and the cocurriculum, while sustained, can be less significant than dynamic and collaborative structures and relationships.

Case Studies

Genuine integrative learning, we believe, is best revealed through the narratives of individual students, who navigate choices and integrate curricular and cocurricular experiences in idiosyncratic ways that lead to intriguing life paths beyond college. Hence we include here several case studies that serve to underscore not only the individualized nature of effective integrative learning but also the extent to which the Skidmore environment enables such integration. These students' journeys demonstrate an array of possibilities for integrative learning in and beyond Skidmore. They also demonstrate a variable model for the integrative learning paradigm that can lead us to address the questions: What institutional structures, policies, or behaviors contributed to these students' integrative learning? How can we generalize from them to improve the integrative learning for all of our students?

Student A arrived at Skidmore in 2001 intending to major in Studio Art and English. After struggling a bit in his first year, he sought the counsel of a professor who taught an Environmental Studies course he particularly enjoyed; their conversation proved pivotal. Effective advising led him to two study-abroad experiences, first in Tanzania, where he studied coral reef ecology, and then on the Turks and Caicos Islands, where he studied marine biology. Upon returning to campus, he engaged in a series of collaborative research projects while also pursuing a major in Environmental Studies. Among other things, he studied how poor water

quality influenced the foraging ecology of fish in the Saratoga watershed, and followed up an ornithology course with a research expedition seeking to study sexual signaling and communication in birds. At that point he discovered a passion for evolutionary ecology, which he pursued through a premiere doctoral program at UC Davis. He now publishes routinely in flagship journals in his field, and has won the Animal Behavior Society's prestigious Allee Award and the Cooper Ornithological Society's Young Professionals Award.

Student B, Class of 2008, was a conscientious and idealistic student in her early semesters but very unsure of what she wanted to do with her life. An interlocking set of curricular and cocurricular experiences—a course in Law and Society, a service-learning project in Mediation Training, and a resulting internship at Mediation Matters—helped her to develop a concrete skill (mediation), which set her on a more focused path. Interested in conflict resolution and International Affairs, she did summer study in Jerusalem and the West Bank with an organization that facilitates dialogues between Israeli and Palestinian youth; eventually she wrote her Government Honors thesis on the resolution practices of the Arab-Israeli conflict. She completed a master's degree in international conflict resolution at the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica and now works for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on refugee resettlement.

Student C, Class of 2014, was a Filene scholar whose wide-ranging interests were immediately apparent. In her first year she won the Backus-FYE Prize for a paper on the economic and environmental problems of New Orleans; this was only the first of several undergraduate awards that, for our purposes, are less important for revealing her exemplary abilities than for demonstrating the breadth of her integrative experiences. A Psychology major with minors in Music and Chemistry and a premedical concentration, she performed as a soloist and ensemble singer throughout her four years while also achieving top grades. As a senior she won both the Barbara Gruntal Allen Award for excellence in voice and the Joseph Garrison Parker Prize for the senior who excels in science but is also artistically accomplished; she also won a Periclean Award. Her cocurricular activities included extensive volunteerism at Saratoga Hospital that led to her winning the Charles S. and William P. Dake Community Service Award. She has entered into the profession of nursing, and recently shared with her advisor that her activities and courses while at Skidmore collectively led her to a career that feeds both her "dorky side" (i.e., pathology and pharmacology) and her "human connections side." She still sings in a semi-professional group and volunteers in a hospital-based Child Life Services program, and is considering pursuing a higher degree in nursing as well as a nutritionist license.

As an incoming student, *Student D* (2013) declared in his RAP essay that he aspired to become a high school History teacher and "a global citizen." Several cocurricular experiences moved him toward these goals. He honed his leadership skills by serving as an Admissions Ambassador and an FYE peer mentor, participating in the Student Government Association, and, through an Honors Forum project, helping to develop a Lyme Disease Awareness Week on campus. But his academic work in History and International Affairs (double major) was more particularly enhanced by two internships that broadened his sociocultural perspectives—one with the U.S. State Department's Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Immigration Museum and the other as a teaching intern with Project WHY in New Delhi, India. This second internship, teaching English to children from the slums, was funded through a SEE-Beyond Award and produced a photography project entitled "Images of India: A Call to Action," which was displayed in the Case Center gallery upon his return to campus. Upon graduation he was awarded the Katherine

Scranton Rozendaal Award for “outstanding citizenship.” Unsuccessful in an early bid for a Truman Scholarship, he nonetheless won a Fulbright to teach in Turkey.

The paths of these students reveal a number of things about integrative learning at Skidmore. First, they exhibit a wide array of integrative learning options ranging across diverse curricular programs and cocurricular ventures; collectively they demonstrate that integrative learning occasions abound. They also suggest that integrative experiences build on each other in an exponential way, and that, most importantly, advising often plays a key role in helping students access and reflect upon these opportunities. Finally, they articulate the importance of a dynamic, multi-layered, engaged undergraduate career, with multiple kinds of integrative learning, for paving the way to a rich post-baccalaureate life.

It is essential to remember, however, that these students’ journeys appear coherent only in retrospect; as with all students, their undergraduate careers proceeded step by step, without a known end in sight. And while one might dismiss these case studies with the argument that only the most “successful” students can trace the arcs of their interconnected learning moments, we would stress that virtually all students should be able to do this from a retrospective standpoint, regardless of whether the individual moments “add up” to a coherent narrative that ends neatly in a postgraduate career. Indeed, every instance of integrative learning—even if it initially appears singular or isolated—is profoundly influential, as it makes a student more receptive to, and perhaps even hungry for, similar opportunities. Hence a student’s collective integrative learning moments structure, at the very least, a narrative of academic and personal progression that may be quite distinct from more recognized and celebrated progressions—for instance, within the major, or through various cocurricular roles, or toward a post-graduation plan.

The question, then, is how to nurture rich educational contexts wherein every student is primed to take full advantage of integrative learning opportunities that may appear “accidental” or unrelated but that nonetheless contribute to an arc of growth. From this question our recommendations emerge.

Recommendations

1. As we noted in our opening, the term *integrative learning* is not in vogue at Skidmore. Indeed, our survey of department chairs and program directors reveals that they tend to conflate this notion with *interdisciplinarity*—which, it bears repeating, we recognize as a mode of integrative learning rather than a synonym for it. Consequently we recommend *a more concerted and deliberate effort to make this a regular part of Skidmore’s language*. If we understand integrative learning as a central building block of a Skidmore education, then faculty and students need to be able to identify it and distinguish it from other concepts. This will require a major educational effort that will take time; it may also call for changes to our written documents. In particular, integrative learning should be highlighted in our Admissions materials so that students enter Skidmore with a clear sense of both the institution’s educational priorities and our expectations regarding continuing reflection on their journeys and goals.

2. *Opportunities for reflection must also be regularized and even mandated*. If reflection leads to personal awareness, then that awareness leads to increased intentionality about “next steps”—and intentionality, of course, fosters assessment and more reflection. This circular

process is not merely a positive and fruitful educational maneuver, but a habit of mind that is typical of successful individuals and will serve our students well beyond college. As it stands, deliberately crafted reflective junctures crop up only sporadically at Skidmore, and it is too easy for students to avoid them altogether. The single reflective opportunity in which all students participate is the RAP (Reflection and Projection document), which is filled out at the moment of entry. Our attempts to encourage its revision in the second semester have been largely unsuccessful, and other opportunities for reflection are unevenly distributed across curricular and cocurricular arenas. For instance, some academic majors and programs require reflection exercises, especially at the capstone moment, but these vary in scope and effectiveness; they are neither codified nor universally required across the college. Similarly, opportunities for reflection offered through various cocurricular programs, while quite useful for the students involved, reach only subsets of the student body. This Working Group recommends not only a more conscious and united effort to incorporate reflection within cocurricular programs, but a mandated reflection component for every major. Ideally, this would ask students to consider connections among their curricular and cocurricular experiences *at several points* within their academic journeys, and to use those ruminations to plan further steps with intentionality and thoughtfulness.

3. One specific recommendation in this regard is to *require e-portfolios for every student in every major*. While the Working Group acknowledges the problems that have been raised in the past in connection with such a proposal—notably the question of who would read these portfolios, and when—we maintain that the *reading* and *evaluation* of these documents is far less important than the benefits accruing to the students who *create* them. Such a requirement would lend increased structure to all majors while also building reflection into the experience of every student. While these portfolios might be logically located within the framework of the academic departments, their content need not be limited to academic concerns—and indeed, they will be most productive when they attempt to re/view *all* aspects of a student's undergraduate career. The process of collecting documents and/or writing statements for the portfolios would also help students prepare for their lives beyond Skidmore by identifying interconnections, highlights, and arenas for further exploration, helping them to craft personal narratives useful for employment and graduate school applications. The task of creating the portfolio represents an instance of integrative learning while also helping students to perceive the integrative aspects of their undergraduate careers, including the very interconnections that may have gone unnoticed in the absence of a mandated instance of reflection.

4. Finally, we recommend *better and more consistent assessment mechanisms* for determining where and to what extent integrative learning is taking place at Skidmore. This may not require *new* mechanisms, per se, but rather improved wording that highlights and captures the notion of integrative learning as a concept. Hence this recommendation would be a natural outgrowth of our first recommendation (i.e., making the language of integrative learning more visible) and is intimately connected to it. The purpose of the assessments should be to ascertain not only how well our students are integrating their learning across traditional boundaries, but also how we can foster those interconnections for every student. Each of the chapters in this report addresses this goal implicitly, from somewhat different but interrelated perspectives. Ultimately, this Self-Study will be useful if it motivates us as a college to make changes in our curriculum, in our pedagogies, in our cocurricular opportunities and the goals that frame them, and in the ways we gauge our success in meeting our goals.

III. Physical and Digital Spaces for Integrative Learning

“You will design a campus which will provide for both student and teacher a feeling of freedom and wide horizon, and you will provide the physical opportunities for attaining that freedom in the mind and that horizon in the spirit.”—Josephine Young Case

On September 20, 1961, Josephine Young Case, trustee and acting president, charged the prospective architects of the new Skidmore campus with the following:

You will design a campus which will provide for both student and teacher a feeling of freedom and wide horizon, and you will provide the physical opportunities for attaining that freedom in the mind and that horizon in the spirit.

You must allow space for contemplation and for aesthetic pleasure and for play, privacy for thinking and study; and a pervasive atmosphere which will be at the same time serious and gay, somber and warm, traditional and forward-looking, made up of time past, time present and time future.

How will you achieve this? *For here the student must discover herself, and through herself others, and through others the world, and through the world others, and through others, herself.* You must provide for her a place where she lives happily with her peers, and where she meets her teachers easily and often outside of the classroom. Her living area as well as her study area must have books always at hand, and art of all kinds, to be lived with. She must have facilities for quiet, for civilized meals, for rest.

Teachers as well must have their areas of peace and privacy, of civilized comforts and amenities.

For the main purpose of the College you must design sites of serious learning. There must be rooms equipped with every modern aid for teaching, including space for those which have not yet been invented. But also there must be smaller rooms equipped only with chairs and tables and an atmosphere of learning.

There must be large halls for outside lectures on large subjects, for these students seek to participate in outside affairs. There must be the most modern laboratories and scientific equipment, for these students seek to know and must know the newest developments of science. There must be many fine studios for the arts, for these students seek to create as well as to enjoy by seeing and hearing. And there must be space for the technical and professional training they seek.

Buildings do not cause academic programs, but they can impede them. Therefore *all these learning rooms must be so placed and so designed that the campus expresses the unity of knowledge. Access between departments must be easy, so that students moving through this rich array feel from the first a single impact, and gather from the harmonious interplay of disciplines some inkling of the universality of human experience.* And at the heart, at the beating center, you must set the library, where every book wanted is immediately at hand, and a thousand others wait beside them to be discovered....

Josephine Young Case’s vision for Skidmore’s new campus transcends physical spaces, learning and teaching styles, and fiscal constraints. Her charge also, and most importantly,

transcends time. The campus she envisioned would by its conception and careful construction be adaptable to change, responsive to creativity, and open to discovery. It is without question a vision of a space in which integrative learning will thrive, where the students and faculty both will be inspired to draw connections across disciplines, across time, and between the campus and other places.

More recently, in 2009, Skidmore faculty approved a set of Goals for Student Learning and Development that are consonant with Case's vision. The Goals

reflect the unique characteristics and synergies of our B.A. and B.S. programs, as well as certain emphases that are deeply engrained in Skidmore's history and culture: on creativity, on civic responsibility, and on interdisciplinary thinking. As in the past, we aim to graduate students who strive for excellence, think deeply and creatively, and communicate and act effectively...Our goals emerge in particular from our collective sense of a Skidmore education as a transformative experience. We want our students to acquire both knowledge and capacities that enable them to initiate and embrace change and apply their learning lifelong in new contexts. We believe that this learning takes place throughout our students' experience, both inside the classroom and out, on campus and off. (Preamble to the Goals for Student Learning and Development; online)

As the following report will show, Case's vision for a new campus, and the College's more recent learning goals, are simultaneously aspirational and practical, and, in the context of physical and digital spaces, met and unmet.

As the physical campus has grown over the years, Josephine Young Case's charge continues to resonate, particularly recently as the community celebrates President Glotzbach's decade of leadership at the College. As a 2013 *Scope* article notes:

Visitors returning to Skidmore's campus after 10 years are astounded by its physical changes. New student residences abound, including the Northwood Apartments that debuted in 2006 and the recently opened 230-apartment Sussman Village, which replaced Scribner Village. Other residences have been refurbished and appointed to entice more students back on campus, especially after Moore Hall was closed and sold. A dramatic renovation of the Murray-Aikins Dining Hall included a revamped array of fresh, healthy, and award-winning food that draws the entire campus community.

Renovations were also made to the Saisselin Art Building, Scribner Library and information technology, Filene Hall, athletic fields, and a broad cross-section of classrooms, laboratories, and gathering places. The College also has ambitious plans for a new admissions center and science facility.

The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, built in 2000, has continued its development into a groundbreaking center of creativity that draws thousands of visitors to its shows and events. It serves as a national model for the way college museums can integrate academics and exhibitions.

The most dramatic addition to the campus is the Arthur Zankel Music Center, funded by the estate of trustee Arthur Zankel, P'82, '92, and other donors. The state-of-the-art facility offers fully wired classrooms and soundproof practice studios and fosters the development of interdisciplinary presentations for its 600-seat Ladd Concert Hall. The center has been hailed by experts and audiences far and wide for its "warm and bright"

acoustics and advanced technologies. The superb facility is the headquarters of a precedent-setting partnership with Carnegie Hall, attracts Grammy-winning record producers, and presents a schedule of renowned guest artists from around the world.

While the above article celebrates Skidmore's meteoric physical growth over the last ten years, it does not speak to whether these new spaces are intentionally designed to foster Josephine Young Case's vision for integrative learning *avant la lettre*, or, if they are, whether they in fact do.

Because the Physical and Digital Spaces Working Group was tasked with exploring spaces on campus that may (or may not) promote or enhance integrative learning, our group has focused on three physical spaces that represent the past, present, and future of teaching and learning at Skidmore. Within these spaces we have identified digital spaces specifically designed to encourage integrative learning. The recent past and present are represented by the Scribner Library, the near future by the yet-to-be built Center for Integrated Sciences, and the longer-term future by the Tisch Learning Center.

Of course, focusing on just these three spaces excludes other spaces that could have served equally well to illustrate both our strengths and our weaknesses in achieving integrative learning through conducive spaces. The Northwoods is strikingly absent, for example, as is the Williamson Sports Center, and we might well have inquired into this last space's structures and programming in connection with our aims for all of our students health, well-being, collaborative and leadership skills, and other goals that may be met within its spaces.

We might also have focused on the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, because it is truly our flagship space for integrative learning. Celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2015 and profiled in our last Self-Study, the Tang continues to serve as a national model for the way college museums can integrate academics and exhibitions. No other campus building to date has been so specifically conceived and designed with integrative learning in mind and sustained as a space for pedagogical innovation across traditional boundaries in all of its programming.

Central to the Tang's mission is to "awaken the community to the richness and diversity of the human experience through the medium of art."²⁸ The museum was conceived as a laboratory space in which all members of the Skidmore community could teach and learn in ways that would deepen their disciplinary knowledge, create bridges across disciplines, and invite dialogue to expand understanding of the shared ways that we make sense of the world in which we live. The Tang invites curiosity and collaborative learning through active engagement with ideas, artworks, and exhibitions. Tang exhibitions probe the boundaries of conventional curatorial practice, frequently crossing time periods and disciplines, and encompassing all types of media and objects to explore intersections between the visual and performing arts, natural sciences, and humanities in new and inventive ways.

Indeed the very design of the building and its siting on the campus were intended to reflect these ideas of intersections, dialogue, and integration. As an architectural form, the building reaches out in different directions to the campus and the community, and in the openness and fluidity of its interior spaces, it reflects the concepts of transparency, exchange of ideas, and bridging of differences. Thus in both its design and its mission, the Tang Museum has been an exemplar at Skidmore in facilitating student learning that transgresses normative

²⁸ See "About the Tang" at <https://tang.skidmore.edu/index.php/pages/view/185/section:185>.

boundaries and challenges all of the community's members to integrate previously discrete domains and experiences. The Tang's boldness and effectiveness also challenge us to unsettle other boundaries and integrate the unexpected in our designs for and uses of space.

There are other spaces we might well have addressed, but rather than present superficial information about many, we have chosen to narrow our gaze onto three. Our goal is to recognize the evolution of integrative learning at Skidmore as exemplified by these spaces, to learn from these cases how we might best continue to realize Josephine Young Case's vision for our students' integrative learning, and to ask whether we are actually upholding Case's vision for our campus and our students. In our conclusion our group makes suggestions for how Skidmore might become even more visionary in its efforts to facilitate integrative learning opportunities.

Integrative Learning at the Heart of Campus: Lucy Scribner Library

"And at the heart, at the beating center, you must set the library, where every book wanted is immediately at hand, and a thousand others wait beside them to be discovered...." —Josephine Young Case

The original plans for Skidmore's Jonsson Campus, the replacement for the College's original, downtown Saratoga Springs buildings, purposefully placed the Lucy Scribner Library at the "beating center." Skidmore has respected this intention by also sustaining the library as the intellectual heart of the Skidmore community. The College has consistently, over time, supported the building's evolution in ways that encourage new pedagogies, foster collaboration, provide access to essential academic services, and reflect the changing needs of the campus community. The library's most recent (2011–2012) renovations reimagined the building as an environment with the people, programs, spaces, and technologies needed to create a rich network of support for integrative learning. It is an ideal space for an initiative to articulate and develop integrative learning throughout the College.

Library Renovation

Built in 1966 with 50,000 square feet of usable space, the Lucy Scribner Library was the first academic building to be constructed on the Jonsson Campus. Thirty years later, in 1996, the College added another 25,000 square feet to the building. That expansion made the 2011–2012 transition to a more comprehensive academic center possible. But there were several smaller steps along the way. Information Technology's Help Desk for users relocated to the main floor of the library in 2002, bringing professional and peer help to the students on location where they need it. And in 2008, the Writing Center relocated from Case Center into the library's fourth floor, again with a strong peer-tutoring component. Together with the Help Desk, the Writing Center opened up the possibility of reconceiving the library's space as a more dynamic, multi-faceted teaching and learning space. Now neither solely a repository of print text, nor just a point of access to digital resources, the library also became a site for all sorts of support for learning and collaborative work. Peer tutors in the Writing Center were an early model for the kinds of peer-led learning that are now more common practice across the College. The addition of English Language Learners (ELL) support in the Writing Center in the form of a full-time staff person and part-time tutor also models the ways learning now is intentionally supported in new modes and spaces as our student population and their needs and goals change dramatically. As

we explain more fully in Chapter IV, the increase in English-language learners in our student body is part of an overall vision for integrative learning. These students are learning outside of the classroom in particularly intensive ways, and we aim to meet their needs as best we can.

Locating the IT Help Desk (2002) and the Writing Center (2008) in the library thus helped us to reconceive the library and prepared us for the major changes that followed. Renovation of the building was undertaken in 2011 with the primary intention of more seamlessly integrating Information Technology services into academic life at Skidmore. Part of IT had been located near the library; other parts were scattered in other buildings. An external review²⁹ recommended bringing the library and IT together, and the moment for renovation seemed in every way propitious. Renovations were undertaken with an eye to drawing connections between information resources and information technology, so that students and faculty could move seamlessly between them with the supports necessary for uses to evolve over time. IT and the library remain distinct operationally, but in sharing spaces they are also sharing ideas and visions in the ways that Josephine Young Case imagined.

A highlight of the project, and the first piece to reach completion, was an expanded and improved Media Services presence in the ground floor of the library. Complementing the existing IT Help Desk, this space supports the steadily increasing number of students who are developing media-based projects as part of their academic work. In addition, an expanded GIS Center and accompanying study rooms provide students with a centralized and improved lab to complete projects within the context of the classroom, in small groups, or working one-on-one with GIS specialists. Both of these digital labs previously were satellite spaces located in classroom buildings; now they are part of the new heart of the College, an interdisciplinary core of digital and traditional learning and communication.

The new vision includes significantly more space for collaborative learning. Reallocation of space within the library and construction of an offsite storage area, the Hoge Building, allowed for the addition of 250 seats and 25 group study rooms outfitted with wall-mounted monitors and an online reservation system. The new Media Viewing Room, requested by faculty in two different focus groups, provides space for the teaching and collective examination of academic, commercial, and student-created videos, with seats for up to 30 viewers. Although construction of the Media Viewing Room predated the establishment of the Mellon-funded Project Vis—a three-pronged visual literacy initiative which includes a new Media and Film Studies minor—its potential for use by that program is clear. These new flexible spaces have proven quite popular for everything from group projects and study groups to committee meetings and formal dialogues. During the 2013–2014 academic year, the Media Viewing Room was booked 634 times for a total of 1,089 hours, while many study rooms saw even heavier use, ranging from a low of 519 bookings for 970 hours (room 324) to a high of 869 bookings for 1,211 hours (room 127).

Two new classrooms, one dedicated to Library Instruction and another that has become the headquarters for Project VIS, were also created and outfitted with new technology as part of the building's makeover. Over the course of the 2013–2014 academic year, the vast majority of 118 Library Instruction sessions as well as two one-credit information literacy courses were held

²⁹ Skidmore College – Lucy Scribner Library. *Building on Strength: Report to the Provost and Library Director*, by The Scribner Library External Review Committee (Bart Harloe, St. Lawrence University; Joanne A. Schneider, Colgate University; Gene Wiemers, Bates College), May 13, 2010.

in the Library Instruction classroom. When not being used for classes, the room is left open for student use. The Project VIS headquarters are the spatial hub of a signature initiative in integrative learning, described in more detail below.

There are also more structural, less visible connections now between IT and the library. Behind the scenes, Enterprise Systems was also relocated to the library, and, by a new interconnection tunnel, linked to renovated space used by IT Technical Services and IT User Services. The renovation placed IT staff on several floors of the building, with offices close to library colleagues; for the first time, all of IT is under one roof.

The physical renovation of the library has been mirrored by the development of its digital resources. The construction of a new digitization lab has supported an ongoing effort to make Special Collections materials more accessible to students and faculty through a Digital Collections project that has quickly grown to over 10,000 items. The library has also begun taking a more transparent approach to archival materials through the implementation of ArchivesSpace, an online collection of archival finding aids. Working closely with other campus constituencies, the library is promoting the development of a more equitable and sustainable model for scholarly communication at Skidmore and beyond through the implementation of an online institutional repository.

The library has also been effectively leveraging participation in consortia to maximize use of physical space and support digital initiatives. Involvement in ConnectNY, a shared catalog and unmediated borrowing service for 18 New York State academic libraries, has given Skidmore faculty, staff, and students access to any one of five million books within 48 hours. Ongoing, collaborative projects with the New York 6, a Mellon Foundation-supported group that includes St. Lawrence, Hobart and William Smith, Hamilton, Union, Colgate, and Skidmore, have led to a long-term plan for digital preservation and the development of a series of digital learning objects to support Information Literacy.

Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning

The building also supports faculty development and pedagogical experimentation in the Weller Room, the home of the Faculty Network Facilitator, Faculty Interest Groups, and Faculty Writing Groups. The Weller Room has evolved into the Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning, a Mellon Foundation-funded initiative to provide opportunities for faculty to explore and engage with the broader landscape of the liberal arts and higher education. The center sponsors a Futures Forum that encourages faculty to connect campus-level and national-level issues in higher education, with particular attention to economic issues. Also created by the Mellon grant will be a Collaboration Commons—both a physical space and a concept that supports innovative pedagogies, such as blended courses, integrative strategies for teaching and learning, and collaborations with other education entities such as the New York 6 consortium and the Central New York Humanities Corridor.

Project VIS

The newest initiative to find a home in the library, in the new LI 113 classroom, reinforces and expands Skidmore's commitment to establishing the library as a hub for integrative learning through both physical and digital projects. Established under the aegis of Project VIS, the John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS) and the Visual

Literacy Forum—two components of the Mellon-funded project—share the space. The Visual Literacy Forum hosts workshops, courses, and events that are intended to contribute to understanding the how and why of visual communication, while reaching across the broadest section of our community. MDOCS is an interdisciplinary center for presenting the stories of the human experience in documentary media and technologies: old and new; visual, oral, and written; analog and digital. Providing resources for and fostering collaborations between Skidmore’s academic programs and documentary practitioners, MDOCS invites students, faculty, and staff to learn and use the documentary arts for critical inquiry, discovery, civic engagement, and exposition. MDOCS, on its own and in partnership with individuals and programs, offers classes in the principles of documentary and instruction in documentary filmmaking, audio storytelling, and exhibition, among other documentary forms. Additional LI 113 projects include the Saratoga-Skidmore Memory Project (a digital collection of materials and reflections on the history of the College and the Saratoga community) and a summer Storytellers’ Institute, which brings a broad range of documentary practitioners to campus for an intensive, five-week program.

Opportunities for integrative learning are best fostered in an environment that allows for serendipitous connections between people and ideas, effortless crossing of disciplinary boundaries, and seamless integration of curricular and cocurricular activities. The recent renovation of the Lucy Scribner Library, and the interdisciplinary initiatives that have relocated to or sprung up within the library in relation to it, have resulted in a space with the flexibility and vitality to incubate new modes of teaching and learning now and in the future. A building with beautiful views, filled with spaces for quiet contemplation and for lively discussion, surrounding its average 1,784 daily visitors (2013–2014 academic year) with innovative programs, expert help, cutting-edge technologies, works of art, books, journals, and increasingly rich layers of digital content—the library is a model for configuring spaces with the tools that allow students to reach across disciplines, and across the increasingly blurred line between the physical and digital, to more meaningfully engage with the world beyond the traditional classroom.

Center for Integrated Sciences

“There must be rooms equipped with every modern aid for teaching, including space for those which have not yet been invented.”—Josephine Young Case

The Skidmore Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS) is designed to embody all of the lessons that we have learned from the Scribner Library, the Tang Museum, and other integrative learning spaces around campus. Currently spread across four different buildings, the nine physical and life science departments are housed in suboptimal facilities in terms of their potential for integrative learning. The Dana Science Center “has not seen a significant renovation to the older portion of Dana since it was originally constructed in the 1960s. Almost 50 years old, its building systems are failing and significant renovation will be required to bring the building in line with present building codes and life safety requirement.”³⁰ Preliminary estimates predict that we have at least \$30 million in deferred maintenance in the Dana Science Center alone. Furthermore, Harder Hall was initially constructed as a building to house student dorm

³⁰ Lidsky, 2011.

rooms and faculty offices and now houses Computer Science (along with Mathematics and Economics), one of our most infrastructure-intensive departments. Similarly the Health and Exercise Sciences department, one of our heaviest users of scientific instrumentation, is housed in renovated spaces in the Williamson Sports Center, a space never designed for scientific research and teaching labs, located across campus from the other science departments.

The newest section of the science complex, the “new” Dana addition, is now more than 15 years old, and even its air-handling units are reaching their anticipated lifetime. In short, the Center for Integrated Sciences is an urgently needed and much anticipated opportunity for the science departments, and indeed the entire campus, to think more carefully about integrative learning and space usage.

The building process began with the formulation of the Science Vision Statement composed by faculty from each of the science departments with input from faculty across campus. The four goals from the Science Vision Statement are:

1. Providing each student with a solid understanding of science and its relevance to their lives.
2. Strengthening our science departments and developing interdisciplinary connections.
3. Empowering more student-faculty research collaborations.
4. Developing unique interdisciplinary connections between the sciences and the art, humanities, and social sciences.

Each of these four goals is facilitated through the design of the CIS at the individual space level, placement of individual rooms, group of interdisciplinary clusters, and the inclusion of multiple spaces designed to reach out to all of campus as described below in terms of integrative learning.

The formal process of planning the building started in July of 2012 with the hiring of Payette, an architectural firm in Boston with extensive science building experience. In order to facilitate goals 2 and 4 of the Science Vision, it was important to co-locate all nine physical and life science departments, including the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Geosciences, Health and Exercise Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Neuroscience, Physics, and Psychology. These departments are currently spread over five different buildings, including the Dana Science Center, Harder Hall, the Dana Science addition (commonly referred to as new Dana), the Williamson Sports Center, and the Tisch Learning Center (discussed in detail below). In order to foreground the four goals of the Science Vision Statement, conversations were organized around interdisciplinary groups as well as departmental units. These disciplinary and interdisciplinary discussions resulted in an exciting design with substantial creativity. They also resulted in much greater space sharing and efficiency that allowed the building to require substantially less net assignable square feet (NASF) per faculty member than at our peer institutions, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of net assignable square feet (NASF) per faculty member in the CIS:

Departments/Program	Skidmore (nasf/fte)	Peers* (nasf/fte)	Aspirants** (nasf/fte)
Biology	1571	2200	2500
Chemistry	1606	2100	3100
Environmental Studies	1197	2700	
Geosciences	1781	2100	2300
Health and Exercise	1285	2800	2800
Math/CS	301	500	900
Physics	1678	1700	2100
Psychology	519	1100	1400
Average	1242	1900	2157
Percent difference		+53%	+74%

* Bard, Bates, Colgate, Connecticut College, Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall, Gettysburg, Hamilton, Kenyon, Oberlin, Sarah Lawrence, St. Lawrence, Trinity C, Union, Vassar and Wheaton

** Bowdoin, Colby, Haverford, Middlebury and Wesleyan

During the summer of 2014, we completed the design/development phase of the planning process. As designed, the CIS involves razing Harder Hall, a gut renovation of the Dana Science Center (which was built when the campus was relocated to its current location in the 1960s) and a light renovation of the new Dana addition (which was constructed circa 1995), as well as an addition on the northern and eastern sides of the existing building. As planned, the CIS encompasses 85,000 square feet of renovated spaces and 115,000 of new construction. Furthermore, this project frees space in the Williamson Sports Center and Tisch Learning Center, allowing programs in those facilities to think creatively about their space.

We have designed a project from the inside out that will allow students, faculty, and staff to integrate their learning across disciplines, across time, and across communities. For the sake of brevity, we have chosen to highlight particular design features and types of spaces rather than provide a comprehensive list of integrative learning in the design of the CIS.

Project Spaces

In order to encourage students and faculty to integrate their learning across time, we have designed groups of lab spaces that incorporate a teaching lab, a preparation space, and project

spaces. The CIS will house 16 project spaces. Scientific learning is often based on access to physical systems or instrumentation, such as the infrastructure to grow and study fruit fly development over time or instruments to measure properties of field samples. The CIS allows students to break free of the limitations of three-hours lab times by combining teaching labs with small adjacent project spaces which students can access 24/7. We are excited about these project spaces because of the way they will allow students to really understand time as a scientific variable and investigate much more sophisticated scientific systems.

Since multiple classes will share these project spaces, we envision that the spaces will foster integrative learning across courses and across time by allowing informal conversations among students. As a student in sophomore level microbiology converses with a senior student enrolled in bacterial pathogenesis, the sophomore will be learning about the work that he or she can anticipate but, perhaps more importantly, the senior will be encountering, remembering, and integrating this sophomore-level experience while engaging more advanced or overlapping coursework.

Interdisciplinary Clusters

As a result of our interdisciplinary planning efforts we have designed a project that facilitates integrative learning across disciplines for students and faculty. While we have chosen to highlight the biomolecular sciences groups, similar interdisciplinary discussions occurred around field methods (environmental studies and biology), the animal facility (biology, health and exercise sciences, and neuroscience), and computational methods (math, computer science, physics and psychology), as examples.

Individuals from biology, chemistry, and neuroscience who have a shared passion and equipment and infrastructure needs formed a biomolecular sciences cluster. In addition to these faculty who will be sharing one large research lab and adjacent teaching spaces, affiliated faculty in health and exercise sciences, field methods, and neuroscience are placed on the same floor across the atrium.

This proximity will facilitate integration of knowledge and research projects across disciplines. The cluster will foster the development of a large intellectual community within which students can integrate multiple disciplines around a shared methodological framework. For example, Jennifer Bonner's developmental biology research program (on understanding the effects of alcohol on the development of the nervous system of zebra fish) will be next to Rebecca Howard's biochemistry research program (on understanding how alcohol affects the behavior of neuroreceptors). This co-location intentionally fosters integrative learning across the disciplines and supports goals 2, 3, and 4 of the science vision.

The CIS will also house four shared, registrar-controlled classrooms, four registrar-controlled computer labs, a shared computer lab/tutoring space, seventeen student study spaces, and four conference rooms which will draw faculty and students from across the campus because of their flexibility and aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, even the physical shape of the building seeks to reach across to the arts quad composed of Filene Hall, the Saisselin Art Building, the Zankel Music Center, and the Bernhard Theater.

IdeaLab

Finally, the IdeaLab is an example of a space designed to integrate the curricular and cocurricular as well as Skidmore and the surrounding community. The IdeaLab is designed to be a flexible, innovative space where students and faculty can actualize their creative ideas. Informed by traditional entrepreneurship spaces, inspired by the “maker” movement, and embracing the Skidmore commitment to creativity, the IdeaLab aims to be a space for course-based projects as well as individual work. The IdeaLab will have a director who will be involved in developing programming for the lab, which will be a combination of academic and social events. It is envisioned that the IdeaLab will be a place for students, faculty, staff, and community members to work but also play with disruptive technologies such as 3D printers, milling machines, and laser etchers. In fact, this space was originally conceived in response to students who were soldering in their dorm rooms in order to make new speakers. We anticipate a rich offering of cocurricular programming that will familiarize interested parties with the technology of the lab and provide intentional integration between the curriculum and cocurriculum; it will also provide opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to network within and beyond the Skidmore community and learn about others’ creative approaches.

This space will bring students, faculty, and staff from across the campus, as well as members of the wider community, together around shared facilities, including both high- and low-tech tools from sophisticated electronics to needles, thread, and fabrics, thereby facilitating integrative learning across several dimensions.³¹

On the Periphery of Time and Innovation: Tisch Learning Center

“Buildings do not cause academic programs, but they can impede them”
—Josephine Young Case

Tisch Learning Center (TLC) was built in 1987 in large part to provide classroom spaces and faculty offices needed to support the recently adopted (and ambitious) Liberal Studies (core) curriculum.

According to minutes from 1985 trustee meetings, TLC was to provide space that was intentionally integrative across disciplines, bringing students and faculty together in ways that would enhance and complement the new interdisciplinary curriculum. When the first phase of TLC was completed in 1987, it became known as the Academic Center; it housed 22 classrooms and the offices of the Departments of American Studies; History; Psychology; and Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work. Labs for these departments were also included in the original plans for the building. Apparently for financial reasons, the plan for phase II, to add a fourth floor and a wing jutting into the green to the south, was never realized.

Between 1986 and 2015, what is now known as TLC has become one of the true workhorses on the Skidmore campus. Unlike mixed-use buildings that include administrative

³¹ Documentation for the Center for Integrated Sciences includes: Science Vision Statement; Science for the Future: New and Renovated Spaces, 2011, by Dober, Lidsky, Mathes; Design Development Document Set

offices and auditoriums, such as Palamountain; or that share academic spaces with student services, cafes, administrative offices, etc., such as Ladd; or that reside among public performance and exhibition spaces, such as Zankel and the Tang; TLC was intended as, and continues to be, a strictly academic building. It is for this reason that the working group selected it as our example of a past space in which we now struggle to meet present and anticipated needs for blended learning, new technologies, and evolving pedagogies such as flipped and de-centered classrooms. TLC currently houses five departments: American Studies, History, Sociology, Social Work, and Psychology. It also houses the interdisciplinary program and minor Intergroup Relations (IGR). It has a rich history of innovation and interdisciplinarity. We anticipate that it can in the future become again a site of innovation as we move to develop more intentional spaces to support integrative learning. In the future, when the new CIS is built, Psychology is slated to move out of TLC, which will open up space and provide opportunities for renovation and innovative spaces.

Technology, “Hubs,” and Other Integrative Spaces in TLC

TLC has long been a site for early adoption of new technologies and pedagogies. In 1996, Psychology professor Hugh Foley was the first faculty member in TLC to introduce technology in his teaching and research in the form of a small 12-computer Macintosh laboratory. This lab was set up in a makeshift space in room 101A—two classrooms were merged into one. Professor Foley’s lab continues to be used for research, experimentation, and statistical analysis.

The classrooms in TLC were the first on campus to be equipped with multimedia podiums and projection capabilities. The successful model achieved in TLC has since been standardized across the campus.

In the past several years, the departments in TLC have developed a model for “hub” spaces. They requested and received computer workstations for student use. The workstations exist now in the Sociology/Social Work main offices on the second floor, and in the American Studies and History main offices on the third floor. These stations have proven to be very effective for bringing students together to work on collaborative projects, to discuss assignments, and to work individually on papers. All have access to printers. Here, faculty can now also train and supervise students making use of specialized software such as SPSS and Hypertranscribe. Individual and collective advising also happens in these spaces, along with quantitative tutorials, collaborative research, and individual projects. Being in close physical proximity to faculty and students from other departments and programs facilitates communication across disciplines.

These flexible, technology-rich hub spaces are models of integrative learning space as it exists in TLC, and certainly should be taken into consideration when the building is remodeled in the future.

In one particular way, the building’s traditional configuration—hallways lined with box-like classrooms and reasonably-sized faculty offices—has encouraged certain kinds of integrative learning, and we might consider how these processes could be supported more fully in an innovative structure designed intentionally for these purposes. Teaching and historical scholarship happen side-by-side (and, as a result, hand-in-hand) in the History and American Studies departments, one very early and very basic form of what we now call integrative learning. Students both witness and participate in the creation of new knowledge in their professors’ scholarship, which is itself in many ways integrative. American Studies is by

definition interdisciplinary; History has undertaken a new initiative in integrating public history into the students' learning; and many of these faculty do research that focuses on visual objects and visual communication (maps, illustrated books, material culture, and digital objects, for example). As the disciplines have evolved, they have become a site for rich integrative learning.

The American Studies and History departments have taken substantive strides in recent years to grow their use of integrative learning experiences while testing the creative limits of their traditional spaces. This includes extensive use of faculty offices for group mentoring, advising, and even small classes. History and American Studies faculty often use their offices as faculty in the sciences use their labs; they are centers for discussions, libraries for lending books and debating ideas, and social centers where students gather during office hours. American Studies and History faculty now also have display cases on the third floor of TLC that their students use as extensions of their classes and as ways to display their work and to curate the visual objects that they are studying. Class assignments—from maps and artifacts to created objects—find larger audiences beyond the classroom walls. American Studies faculty display their latest scholarship in these cases as well, again offering students and larger audiences access to the department's scholarly accomplishments and visually providing students access to the scholarly world beyond their classrooms.

In all of these ways, the TLC faculty make an outmoded design work for several models of integrative learning. We propose that putting integrative learning at the intentional center of our eventual planning for renovations will lead to a better, more flexible design for spaces that will not just allow but also provoke innovations in pedagogy and learning.

Current Challenges

The current state of affairs in the building, however, continues to make integrative learning very difficult on several levels.

First, the recent expansion of Psychology's lab space to the third floor of TLC has eliminated large classrooms on the floor that History and American Studies formerly valued. Because the faculty in History and American Studies cherish the intertwined educational/scholarly profile their faculty and students have developed over time, the crowded conditions in the building—and on the third floor in particular—have changed the ways teaching and learning happen. The third floor lost three classrooms when offices and laboratories were created for the Psychology department.

Following Psychology's anticipated move to the CIS, American Studies and History support a vision that reimagines the third floor of TLC as a space for both departments, a space that recognizes their closer alignment with one shared administrative assistant and that is spatially designed to mirror that arrangement. Any future plan would need to account for office space, assuming that both departments may grow their faculty over time. Also, as Skidmore considers changes to its core curriculum in 2015–2016, it would be wise for us to consider carefully the implications of such changes for future space needs, needs that go beyond the anticipated CIS.

More importantly, though, any future plan should include the restoration of classrooms to the third floor. Both History and American Studies have taken steps to include exhibitions, public history, and other integrative topics and pedagogies into their class offerings, and all of TLC's departments and programs are eager to collaborate on flexible, innovative spaces that are

technology-rich. Smaller seminar spaces in which to workshop public history projects; spaces more conducive to media, documentary, and visual studies; and spaces that are more conducive to multiple configurations in the course of a class (such as flipped classrooms, lab-like spaces, and small-group work, as well as more traditional lectures and seminar discussions) are a sampling of what all of these departments might want or need.

The new seminar rooms could be used for more traditional teaching, but they would also allow faculty to bring archival work to our students in rich new ways. The rooms would, in effect, serve as classrooms, meeting spaces, technology hubs (for technologies both old and new), and integrative environments that would highlight the melding of pedagogical and scholarly work, of multiple disciplines, of visual and textual objects of study, and of theory and praxis.

Conclusions and Recommendations

“Make no small plans.”³²

Between 1987, when the TLC was completed, and the as-yet-to-be-determined date for the completion of the CIS, Skidmore will have significantly updated its infrastructure to meet the growing special and technological needs of our students and faculty. The Scribner Library renovation is a perfect example of how Skidmore has responded to demands for fully wired classrooms, new software, increased access to new electronic databases, and areas designated for technological experimentation and creative teaching and learning. The CIS will take these innovations further, as it has in its plans rooms that will be multipurpose, with moveable chairs and desks and multiple workspaces created specifically for collaboration and integrative teaching and learning. Here Skidmore will realize the most integrative opportunities for our students and faculty, encouraging them to work in new ways.

TLC represents a building that, despite significant technological upgrades, remains woefully out-of-date, difficult to utilize, and incapable of meeting the growing technological needs of our students. Nor are the classrooms conducive to truly integrative teaching and learning. Despite the small innovations departments have made, it is difficult to imagine TLC, as it is currently configured, as a space conducive to creative pedagogies, much less integrative ones.

Conclusion

We have made some difficult decisions in focusing here on just the Scribner Library, the Center for Integrated Sciences, and Tisch Learning Center. Many other spaces on campus could have served just as well, especially as spaces we aspire to re-invent. We have a Campus Plan that entails many changes, both in the near future and further out, and we would do well to consider

³² The quote, originally from 19th-century American architect Daniel Burnham and adopted in 1976 by Skidmore President Joseph Palamountain (by way of another university president), “has become something of a Skidmore byword,” as American Studies professor Mary C. Lynn explained in her book, *Make No Small Plans: A History of Skidmore College*.

how any of those changes might be informed by an intentional and planful approach to integrative learning spaces across all areas.

Every chapter and topic in this Self-Study could and should also be viewed through the lens of planful spaces and innovative designs. We have not, for example, addressed the limitations of the Intercultural Center as a space for integrative learning (curricular and cocurricular) around culture and identities. Nor have we addressed the need that many see for an integrative community wellness/recreational/social center. To better integrate, support, and promote cocurricular activities within the Skidmore community, many believe the College should develop plans for a community center that includes facilities for health and wellness, recreation, and community events and performances in a welcoming setting. The spaces should be flexible to allow for multiple uses, but also include areas dedicated to equipment for specific purposes (exercise equipment, games, a social space such as a pub or coffee house). The current Case Center addresses only a few of these functions and could be developed into a more comprehensive center serving as a hub for the community and supporting goals in the Strategic Plan that focus on wellness and well-being.

Finally, we might also have considered separately and more fully the College's digital spaces in relation to our physical ones. A more capacious and ambitious concept of digital spaces as sites of integrative learning could inform, again, every chapter of this Self-Study. Among the ideas that floated in early drafts of this report was the proposal to increase support for digital scholarship and, in particular, digital humanities, perhaps with a center for digital humanities. And we would do well to consider whether our current arrangement of offices—for example, for Student Academic Support—is maximally conducive to furthering integrative learning in the ways we are imagining here.

These are just several among a number of interrelated topics on space that we might well have addressed here. One further perspective to explore relates to the curriculum revision that is under discussion. As noted at the beginning of this report, Tisch Learning Center was initially conceived and constructed in part because of changes to the All-College Curriculum when Skidmore implemented Liberal Studies. Once again the College is considering reforming our core curriculum. As in 1985, it would be prudent for us to consider whether our current classrooms are prepared to support curricular changes that will—and should—require new teaching and learning spaces and new technologies for improved, integrative pedagogies in the future.

Our recommendations below, however, emerge directly out of the topics studied here. A final and broader recommendation would be to consider any building and renovation projects through the lens of integrative learning, on the model best demonstrated by planning for the CIS. “There must be rooms equipped with every modern aid for teaching, including space for those which have not yet been invented,” Case wrote. Her vision holds true for us today.

Recommendations

1. Our primary recommendation is to begin the construction of the CIS at the earliest possible date in order to lead to the domino set of space moves that will positively affect programs, including the nine physical and life science departments and also those others in the TLC and Williamson Sports Center.

2. While podiums met needs for innovative technology in the early 2000s, current classrooms in Tisch Learning Center are set up for lecture/seminar formats where a single presenter engages an entire classroom presumed to be taking notes on paper. Innovative pedagogy which breaks classes into workshops or small groups, where students might need to access technology (sockets/screens) and faculty might wish to move among clusters at work, is not yet supported in TLC. Perhaps, once again, a few classrooms in the building might be set aside for experiment and more engaged hands-on learning.
3. Ensure that planning for a renovated/repurposed TLC be informed by the ambitious vision(s) for integrative learning of those who will occupy and use it.

IV. Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and social justice are intellectual and experiential domains that particularly lend themselves to integrative learning. At Skidmore, such teaching and learning most frequently happen in programs and initiatives involving academic and student affairs and the community: when student experiences connect the curriculum with the cocurriculum—when students bring theory to practice, moving from the classroom to work in local, national, or international contexts and communities. We document here many interconnected initiatives that we have undertaken in order to meet our goals for our students’ learning about diversity and inclusion. In doing so, we have realized that we do not always know the effect we have on our students’ learning when we adopt new policies and programs. Nationwide as well as at Skidmore, we are grappling with the enormous challenge of changing not just behaviors but also mentalities and implicit assumptions about race, ethnicity, social class, and other social identities. All of our work on diversity and inclusion must aim ultimately to increase our students’ integrative learning, so that as they are transformed by their liberal arts education, they meet our Goals for Student Learning and Development in this area as in others:

- Understand social and cultural diversity in national and global contexts
- Communicate effectively
- Interact effectively and collaboratively with individuals and across social identities
- Examine one’s own values and their use as ethical criteria in thought and action
- Interrogate one’s own values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences
- Develop practical competencies for managing a personal, professional, and community life
- Apply learning to find solutions for social, civic, and scientific problems
- Integrate and apply knowledge and creative thought from multiple disciplines in new contexts
- Embrace intellectual integrity, humility, and courage

Among the most important outcomes of our work on this chapter is our recognition that we need to learn more about the effectiveness of our initiatives in realizing these goals. We might also consider how well students’ learning about social identities, power, and inequality may be a particularly engaging way for them to learn critical thinking, effective communication, values and ethics, and solving large-scale and complex problems. In other words, diversity and inclusion can be understood as inherently integrative learning domains. The very difficulty of this learning can make it especially engaging and enduring, if we can as a community understand how best to make that happen. Certainly recent events in the national context point to the ongoing importance of continuing to keep learning about diversity and inclusion at the heart of our understanding of a liberal arts education. **[insert here re the new Strategic Plan]**

During the past ten years, Goal II of the *Strategic Plan 2005–2015* guided the direction of institutional decisions regarding diversity, inclusion, and social justice. For example, the Goals

for Student Learning and Development include understanding of cultural diversity in national and global contexts, interaction and collaboration across identities, and interrogation of individual values “in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences.” Also, implementing the *Strategic Plan 2005–2015* since the last Middle States review—particularly in the past five years—we have made notable strides in diversifying the student body and the faculty. Between 2006 and 2015, the ALANA student population jumped from 14.8% to 22.3% of all students; during the same period, the population of first generation students went up from 6.3% to 12.4%, and the percentage of students receiving financial aid from 40.8% to 44.7%, with an average award of \$35,531 in academic year 2014–2015. In the same period, the international student population has reached 9%, which represents a 400% increase since 2006.

Our faculty hiring process underwent a successful structural change in the light of the *Strategic Plan’s* goals. In the past three hiring cycles, we conducted 33 tenure-track searches, and have also made two conversions and one opportunity-hire to fill open positions in various departments as a result of retirements, replacements, and the creation of new lines. This renewal of close to 20% of our tenure-track lines provided the College with a timely opportunity to further diversify the faculty. Accordingly, the Dean of the Faculty’s office, in collaboration with Human Resources and the consulting firm Romney Associates, implemented innovative hiring practices that include four In Time Workshops, each focusing on particular aspects of the search process. Topics include the importance of the content and the structure of the ad for attracting a diverse pool; the relevance of networking; consideration of CVs and other application materials to identify applicants from underrepresented groups; strategies to avoid unconscious biases; the pertinence of diversity statements; and discussion of best on-campus interviewing practices and legal and illegal questions. We also implemented an Ambassadors program that offers an opportunity for candidates to meet with individuals who are not connected to the search in order to discuss issues that are outside the professional boundaries of the interviewing process, but that are essential to familiarizing candidates with the College, Saratoga Springs, and adjacent cities. Each search had a “diversity advocate” whose task was to limit the influence of unconscious biases and insure that the qualifications of the chosen candidates met the qualifications specified in the ad. Finally, the Dean and the Associate Dean for Faculty, Personnel, and Diversity played an active role in every search, with a view toward ensuring that the diversity of the wider pool of applicants was reflected in the shortlist of candidates for phone/Skype interviews and campus visits, and in the eventual evaluation of finalists.

The results have been extraordinary. Of the 39 positions over three years, we hired 22 faculty from national and international backgrounds that bring greater diversity to the faculty: three Asian Americans, three African Americans, six Latinos/as, and nine international faculty. The new searching protocols have become the standard *modus operandi* for tenure-track searches. Furthermore, in those instances when departments have succeeded in hiring faculty from underrepresented groups, they have invariably recognized the value of the new search methods. Although it is hard to accurately predict the number of vacant lines during the next 10 years, we can anticipate that a meaningful segment of the faculty will near retirement during that period and also that opportunities for conversions of contingent lines to tenure lines may arise. The Dean of the Faculty’s office, in conjunction with Human Resources, will continue to run the workshops after our contract with Romney Associates expires in the spring of 2016. By then, a critical number of faculty will have participated, sometimes repeatedly, in the new hiring process and will have developed expertise that will allow us to continue to refine the process. Skidmore’s success in hiring a significant percentage of new tenure-track faculty of color has been noticed

by some of our peer institutions, and they have consulted with us regarding our new hiring protocols. Also, we have presented the hiring results at AAC&U (2013) and NCORE (2015) conferences. On another note, we are also happy to report that we have reinstated the Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellowship with a two-year appointment of a Latino fellow in Anthropology. As we note below, we do continue to experience some challenges with retaining faculty and staff of color, and we need to address that. But the successes with hiring and the effective use of resources to achieve those successes are encouraging signs of change in the community.

Our data on the retention of faculty of color hired³³ during the past ten years are also relatively encouraging. Forty-two of 90 tenure-track faculty hires in 2005–2015 were either domestic faculty of color or international faculty—a significant change in our faculty demographics. Approximately a quarter of all of the faculty hired have left the College, distributed fairly equally across the categories. But the reasons for leaving are quite different: the faculty of color had no unsuccessful reviews or reappointments; there were two denials of tenure. Of the six faculty of color who left, then, four left voluntarily. In comparison, two out of five international faculty hires who left resigned, and three were not reappointed. The numbers are too small to draw firm conclusions, but we would do well to investigate whether there is any pattern to the bases for departing, in all of these cases, including voluntary departures. We would also do well to consider the data for retention of faculty and staff of color and other underrepresented groups beyond this cohort of recent, tenure-track hires. Is our relative success in hiring and retaining faculty of color and international faculty reflected in our overall retention of faculty and staff?

In Student Affairs, too, a number of initiatives have followed the *Strategic Plan's* imperatives. A fellowship position was approved in the Office of Student Diversity Programs (OSDP) in 2012 to design and implement a cocurricular intergroup dialogue program. The Student Diversity Program Fellow offered educational programs to promote leadership development and build community among students from both majority and underrepresented groups. The fellowship evolved into the position of Program Coordinator when the director of the OSDP also assumed the position of Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Program Coordinator advises 12 student clubs (African Heritage Awareness, Asian Cultural Awareness, Chinese Culture Club, Hayat, Hip Hop Alliance, International Student Union, Lift Every Voice Gospel Choir, Queer Lives in Color, Raíces, Skidmore Pride Alliance, So What Are You Anyway, and UJIMA) in diversity programming and leadership development, supports students with marginalized identities, and works collaboratively with student groups, Student Affairs staff, and faculty. This year the OSDP launched a pilot program, *I Speak What I Like*, a cocurricular workshop program that employs the peer facilitation model to provide social justice educational programs to the community. The OSDP works closely with the Tang Teaching Museum, the Sustainability Office, student clubs and organizations, and at least two academic departments to offer programs on a diverse range of topics related to social justice, identity, power and privilege, diversity, and inclusion.

This progress notwithstanding, we continue to experience problems related to students' social identities and their relative sense of inclusion on campus, as reported by the student survey conducted by Romney Associates in 2013. This report confirms and reinforces other reports in

³³ See Appendix: Retention of Domestic Faculty of Color, International Faculty, and White US Faculty Hired 2005–2015.

recent years. Students of color, for example, report more dissatisfaction with their experience at Skidmore than white students; black students feel less welcomed and less valued, and all students agree that the campus climate is the least favorable for Latino and black students.³⁴

Moreover, students of color identified the classroom as the third least-welcoming space on campus, one wherein they experience or witness insensitivities in matters relating to class and race. Students also contend that some white faculty lack the experience to confront or mitigate microaggressions, which can turn the classroom into an uncomfortable or unsafe space. These and other comments highlight the need to increase an awareness of disadvantaged socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds among both the students and the faculty (“the need for students and professors to stop making assumptions about class on campus”); to recognize students’ and employees’ feelings of marginalization on account of their own religious beliefs; and to unsettle the sheer conventionality of (political) ideas expressed by some white students. In addition, students with disabilities express the need for the College to improve accessibility on campus and foster greater awareness of the issues they experience.³⁵ These data compel us to continue to dedicate resources—financial, curricular, and programmatic—to initiatives that address issues of diversity and inclusion and that foster a climate that allows all our students, regardless of their origin, social class, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, or ability, to grow and flourish both personally and academically at Skidmore and beyond.

If we look at the data as a whole, then, there seems to be a thread that continues from our last Self-Study and the Periodic Review Report: we have made tremendous gains and many changes; we have had the greatest success with hiring, with Admissions, with recruitment of students, and with programming in Student Affairs; and despite these changes in our community, we continue to face challenges with campus climate. A further question remains: How well are our students learning about diversity? This is a multifaceted question. How well does our curriculum and do our pedagogies teach students about diversity so that they can meet our goals for their learning? How well are activities in the cocurriculum leading them to have the integrative learning experiences that will affect them deeply and change their thinking?

Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2013) show that Skidmore students—first-years and seniors—report both engaging in activities and having discussions about diversity and economic/social inequality more than do students from the comparison schools (Appendix). Even though the numbers are higher than the comparison schools’, we are not satisfied that Skidmore students are fully engaged in addressing issues of diversity and inequality. For example, only 33% of Skidmore first-year students and 23% of seniors reported that they often attended events or activities that encouraged them to examine their understanding of racial or ethnic differences, and 61% and 52%, respectively, engaged in discussions about race, ethnicity, or nationality.

Another set of questions on the NSSE survey asked about how often students included diverse perspectives in their coursework and how often they interacted with students from backgrounds different from their own. Skidmore students scored fairly high on these questions

³⁴ Graduating Students of Color Exit Interviews 2011. A report prepared by the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding, February 22, 2012.

³⁵ Eilola C, Fishman K, Greenberg A, Moore CD, Shrijver A, Totino J. Success with ACCESS: Use of Community-Based Participatory Research for Implementation. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 24(1): 58-62; 2011

(61%–82%; Appendix XXX), except for interactions with people with different political opinions, on which they scored significantly lower than students from comparison schools (51% vs. 68% for first-years and 48% vs. 67% for seniors).

On the whole, however, our recent alumni report that they did not learn as much about diversity and inclusion as we aim for: data from the Alumni Learning Census (classes of 2001–2010) show that while alumni rate the *importance* of the five items related to diversity between 4.1 and 4.6 on a 5-point scale, they rate these items only 3.2 to 3.9 as being *enhanced by Skidmore*.³⁶

In the chapter that follows, it is clear that the College has redoubled efforts to increase our students’ learning in this area, often in areas and ways that are creative and unexpected. And yet we are still in the process of developing assessments that will tell us more about what students are learning from these experiences. And, as is clear in Chapter I of this Self-Study, we are still developing the curricular requirements that will best lead to the learning we want for our students. These processes have been under way for years and yet remain unfinished.

We have had success with one recent curricular initiative, launched by the Dean of the Faculty in 2013. Even though the faculty response exceeded the funds that were set aside, the Dean supported 10 faculty in developing new courses on race and ethnicity, gender, and class. Courses such as “The Black Female Body,” “Multicultural Flare-ups,” “Latinidades,” “Philosophy of Race and Gender,” and “Sexuality in Japan” are now part of the curriculum in several departments and programs. We know that we need many more courses if we are to be in a position for all of our students to learn about social identities and social justice.

In this chapter, we present our efforts to bring this learning to a broad range of students, noting both successes and challenges. Our aim is to present the evidence for where sustained efforts and sometimes changes are both needed and are likely to work, based on our evidence.

Diversity and Inclusion and Integrative Learning

Engaged liberal learning experiences, otherwise known as high-impact experiences, provide, as we know, some of the best opportunities for integrative learning. As we hope to demonstrate below, some of our signature programs—IGR, SEE-Beyond, learning at the Tang, and our structures for off-campus study—engage students to focus deeply and creatively on various experiences with diversity, social justice, and inclusion. Students’ learning about diversity and inclusion is among the most engaged learning they experience, particularly when it happens simultaneously in the curriculum and the cocurriculum; when students bring theory to practice; when they encounter different cultures that call for negotiations in a different language; when they step out of the classroom to work with a group of individuals who face physical and mental abilities that are markedly different from their own; or when they face complex identity dynamics through the lens of art and various media. Such experiences prompt self-reflection and self-awareness and are most profound when students are encouraged to consider them in a sustained manner. This can be accomplished in a course or sequence of courses, by keeping a journal or making a presentation, and while working with individuals who are different from oneself. Needless to say, in all these spaces and circumstances, students are systematically prompted to confront their own biases and understand their own cultural locations.

³⁶ Alumni Learning Census Summary Data, classes of 2001–2010 (included on page XXX).

For this part of the Self-Study, we have focused on five programs where integrative learning happens in the context of learning about and experiencing diversity and inclusion. The programs vary in the number of participants and are often qualitatively and quantitatively different regarding the resources they require. Although they may be firmly ensconced in the curriculum, a practical component may connect them with the cocurriculum and the “glocal” world beyond Skidmore. What follows in this report are program exemplars where integrative learning is at its best, and where it flourishes primarily because of the multilayered experiences and plural perspectives that are woven into them. Students who take part in these programs are typically able to connect personal life experiences with acquired knowledge, and are compelled to engage in rigorous thinking about their own roles in identity-based social interactions. The core objective in these programs is to inculcate in students an ability to genuinely celebrate and understand diversity while grappling with issues around marginality and otherness.

At their best, these and other similar programs promote the development of leadership skills for the pursuit of social justice and for the creation of inclusive, supportive, and safe environments that are *sine qua non* for the realization of learning and personal growth of all populations of students. As we learn more about their relative effectiveness, we will also be in a better position to expand and replicate their successes.

Rationale for Focus

Of the multiple possibilities available to us, we decided to focus on five programs that have successfully fostered integrative learning through the study and pursuit of diversity and inclusion, but that also present various challenges for their continued development and growth. In this respect, we believe, each program is paradigmatic and in our judgment will help the institution collectively address how best to bring diversity and inclusion to the center of the curriculum and the cocurriculum in its goal of offering the best integrative learning opportunities to our students. The five programs this report focuses on are the Tang Teaching Museum’s opportunities for students, Intergroup Relations (IGR), Saratoga Bridges, SEE-Beyond, and three off-campus study experiences offered through the Off-Campus Study and Exchanges Office.

Our decision to spotlight the IGR minor follows from the program’s own explicit and exclusive focus on diversity and inclusion that is grounded in the curriculum. That curriculum is also explicitly integrative: its aim is for students to not only learn about racial identities but to also be able to put that learning to work dynamically in dialogues with others and in later experiences. IGR is also worth considering because it developed organically out of the collective efforts of faculty and staff with an interest in teaching about diversity. This program is also, of the five foregrounded, the one for which we have extensive assessment results that study its effectiveness; those results are supplemented, in turn, by further research done on related programs on 10 other campuses.

The rationale for choosing the Tang Teaching Museum is threefold: it is a signature institution within Skidmore itself—seeking to connect the world of creativity and artistry with the wider pedagogical orientations of the College; it is a major element of Skidmore’s public face that attracts audiences from within and outside of the College through its various exhibitions, events, and displays; and it is a resource-intensive endeavor, the operation of which relies on both outside and institutional funding. For all these reasons, we thought that it merits a fresh look and assessment of its ability to serve diversity and inclusion needs within a framework of integrative learning. Perhaps most significantly, however, we believe that the Tang merits

close attention in the context of this chapter because it is already a leader, both in integrative inquiry and in unsettling our assumptions about diversity and inclusion. Like all of these subjects of inquiry here, it may provide a kind of laboratory for understanding what teaching and learning—what cognitive processes, what pedagogical scaffolding—might enable our students to achieve profound understanding of the complexities that inhere in what we call “diversity,” in which so much is at stake.

Skidmore’s SEE-Beyond program, being only in its third year, is a much newer initiative than the Tang and exemplifies the connection between diversity and integrative learning outside of the classroom. A striking number of students receiving the SEE-Beyond Award work at the intersections of social justice and inclusion, and conduct their research somewhat independently in the summer. We also see the program as deserving attention here because its high-impact nature positions it as a potential major program of the future; and we believe that, because of funding limitations, it has not yet achieved its full potential in terms of number of students participating in it.

Bridges to Skidmore embodies the institution’s commitment to service and community-based learning both within the curriculum and beyond. The program involves students taking a particular course in Social Work, and it engages a variety of students, including in particular a number of athletes at the College. The program is also worthy of attention because it perfectly melds the needs of a local agency that offers services to a particular segment of the community with our students’ integrative learning.

The last program that we have chosen to highlight is the office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (OCSE). OCSE occupies a prominent place at Skidmore College, since close to 60% of our students take advantage of the study-abroad opportunities and travel seminars, many of which are designed around principles of integrative learning and have substantive orientations toward diversity and inclusion.

The Intergroup Relations Program

In 2008, Skidmore established the Intergroup Relations (IGR) Program, a sequence of courses based on a fusion of academic content and dialogue experiences shaped around social identities. After the program was well under way, the College approved a minor in IGR, the first of its kind in the United States. The program emerged as a result of the unwavering commitment of 13 faculty and Student Affairs staff, and is sustained in large part by the support of students who are willing and eager to engage in the complex, hard, and often deeply personal work demanded by interracial dialogues. Since 2010, 297 students, for a total class enrollment of 410, have enrolled in IGR courses. In 2013, the administration approved a new tenure line for IGR/Sociology and instituted the position of Assistant Director of IGR, recognizing that additional support for the minor was necessary if the program was to continue to develop and flourish. The new position has also permitted the program to host an inaugural Northeastern IGR Conference in June 2015 bringing together IGR academics and practitioners from colleges and universities in the Northeast to discuss development and structures of existing and future IGR programs.

The IGR minor at Skidmore College provides a powerful example of integrative learning, as it engages students in curricular work that allows them to connect their personal experiences with their academic knowledge. At the heart of IGR pedagogy is the development of reflective

judgment and practice. Because students who minor in IGR must learn to facilitate coursework in intergroup relations (students are trained to lead the two-credit dialogues for their peers), the minor sits at the crossroads of theory and praxis. The program's pedagogy is centered in dialogue, a form of communication focused on developing understanding through the generative power of conversation.³⁷ From their first dialogue experience, students are involved directly in social analysis and the practice of examining social identities in relation to one other and the broader cultural, institutional, and structural world. All IGR courses require that students integrate analytic knowledge with self-reflexivity, a process that often draws out strong emotional responses. As such, intergroup dialogue pedagogy embeds practices designed to tap into both modes of learning—analytic and emotional—in developing an understanding of one's own social identities and those of others. Students' work is driven by both content (knowledge and skills) and process (both practice and application in real-world contexts)—the definition of an integrative learning model. As a result, students learn to challenge racial assumptions, bringing to the surface the emotions attached to these often ideological and unconscious beliefs, so that when they encounter these outside of the classroom, they possess the awareness, knowledge, and skills to address the conflict. Students move from low-risk to high-risk activities and dialogue; from consideration of the personal to the structural and institutional; from abstract to concrete; and from disciplinary content knowledge and awareness to application in real-life settings. In short, to be successful in their IGR coursework, students must connect what they are doing in the classroom to experiences outside of the classroom—within their cocurricular, other curricular, and larger community experiences. Thus, learning is transferrable; for example, students develop an enhanced ability to recognize everyday practices and institutional forms of racial injustice in new contexts.

IGR thus promotes integrative learning that is transdisciplinary and potentially lifelong in practice. IGR is an interdisciplinary field of study requiring the cognitive integration of concepts from multiple disciplines to application in complex social conditions. For example, students engaging in an examination of race must simultaneously work to apply concepts, methods, and content from across the disciplines—such as sociology, psychology, history, and media studies—during their dialogue.

In their IGR coursework, Skidmore students learn to process language and communication in an integrated manner. Attention to language (oral, written, and body) and knowledge, and the dialectic relationship between them, is central to the process of engaging in dialogue. Readings, in-class dialogue, written papers, and interactive exercises are used to guide self-exploration, highlight similarities and differences among class members, and increase understanding of how social structures and institutions function to allocate privilege and sustain societal inequities. Students learn to use communication in a truly integrated sense to engage in self–other exchanges that help them come to see and understand the experiential and intellectual similarities and differences. IGR exemplifies a paradigm in which communication is always more than just a “message” or text: in IGR, every communicative act takes place in the context of dialogue; communication thus entails understanding your audience and context, and attending to any response.

Assessment of Skidmore's IGR demonstrates that students exhibit a pronounced understanding of one's self as a learner. IGR uses a framework of co-learning and lifelong

³⁷ Bohm, 1996.

earning to emphasize that this work is ongoing and never-ending. Self-assessment and self-reflection are cornerstones of the IGR model.

Student learning outcomes indicate:

- *Increased self-reflexivity* about issues of race, identity, power, and privilege. Students are better prepared to recognize target and agent social identities; examine their stereotypes, prejudices, and biases; and progress through the racial identity development stages.
- *Heightened awareness* of the institutionalization of race and racism in the U.S. Students are better able to understand the socio-historical context of race relations as well as relevant terminology, and to recognize structures of power, privilege, and oppression in their own life (or the lives of others); they learn to understand overt and subtle prejudices against multiple social identities.
- *Improved cross-racial interactions*. Students become more willing to listen to perspectives that are different from their own; they develop inter- and intra-racial relationships, friendships, connections, and allies.
- *Enhanced ability to engage productively in race-related dialogues*. Students are more equipped to use their newly-developed skills (e.g., practice empathy, listen actively).
- *Diminished fear* about race-related conflict.
- *Heightened appreciation* for the educational benefits of a racially diverse campus.
- *Increased participation in social change* actions (e.g., taking ownership for actions; building alliances; challenging derogatory comments; recognizing how to intervene).
- *Improved confidence in creating social change*—individually, interpersonally, and structurally.³⁸

The most recent IGR assessment project documents outcomes that extend out beyond graduation in the lives of our alumni, affecting their careers and their beliefs. This ongoing research project explores how, if at all, former IGR facilitators are using and/or applying what they learned to their personal and professional lives three years post-college. Through extensive qualitative interviews, this study hopes to assess facilitator growth over time in relation to the learning goals of the dialogues (e.g., communication processes and inter-/intra-group competencies, sustained awareness of social justice issues, ability to work effectively with people of differing races, evidence of course application to interpersonal interactions and experiences, impact on professional trajectory). As we note below in Chapter V on values and ethics, the preliminary results suggest that IGR has helped students to interrogate, question, and reexamine their justice-related values and ethics. IGR has also affected the decisions these students have made in their post-college lives.

Since its inception, 22 faculty and staff have participated in the program, and seven students have collaborated with Kristie Ford, the director, in the analyses of assessment data. At least three such collaborations have led to articles that have been published in peer-reviewed journals.

³⁸ [IGR Assessment report]

While the IGR minor at Skidmore represents a strong model for integrative learning, we do see challenges that must be addressed in the coming years. These include developing and sustaining faculty and staff engagement with IGR, particularly among senior faculty and staff; developing student interest in and commitment to IGR (like other curricular initiatives, IGR serves a smaller subset of the campus community, so the capability of engaging more students across identities is paramount to the success of the program); and developing the IGR curriculum to more formally reflect the broad scope of social identities including class, gender, sexual orientation, and nationality, to suggest just a few possibilities.

Recommendations

- Develop and sustain faculty and staff engagement with IGR, particularly among senior faculty and staff.
- Develop student interest in and commitment to IGR.
- Develop the IGR curriculum to more formally reflect the broad scope of social identities.

The Tang Museum—Diversity and Inclusion/Integrative Learning

Since its inception in 2000, the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College has consistently offered a wide range of exhibitions, programs, and activities that successfully connect integrative learning with issues of diversity and inclusion in its broadest sense—in terms of race and ethnicity, but also gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, and social class. In the last five years, the Tang has presented 77 exhibitions, of which 55% represent diversity and inclusion either through the subject matter and content, or by representing the work of artists from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Two related programmatic threads operate at the Tang: exhibitions and events. Exhibitions and the programming around them are a vital and powerful way to achieve an understanding of the complexity of communicating across difference; of how profoundly different views, perspectives, and values can coexist; and of the importance of strong relationships across culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other social identities. Tang programs create opportunities for students to participate in their conception and execution, and to take part in programs that have real-world impact. They also engage students in sustained ways through the curriculum, as faculty make use of exhibitions and objects as a laboratory of ideas for their courses. Student-led programming (for example, at Late-Night Thursdays, and in connection with student-created exhibitions) also reinforces the curricular learning in the Tang. Both exhibitions and programming foster global and intercultural understanding through content, but also because all exhibitions—regardless of specific content—foster an understanding of how multivalence can exist within the world: the semiotics of the visual when practiced as open-ended inquiry and play counterbalances the essentialist rhetoric in much of the world around us.

As we do throughout this report, we present here a case study to illustrate the kinds of exhibitions that are curatorial collaborations between faculty and Tang staff and that result in high-impact, integrative learning for students. Two more case studies appear in the Appendix, along with more complete information about our work related to diversity in the museum. These examples differ in terms of size and scope, complexity, the space in which they were mounted,

longevity, types of enrichment program connected to them, and the ways in which they integrated with the curriculum. But all examples highlight the kind of integrative learning that occurs on a regular basis at the Tang around issues of diversity and inclusion. Space limits us to just one here. We have chosen to present a very recent exhibition that demonstrates particularly well our commitment to our students' learning about diversity and social identities.

Goals for Student Learning and Development that are regularly engaged through these projects include:

- understanding social and cultural diversity in a national context;
- thinking critically, creatively, and independently;
- gathering, analyzing, integrating, and applying varied forms of information;
- understanding and using evidence;
- interrogating personal values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences;
- developing practical competencies for personal, professional, and community life;
- applying learning to find solutions for social and civic problems;
- fostering habits of mind that enable them to live deliberately and well;
- effective communication;
- effective collaboration with individuals and across social identities; and
- engaging in and taking responsibility for their learning and striving for excellence.

Classless Society, which was on view at the Tang from September 7, 2013–March 9, 2014, was co-curated by Janet Casey (English Department), Mehmet Odekon (Economics Department), Rachel Seligman, and John S. Weber (formerly Dayton Director of the Tang). An exhibition of contemporary artworks and material culture, the show was organized to explore socioeconomic identities, questioning the myth of the United States as a classless society. The artworks and objects in the show raised questions about the reality of class mobility and how class is signaled and understood in the United States—by viewing class through multiple lenses, including gender, race, income, education, and more. *Classless Society* offered students opportunities for integrative learning in numerous ways: work/study students helped to create content for the show and helped design the interactive web feature that accompanied the show; students participated in the writing, directing, and acting of a play based on the show which combined their personal experiences of class with research they undertook on individual works of art; students in numerous courses conducted research and gave public presentations based on themes or artworks from the show; students helped produce a series of recorded interviews with staff, faculty, and alumni on their personal experiences of class. The arrangement of artworks and the imaginative uses of the show's space by faculty, curators, and staff generated intentional, difficult conversations about economic and social inequality and difference.

Students working within the show's orbit realized important goals for expanding personal and social values and for developing skills and strengths for postgraduate life. For example, one senior in the class of 2014 designed and populated the show's website with data collected by student, faculty, and staff researchers on the ways that class intersects with gender, race, kind of

work, education, wealth, where you live, income, family, ethnicity, and national status. In addition to developing the skills that enabled him to start his own web design company after graduating, his work on the *Classless Society* show deeply affected his sense of his socioeconomic place in the world and the factors that helped shape and that will continue to shape it in his future. All the students who worked on the exhibition reported having been affected by the insights they gained as a result of the research, conversations, and experiences they engaged in the course of their projects.

One excellent example of student engagement with the show also serves as a compelling assessment of its effectiveness. A senior in the class of 2015 (who was also the leader of a campus group called Class Action for Skidmore Students) studied 100 Skidmore students in conjunction with the *Classless Society* exhibition and her senior research project in Psychology. She measured student reaction to the *Classless Society* exhibition through a series of exercises and questions, comparing these data to a control group who saw a different exhibition. The study showed that being exposed to the effects of social class in the U.S. was disturbing for Skidmore students, and that students of color and students from lower social class backgrounds reported significantly lower feelings of belonging at Skidmore. This kind of real-world work by a student can and should have an impact on how we address issues of diversity and inclusion on our campus, and in fact the study's author and her faculty advisor proposed some new strategies to the College for addressing these issues.³⁹

A final excellent example of engagement with the show to highlight here is the theater performance *American Collisions*, an interactive drama written and performed by Skidmore theater students in TH250: "Theater Production Seminar," based on and set within the *Classless Society* exhibition. The Theater students worked with their professor to research the artworks in the exhibition, explore their own experiences of class before and during their time at Skidmore, and combine that content into a complex series of vignettes that moved the audience through the exhibition in different ways based on a random division of the audience into three "class" groups. One of the most powerful aspects of the production was that the student performers who presented the audience with personal narratives of their class experiences were actually telling the stories of fellow cast members, not their own. They had swapped "identities" for the course of the performance. This exchange of class identities had a visceral impact on the students, who recounted understanding issues of class difference in a way unlike anything they had before.

While the Tang Museum continues to be a leader in integrative learning around issues of diversity and inclusion, our challenge is to expand the reach of the museum to a greater number of students and to explore what kind of impact we are having on our students' learning, and how we can deepen our programming and our impact. How can we observe and then intensify student learning in the Tang? Are there ways to take better advantage of Tang programming? How can we reach a greater number of students, faculty, and staff? Are there collaborations we could foster, for example with IGR, SEE-Beyond, or the other programs treated in this chapter? How can we move beyond a few "centers" in which we expect this kind of conversation to occur, to a broader model that is more integrated into daily life on campus? Is there a role that the Tang can play in that transition? What are the ways in which we could further strengthen the Tang's existing commitment to integrative learning that would enhance its commitment to diversity and

³⁹ For a more complete listing of exhibits, examples of cocurricular engagements, and a sample of classes that have included them in their activities, please see Appendix X.

inclusion? The Tang is a great example of how we engage our students beyond the classroom, through collaborative projects, internships, volunteer opportunities; can we expand further? If an exhibition like *Classless Society* leaves some students feeling less a part of Skidmore, is there programming or a way of framing unsettling exhibitions that could *enhance* belonging?

One new initiative we are undertaking involves creating more partnerships between the museum and student clubs to create programming at the museum that connects students and their interests with exhibition content and a broader, community audience. An excellent current example was our South Asia Festival on February 28, 2015—a collaboration with Hayat, in conjunction with the *Realms of Earth and Sky* exhibition of Indian painting from the 15th to the 19th century. What else can we do along these lines? One potential area for improvement is in collaborations between OSDP, AOP/HEOP, and Admissions. Another intentional area of outreach we are exploring is to connect with faculty and staff groups like the Black Faculty Staff Group (BFSG) and the Consortium on High Achievement to bring them into the museum and engage them with exhibitions in a way that invites dialogue and supports their interests.

We recognize that the nature of our staff is related to our challenges with these initiatives. While the Tang's programming represents diversity on many levels, its staffing is not currently racially diverse, although it is gender-diverse, with 11 women and four men. We do need to work toward greater diversity of identities and experiences in our staff. Improvements in this area along with continued strength in our programs will help to support diversity in our students, faculty, and staff and increase the quality of experience for all members of our academic community.

Recommendations

- Further strengthen the Museum's commitment to integrative learning by enhancing its commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Expand the reach of the Tang Museum to a greater number of students and by means of collaborations with, for example, OSDP, Opportunity Programs, Admissions, IGR, and/or other programs.
- Enhance the diversity of the staff to include individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Create effective assessment tools to analyze and gauge the impact of programming on students and the potentially positive effect on campus climate.

Skidmore Educational Experiences Beyond Campus (SEE-Beyond)

SEE-Beyond is a non-credit-bearing program that clearly advances the Goals for Student Learning and Development. Students identify and plan summer experiences that build directly on the learning goals of their majors or minors. SEE-Beyond invites students to explore new techniques, technologies, or modes of inquiry or expression and to apply their academic-year learning in the summer to real-world circumstances, exploring the interrelationship between their educational and post-baccalaureate ambitions. SEE-Beyond is the only award program at the College that expands funded experiences beyond academic internships to include collaborative research in the field and lab, as well as artistic apprenticeships and performance workshops.

Although some departments direct students to certain types of experiences, most have focused on simply challenging them to be creative and integrate their academic work with a substantial practical experience. The program, initially supported by Mellon and Presidential Discretionary funds, awards each successful applicant \$4,000, a sum that allows students from underserved, particularly high-need populations to participate. In the past four years, the program has funded 86 student projects, mostly to graduating seniors and rising seniors. In 2013 SEE-Beyond gave 20 awards, and 25 in 2014, to students from underrepresented groups, including five (20%) to high-financial-need students, five to international students, and 11 (44%) to students of color, both domestic and international. We are very encouraged by the overall rising trend: in 2013, 15% of awardees were high-financial-need and 35% were students of color. In comparison, in 2015, 30% were high-financial-need and 30% were students of color, double the number from 2012.

The program encourages students to scaffold, i.e. to build upon previous experiences, such as work in a laboratory, an academic internship, study abroad, volunteering, or collaborative research. Of the 60 students who have competed in a SEE-Beyond experience, 40 (60%) have either already studied abroad or will have done so before graduating; it is also worth noting that 32% of the projects have taken students abroad. Thus, for some students, off-campus foreign study and SEE-Beyond seem to be on a continuum that allow students to expand their intercultural—and for many, their foreign language—proficiency, and to deepen the integration between academic knowledge and thinking with practical applications in non-native cultural contexts.

The list of successful projects speaks for itself. An Asian Studies student was a textile and clothing supplier in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China; a German major completed a curatorial internship in Berlin; an International Affairs student, an education internship in New Delhi; an Anthropology major, a Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship project in Mumbai. A Studio Art student photographed Norway's Summer Lights in an Immersive Artistic Experience; a Theater major/Dance minor worked with Ecuadorian Highland Quichua dancers and choreographed a dance which she presented on campus; a Sociology student was a Conservation Farm Intern in Costa Rica; a Neuroscience major, a Molecular Neuroscience Research Intern at the Institute of Neuroscience in Shanghai. These are just a small sample of this extraordinary group of projects.

SEE-Beyond prompts students to combine academic interests through an existing internship or a project of their own design. Moreover, it encourages students to make contacts on their own, thus developing valuable skills for their post-baccalaureate life. At every point of the process, students engage in problem solving and develop skills that will be essential for the success of their project. Another form of scaffolding happens in the connection that applicants are encouraged to establish with a SEE-Beyond Ambassador, i.e. a previous awardee who will advise applicants on how to identify a project and submit a worthy application.

Students are required to write reflection papers which will be part of an upcoming assessment initiative. Such papers, in conjunction with a survey focused on the impact of their experience beyond Skidmore, will shed light on the program's impact on students thinking about their transition from college to the workforce. The Office of Academic Advising (OAA), which administers the program, will continue to gather the written reflections from students, and will implement the survey when the pool of students is more robust. Meanwhile, the projects' stories are compelling, as the following two examples demonstrate. A rising senior of the class of 2013

conducted research on AIDS education and policy with the ministry of Swaziland, used her work and experience in her senior project as a Self-Determined major in Public Health, and is currently in a Master of Public Health Program at Columbia University. Another 2013 graduate who participated in an entrepreneurial internship in China won that year's Kenneth A. Freirich Business Plan Competition (over 250 participants) and with the \$20,000 prize started a "Summer Destinations" program in Beijing. The program matches Chinese young people with residential summer camps in the United States. The stories OAA has collected reveal that a majority of SEE-Beyond students applied classroom knowledge to new situations, took ownership of their learning, expanded their knowledge of human cultures and their understanding of social and cultural diversity in global contexts, and integrated theory and practice.

Recommendations

- Institutionalize the SEE-Beyond program by securing its support through endowed funds and the operating budget.
- Devise and implement assessment instruments and protocols to determine how well the program contributes to integrative learning, helps students to meet the Goals for Student Learning and Development, and in particular promotes learning about and experiences with diversity and inclusion.
- Design and support dialogue-based training to prepare students for the widely varied interactions they typically undertake in their projects.

Social Work Connects to the Community: Bridges to Skidmore

Bridges to Skidmore (B2S) is one of a number of community-based learning opportunities across the curriculum and the cocurriculum that promote integrative learning through engagement with diversity and inclusion. In academic year 2012–2013, about 1,000 students took one or more of the 67 courses that included a range of service-learning components. Although not all of them engaged students with populations from underrepresented groups or issues pertaining to social identities, social justice, and inclusion, many did. Community-based learning is also present in the cocurriculum. The alternative spring break in Guatemala, which is connected to a one-credit experience preceding it, and is led by a faculty member, is such an example. Another instance of community-based learning in the cocurriculum is the community service performed by some of the sports teams at various local agencies and organizations. For example, student athletes connect with at-risk populations in elementary and middle schools, run clinics for youth and adults, and help out with various community events. Other student groups, as discussed in Chapter V, also commit to a number of service-learning experiences through Benef-Action, Habitat for Humanity, and Big Brother or Big Sister, to name a few. We have chosen to focus on B2S because it connects the students and the curriculum and with a segment of the local population that is otherwise not well represented in our community-based research and service-learning opportunities. Rarely do our students interact with adults who have intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). But this is a population that in many ways is severely disadvantaged, and our students' learning from their B2S experience is transferable to other identities as well. (Indeed, students with "invisible" disabilities are well represented in the IGR dialogues, which reinforces our contention here that disabilities are of compelling interest to our students and can well serve as a starting point for a better

understanding of diversity and inclusion writ large.) Saratoga Bridges offers a rich opportunity to our students for integrative learning.

The collaboration between Skidmore College and Saratoga Bridges began in 2010. Saratoga Bridges, established in 1954, is one of the largest Saratoga Springs not-for-profit organizations that provides professional assistance both to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to their families. One of Saratoga Bridges' goals is to "foster independence by promoting [its clients'] abilities and achievements," which the Bridges to Skidmore program (B2S) helps to fulfill. B2S connects Bridges participants with the Department of Social Work, Skidmore students, and faculty. In the fall, students taking SW333: "Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families" fulfill one of the four-credit class hours through B2S. In the spring, it is offered as SW298: "Explorations in Social Work," a one-credit stand-alone course that is open to non-majors. In both iterations, 15 Skidmore students and an equal number of Bridges participants attend, over a period of 10 weeks, biweekly 55-minute lectures delivered by Skidmore faculty on the College campus. After each presentation, the students and Bridges participants meet as (pre-assigned) pairs to discuss the content of the presentation and their reactions. During the week following the lectures, the pairs complete written homework assignments related to the previous week's lecture. After four semesters, Bridges participants graduate from the program and a new cohort from Bridges begins its college journey.

The objectives of the project are to offer cooperative learning opportunities for students and adults with I/DD; provide a modified college experience for Bridges participants whose access to higher education is very limited; increase Skidmore students' exposure to individuals with I/DD with the goal of fostering their professional interest in working with this segment of the population; enhance Skidmore students' ability to communicate with people with abilities different from their own; offer socialization experiences and educational opportunities for Bridges participants; and raise awareness of issues related to disabilities among students and faculty. In working with groups of individuals with various developmental abilities over time, Skidmore students apply their classroom knowledge to a variety of new and often unexpected situations, and participate in a college experience that is enriching both to them and to Bridges participants. Bridges participants possess a variety of communication challenges which students must constantly assess in order to adapt and develop their own communication skills. The relationship between the students and the Bridges participants often develops into friendship over the course of the semester, and they frequently continue their communication beyond the classroom by electronic means or phone. Students keep weekly logs of their work with their partners and identify progress in their relationship as well as their evolving abilities in working effectively on their writing assignments.

In 2013, Professor of Social Work Crystal Moore and a Social Work student completed a systematic analysis of Skidmore students' papers in SW333 and found that participation in the B2S had changed the attitudes towards individuals with I/DD and had increased the students' interest in working with this group of individuals after Skidmore. One SW student helped with the design, planning, and implementation of the program. Furthermore, each year the program relies on a student coordinator, a social work major who has completed B2S, for the day-to-day implementation of the program. The student coordinator recruits the professors to lecture and to develop written assignments, readings, and the course logs. Students thus gain valuable integrative experience in putting theory into practice as they help to create the program.

The Social Work Department also partners with the Department of Health and Exercise Science and the English Department in implementing B2S. Over the past five years, three teams of four students each have completed their senior theses at Saratoga Bridges, focusing on the design, use, and effects of health and exercise interventions adapted for adults with I/DD. As B2S continues to evolve, in spring 2016 a recognized scholar in the field of literary disability studies will lead SW298: “Explorations in Social Work,” which will focus on autobiography and autobiographical writing.

Much like the other programs that we have thus far discussed, B2S is an exemplar of integrative learning, and a locus for the fulfillment of the Goals for Student Learning and Development pertaining to diversity and inclusion. Students apply theory to practice, engage in social critical analysis, and experience personal transformation both within and outside the classroom. Much as in IGR, students learn through practice and reflection how to unlearn stereotyping—in this case of individuals with various types of abilities—and come to terms with their own prejudices. Moreover, they commit to a work that is deeply emotional in which both the academic content—the lectures and the writing assignments—and their relationships with their partners are inextricably intertwined. Responsibility and compassion, as well as leadership, organization, and teamwork and consensus building, are equally important.

Recommendations

- Devise and implement assessment instruments and protocols to determine how the various programs contribute to integrative learning and promote learning of and experiences with diversity and inclusion, in particular our relevant Goals for Student Learning and Development.
- Study the feasibility of scaling up community service in Saratoga Springs and surrounding areas; see Chapter V.

Study Abroad

Study abroad at Skidmore is one of the exemplary programs in which students learn about diversity and inclusion through integrative learning experiences. Offered through the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (OCSE), study abroad gives students a variety of structured educational opportunities through both Skidmore’s own programs and third-party providers’ programs. In essence, these opportunities develop students’ abilities to integrate their Skidmore academic learning with onsite curricular and cocurricular experiences in different parts of the world. Study abroad helps students to meet several of our Goals for Student Learning and Development; we are chiefly concerned here with goals related to learning about diversity and inclusion:

- interrogating personal values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences;
- applying learning to find solutions for social and civic problems;
- effective communication;
- effective collaboration with individuals and across social identities.

The relationship between study abroad and intercultural competencies and understanding is notoriously difficult to document beyond students' self-reporting, let alone to measure.⁴⁰ Anecdotal evidence is strong and durable that study abroad is one of the most transformative learning experiences our students have. We do believe that the study abroad programs and the travel seminars can occasionally be personally challenging for students and can make them feel somewhat unsettled. The programs are also designed to channel this discomfort into learning experiences about self and other in a culturally complex world. At the same time, we know that not all study abroad is equally rich in learning.⁴¹ Our inquiry here and our recommendations aim to identify and to maximize the impact of the best practices for integrative learning in study away.

We have made conscious efforts to support both the academic rigor of their experiences and structured interactions that foster intercultural learning. Each department now has a list of approved programs that are reviewed regularly, including site visits. The College has also made conscious efforts to open study abroad to underrepresented student groups through financial aid packages and proactive work with Disability Services. We believe that study abroad should be available to every student. That said, we know that we have a great deal to learn about what works best, in which programs, for our students' learning about diversity and intercultural communication. And there is currently no faculty group that is charged with following the extensive current research on learning abroad and introducing policies and practices that might deepen our students' learning and intercultural capacities.

At least in terms of numbers, our efforts have been successful. A large majority—59%—of our 2014 graduates studied off-campus, a typical figure for recent years. According to the Higher Education Open Doors Survey, Skidmore ranked sixth among the top baccalaureate institutions when it came to students pursuing study abroad. We have also improved access. During the period between fall 2008 and spring 2015 the percentage of students studying abroad who identify as students of color was 21%, which reflects the total percentage of ALANA students at Skidmore (also 21%). During that same time period, 45% of students studying abroad were receiving financial aid (either Skidmore or Pell grants), which also reflects the percentage of the total Skidmore population that is Pell-eligible. We have also expanded study abroad beyond the traditional humanities and social sciences: we achieved a notable increase in the number of physical- and life-science majors choosing to study abroad, from 41% in 2006 to 47% in 2012. These achievements can be credited to the efforts of the OCSE, a structure that facilitates departments and academic programs in selecting opportunities for their students based on academic fit.

We have chosen to focus on three different Skidmore programs as sites for integrative learning about diversity and inclusion: (1) Skidmore's First-Year Experience in London, (2) Skidmore in Spain, and (3) Skidmore's Short-Term Travel Seminars. All these programs share objectives relating to the acquisition of knowledge about different cultures and the development

⁴⁰ M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, and Lou Hemming. *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They're Not, and What We Can Do About It*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2012. This book is an invaluable resource on research on study abroad.

⁴¹ Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming aptly summarize the causes for skepticism about some study abroad experiences. We believe we have eliminated programs that provide essentially a "semester off." But there is much in *Student Learning Abroad* that we could consider adopting or regularizing (there are many practices we already do) to ensure that students are learning the intercultural competencies that are our goals for them.

of communication skills needed to interact with people from a variety of identity groups. At their core these programs also seek to instill in students an ability to interrogate their own and other cultural value systems, and to apply their knowledge to understanding local and global contexts.

The First-Year Experience in London

Offered to students in the first semester at Skidmore, the First-Year Experience in London gives students the opportunity to engage within communities, neighborhoods, and local institutions that directly connect with work done in the classroom. Students are routinely confronted with concepts that are unfamiliar to them, and are forced to examine their own less-visible biases that are part of their self-identities as American/white/African-American/privileged, etc. The intimacy of the group experience in London can also engender an appreciation of intergroup differences and commonalities. Over time we have succeeded in making the student demographics mirror the total population of students, with 23% of students choosing to study in London between 2008 and 2015 identifying as ALANA students. The data are even more encouraging in terms of access, as 42% of students completing their first semester in London between those same years have done so while on Skidmore or Pell grants.

What is remarkable about the London experience is that each course uses the city itself as a classroom and in very deliberate ways connects elements of London to concepts learned in the academic classroom. The curriculum is intentionally shaped to help students make connections between the curriculum and cocurricular experiences, between the classroom and the “real” world, and across disciplines in the study of large-scale, intransigent problems. Examples of courses that do this while simultaneously focusing on questions of diversity include:

- “History of London.” Significant aspects of London’s economy and social structure are examined, as well as its political governance. Topics/modules covered throughout the semester include religious tensions throughout London’s history; London’s East End and the built environment as a reflection of the city’s religious, social and political realities; social, political, and public health impacts of industrial development; causes of hostility toward “alien” communities that were discriminated against prior to WWI; and others. These topics expose students to the historical realities of marginalized populations in London, while introducing them to the actual physical realities these populations inhabited.
- “Understanding Britain.” Students learn about the history behind the large numbers of people of Indian, Afro-Caribbean, and Eastern European descent living in London. Students explore the media in Britain and the ethnic composition of Britain and especially London.
- “Scribner Seminars.” The Scribner Seminars, designed by Skidmore faculty who lead the program, often engage in questions of diversity and inclusion in the British or a comparative context. For example, in the Scribner Seminar titled “Coming of Age in London,” students were asked to consider how emerging adulthood is expressed in various relationships; how emerging adulthood varies by race, gender, class, and culture; and how emerging adulthood in England compares to coming of age in the United States.

Recommendations

- Review existing admissions protocols and implement changes that will continue to attract students from underrepresented groups to the program.
- Consider whether there are ways to frame the program and work with the faculty leaders so as to maximize the students' learning about their own and others' social identities. Might an Intercultural Development Seminar similar to the one in Spain (see below) make the students' integrative learning more intentional and effective?
- Assess the role of the Scribner Seminars and the Understanding Britain course in learning about diversity and inclusion in London and the U.S.
- Assess the value of the integrative learning happening in London, possibly by administering the Global Perspectives Inventory as a pre/post test. Do our Londoners come to campus in January with a greater intercultural literacy than those who arrived in September? A better understanding of privilege and power as it relates to and impacts diversity and inclusion issues globally and locally? A stronger interest in these issues long-term? What integrative learning experiences about social identities and social justice are present? With what effect? How can they be maximized?

Skidmore in Spain

The Skidmore in Spain program offers two vital integrative learning opportunities, both of which might well serve as models that we could develop elsewhere. The first is the Intercultural Development Seminar, which carries with it a certificate. The second is the rich portfolio of internships available to all students. Both offer deliberate educational experiences that allow students to develop across time as they progress through the semester. They also structurally encourage students to transfer learning to new, complex situations and allow them space for reflection and self-awareness.

Intercultural Development Seminar: This required seminar is designed to provide students the information and tools to move their intercultural experience from contact to skillful and mindful approaches to negotiating cultural difference. Throughout the course students are asked to examine and reflect on their lived experiences in Spain and the various challenges and successes they experience throughout their adaptation to another culture. The seminar includes lectures and discussion groups that explore real-life situations students are encountering in the classroom, community, and homestays. Examples of topics covered include Discovering Your Cultural Diversity; Comparative History of Diversity in the U.S. and Spain; Environment and Values in Spain; Looking at the U.S. from the Outside; Developing Openness and Depth in Response to Difference; and Model of Intercultural Sensitivity: from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism.

Internships: Students' internship opportunities in Spain create pathways into a variety of different areas of Spanish life that would otherwise be unavailable to them. In the final paper and interview students are asked to reflect on their experience, offer a summary and evaluation of work performed, and project how the internship might be used in the student's professional future. Internship placements have included helping visitors at the Museo del Prado, working with the homeless and in nursing homes and hospitals through Desarrollo y Asistencia, developing reports to aid refugees through the Spanish Commission for the Aid of Refugees,

teaching about universal human rights in local schools through Human Dimension, and working in marketing and communications for Alianza por la Solidaridad con las Mujeres (women's rights organization).

Although the number of students participating in the Spain program is relatively small, 22% of the students doing so between fall 2008 and spring 2015 were students of color, and 49% were receiving some form of financial aid. We recently opened the internship opportunity to all students and hope we will see an increase in the work students conduct in the community.

Recommendation

- Assess the internship model to determine if students are advancing in their professional goals, if they are advancing in terms of intercultural competency development, and how their growth compares to students who have not participated in an internship. The students' reflection papers could serve as a basis for a first assessment.
- Consider whether the Intercultural Development Seminar could serve as a model to be adopted in more study abroad contexts.

Travel Seminars

In addition to semester- or year-long study abroad, Skidmore students have the option of learning about cultural diversity in many of the short-term, faculty-led travel seminars. These allow students to focus on a topic on campus and then continue to engage with the material off-campus in the course of the travel seminar. The travel seminars integrate the in-class learning with a specific local environment—typically outside the U.S., often in regions that are underrepresented in our usual study abroad. The groups tend to be small, and both the class materials and the outside class experience tend to be very focused. Examples of travel seminars would include Tropical Ecology in Montverde, Costa Rica; Japanese Culture and Art in Kyoto, Japan; Colonialism and Culture in Puerto Rico; and Culture and Performance in Bali, Indonesia.

In recent years we have struggled to enroll several travel seminars, leading to cancellation. The challenge could lie in the fact that students have so many options for semester study abroad and that the culture at Skidmore is one of the traditional junior semester abroad. The scenario regarding diversity and inclusion is similar to that mentioned for the previous programs: 52% of the students in the travel seminars between fall 2008 and spring 2015 were on Skidmore of Pell grants and 28% were students of color, roughly comparable to the student body as a whole (actually slightly higher). However, we also believe that the financial model used for travel seminars is problematic in that eligible students receive only 50% of the program cost in aid. While this is certainly generous, many students cannot afford the remaining 50% of the fee. We are then faced with an access issue that affects all students' ability to take advantage of these targeted learning experiences—students who are on aid because they cannot afford the seminar and students not on aid because the seminar is canceled due to low enrollments. We recommend that we reassess the financial model in terms of our institutional goals for intercultural and integrated learning.

Recommendations

- Gather available information on how much our students are learning about intercultural understanding and competencies in these seminars, as part of a general reassessment of the seminar model.
- Reassess the financial model for the travel seminar in terms of our institutional goals for intercultural and integrative learning, and for broad access to transformative experiences.

General Recommendations for Diversity and Inclusion

- As much as possible, seek out and provide data to support the revision of the Culture-Centered Inquiry requirement as outlined in Chapter I of this Self-Study, and as ultimately proposed by CEPP.
- Continue to support hiring of faculty of color and international faculty, as well as recruitment of ALANA students and strong financial aid.
- Consider data on retention of faculty of color, and develop policies and practices to improve retention.
- Establish an initiative to increase an awareness of disadvantaged socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds among both the students and the faculty, as well as awareness of religious differences; clarify responsibility, specific goals, and follow-up.
- Continue to improve accessibility on campus and foster greater awareness of the issues experienced by students with disabilities.
- Sustain this report's efforts to present a comprehensive overview of integrative learning opportunities and successes related to diversity on campus. Although Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have a rich array of programs fostering integrative learning while engaging students with issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice, we do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of the number of programs we support, their goals and outcomes. Moreover, institutionally we do not know how they contribute as a whole to improving institutional climate. We therefore recommend that annually Student Affairs and Academic Affairs identify and collect descriptions and outcomes of each program, as well as conduct a more detailed inquiry into substantial programs on a regular basis. Such routine assessment and inquiry would allow both units to better connect and disseminate their efforts and maximize the attainment of their outcomes.
- Key to the above effort is to expand and refine the data gathering on student participation in the various programs. Currently, the data are localized, not always easy to access, at times uneven, and thus not fully reliable. Each program should submit to the area's leadership an annual dashboard of data points that are significant for understanding the program's successes and challenges.
- Multiply the opportunities. Programs and initiatives discussed in this report still reach only a fraction of students. We need to continue to support them and also to explore and implement initiatives that will expand these efforts and increase participation of

students, staff, and faculty, replicating successful models in other areas of the curriculum and cocurriculum.

- Increase community awareness of how community-based learning, IGR, SEE-Beyond, and other related programs facilitate and develop integrative learning, contribute to the development of leadership skills, and improve climate.
- Expand assessment of the outcomes of the various programs in Study Abroad. Outcomes assessment will help us to refine and scale up existing programs, where appropriate, and to improve available opportunities. This initiative will require strong administrative leadership and faculty commitment.

V. Responsible Communities: Civic Engagement, Sustainability, and Values and Ethics

The premise of this chapter is that civic engagement and learning about sustainability and values and ethics are so interrelated as to comprise one larger concept, what we are here calling responsible communities. Responsible communities, we believe, concern themselves with the greater good. The members individually and collectively seek to understand and act on complex social, ethical, and environmental concerns that transcend the community's own self-interest. A further premise is that learning to be part of responsible communities is inherently integrative, as students draw connections between theory and practice, between values and behaviors, and among disciplines.

The values that inform responsible communities are also clearly visible among our Goals for Student Learning and Development; all of the Goals are relevant, but we might put a particular emphasis on:

- Understand social and cultural diversity in national and global contexts
- Gather, analyze, integrate, and apply varied forms of information; understand and use evidence
- Communicate effectively
- Interact effectively and collaboratively with individuals and across social identities
- Examine one's own values and their use as ethical criteria in thought and action
- Interrogate one's own values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences
- Develop practical competencies for managing a personal, professional, and community life
- Apply learning to find solutions for social, civic, and scientific problems
- Embrace intellectual integrity, humility, and courage

Now, perhaps more than ever, students educated in the liberal arts will be called upon to work collaboratively with people across cultural differences to find collective solutions to the intransigent problems we are facing nationally and globally. To do so will require not only knowledge and skills, but also commitment and caring. As the *Strategic Plan 2005-2015* stated, "The challenge to live as a responsible citizen also invokes the value of concern for others, for a greater social good, that extends beyond one's narrow self-interest."⁴² Looking at this past decade, we find we have made tremendous progress in some areas when it comes to cultivating learning for responsible communities; but we also see that much remains to be done.

We will talk about these three areas—civic engagement, sustainability, and values and ethics—in sequence and discretely, but we are convinced that they are interconnected not only with each other but also with the other topics of inquiry in this report. Our aim must be to find

⁴² *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College: 2005–2015*, online at <http://www.skidmore.edu/planning/documents/strategicplan.pdf>, page 17.

and articulate the ways that these three goals can reinforce each other and help us to gain traction where it is lacking, or to find knowledge that we still need.

The overall story we have to tell is this: We have made great gains in these areas, especially in civic engagement for our students and sustainability initiatives for the College as a whole. We also have evidence of ways that we are falling short of our goals. In particular, as a resolutely secular College from the beginning, we have little or no tradition of emphasizing the study of values, so that we are missing that avenue for building shared communal values about what kind of polity, physical world, economy, and community we would like to help create over the course of our lives. Our tradition around values is more skeptical than inspired; critical and creative thinking take precedence, more often than not. Many would not wish us to found any kind of shared initiative on an unexamined basis of “doing good,” given the kinds of unintended harm that have so often followed upon zeal.

And yet we recognize the need for determination, openness, commitment, and informed intelligence—put another way, for intellectual integrity, humility, and courage—in deciding to value the common good and responsible communities as an important aspect of a Skidmore education.

Most of what we report on below represents progress, certainly with respect to our previous record. But we think it revealing to open with some evidence that despite our many initiatives and considerable efforts, we may still be falling short. For example, the results of the 2013 NSSE survey show us to be behind our selected peer colleges on several measures of civic engagement, including doing community service work and developing a personal code of ethics (Appendix X). These results are supported by alumni survey data.

Nevertheless, with real efforts, we have made quite significant progress with civic engagement, as we explain below, especially relative to our past history. Perhaps further progress should include undertaking on campus increased attention to values and ethics and the bases of community. And it seems possible that one avenue of approach is through the value of sustainability. For that reason, and because in so many ways learning about and committing to sustainability are subsets of civic engagement, we begin with sustainability.

Sustainability

Recognizing environmental limits, and sharing the ethic that present actions should not “compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,”⁴³ the Skidmore College community embraces both the concept and the practice of sustainability. We endeavor to enact environmentally responsible practices, grounded in economic and social equity, and, through our actions, to have a positive impact on our community and our planet.

Skidmore’s primary mission is education; the College’s greatest impacts and achievements will be realized as consequences of the lives our graduates lead. As part of an ever-growing population on a finite planet, we are confronted with an increasingly urgent need to address the resulting environmental constraints and social challenges. Institutional adoption of sustainable practices, informed by an understanding of the complex, interconnected nature of living systems and their physical environment, provides the opportunity for each Skidmore

⁴³ From the Brundtland Commission.

community member to become educated, personally involved in addressing these challenges, and empowered with techniques and strategies that they might apply to make positive changes beyond Skidmore.

Skidmore community members are invited to engage in mindful consideration of their individual and collective ecological, economic, and social impacts, to examine their values, and to collaborate in demonstrating their values and principles through action. Teaching, learning, and living in accordance with the tenet of sustainability fosters broad education and civic engagement of our community members, and prepares our students to be informed, active citizens and leaders in realizing sustainable futures. The health and well-being of future generations is dependent upon our success.

Historical Context and Current Status

Over the past decade, we have made significant strides in our sustainability efforts, in our curricular and cocurricular efforts, and in our infrastructure initiatives, all of which have enhanced the visibility of sustainability at the College. At the same time, we have increased our students' opportunities for integrative learning in the context of sustainability. For many of our students, Environmental Studies courses and cocurricular experiences are their first or most powerful experience of civic engagement and integrative learning.

The Environmental Studies (ES) major was implemented in the spring of 2002 and is now the fifth largest major on campus, with between 30 and 40 students graduating each year. We continue to have a healthy population of ES minors each year as well, with between 10 and 15 graduates. ES courses also contribute to the International Affairs major and minor and the all-college curriculum. Various faculty development workshops over the past decade have increased the number of sustainability-related courses (now numbering over 70 courses offered by 18 departments and programs across campus). We evaluated and ultimately approved approximately 20 study-abroad programs with a focus on sustainability that complement students' on-campus experiences. Many of the courses on campus, as well as those in our approved study-abroad programs, have community-based research and service-learning projects; our students also take advantage of numerous on-campus and community internships. A recent grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority has enabled us also to launch NY EXCEL, an educational program aimed at helping entrepreneurs and executives develop clean-tech businesses.

Cocurricular life around sustainability is also vibrant and rich. Various student organizations, including the Environmental Action Club and the Sustainability Committee of SGA, launch sustainability-related initiatives and host numerous events each year. Academic programs also sponsor multiple sustainability-related all-college lectures and visitors to campus. In addition, we have held numerous regional and national gatherings at Skidmore that bring students, staff, and faculty together from numerous institutions. We also recently sponsored a geothermal professionals conference on campus.

Over the past decade, we have made significant progress in transforming our physical campus into a living and learning environment that emphasizes sustainability. Smaller-scale projects, such as occupancy sensors and tray-less dining, to larger-scale projects, such as our 2.8-MW solar array and 4-MW micro-hydro agreement, all help reduce our environmental footprint

and raise awareness about sustainability. The interactive sustainability map and the Sustainable Skidmore webpage capture the diversity of projects that we have implemented over the years.⁴⁴

Our Skidmore Sustainability Office, which serves as a hub for coordinating and making visible our sustainability efforts, was founded in 2007–2008 when we hired our first temporary Sustainability Coordinator through a grant from the Educational Foundation of America. The office is now staffed by a full-time Sustainability Coordinator and a full-time Sustainability Fellow, with additional personnel contributions from Academic Affairs, Facilities Services, and Financial Services. The Campus Sustainability Subcommittee of Skidmore’s Institutional Policy and Planning Committee, which helps support and broaden the work of the Sustainability Office, consists of representatives from all across campus.

All of these efforts have been in support of and in response to our strategic planning. According to Goal III of the *Strategic Plan 2005–2015*, “We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world.” In keeping with this goal, environmental sustainability, and sustainability more broadly, are identified as an increasingly important facet of responsible citizenship. The plan acknowledges

the deep connection between our commitment to responsible citizenship and our institutional behavior itself—especially in the realm of environmental awareness. As we make decisions about the use of our resources and about our development as a College, we will give pride of place to the concepts of sustainability and balance, not just in managing the demands we place upon our people, but also in the demands we place upon the environment. We will become better stewards of our precious North Woods, and we will extend our efforts to manage and, where possible, to minimize Skidmore’s “environmental footprint.” This means that every expansion, renovation, and purchase should be viewed, in part, through the lens of environmental impact. Our goal is to become an environmental leader in our local community, state, and, where possible, in our nation—a worthy role model for our students, alumni, and staff. Establishing environmental sustainability as an institutional priority honors Skidmore’s progressive, service-minded legacy of mind and hand, while giving special meaning to our emphasis on making creative thought matter.⁴⁵

Our curricular, cocurricular, and infrastructure initiatives, and the intentional connections among them, have all helped advance Goal III. Our collective efforts to enhance community engagement in sustainability work and in communicating our progress have helped establish sustainability as a visible and valued characteristic of the College. This is an area where we can see that student learning follows and also reinforces faculty and staff learning; we are a community of learners in this regard as we make informed decisions about our own policies and practices.

Learning about sustainability at Skidmore is integrative at many levels. Even the definition of sustainability assimilates our understanding of environmentally responsible practices and economic and social equity. From a curricular perspective, the ES major draws on courses from across the College; but there is also deep integration of disciplines within

⁴⁴ See <http://www.myatlascms.com/map/index.php?id=545#!ct/6720,6721,8045,6722,8044,6718> and <http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/index.php>.

⁴⁵ *Engaged Liberal Learning*, online at <http://www.skidmore.edu/planning/documents/strategicplan.pdf>, page 33.

individual courses (e.g., “Sustainable Development,” “Case Studies in Environmental Sustainability,” “Field Studies in Environmental Science,” etc.). There is also intentional integration of curricular and cocurricular experiences. For example, all-college guest lecturers are often incorporated into classes; internships and volunteer work often fuel course-related projects; and campus infrastructure projects used in courses and course projects at times serve as prototypes for larger-scale infrastructure projects. In addition, students’ work in our broader community, and even in their study-abroad programs, feeds the work they do in their curricular and cocurricular lives on campus, with the reverse also being true. The Skidmore Sustainability Office serves an important role in integrative learning within sustainability, as it often connects curricular, cocurricular, and infrastructure efforts, while uniting Skidmore and surrounding communities.

Sustainability provides an ideal context for meeting the Goals for Student Learning and Development, as there is significant overlap between these goals and the articulated learning goals for the ES program. The ES goals are routinely assessed in individual courses, as well as in the program as a whole, through an extensive senior exit interview process. From a curricular perspective, we know that we are doing well meeting our ES learning goals; we will continue to make adjustments and improvements to the program each year based on our assessment.

While we are no doubt advancing the Goals for Student Learning and Development through our cocurricular and infrastructure initiatives, we have not yet systematically measured how well we are meeting the goals across these initiatives. The new strategic plan for sustainability⁴⁶ places an emphasis on student engagement and assessment, and may lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how well we are meeting the Goals.

The value of our students’ learning about sustainability is, first, that they are preparing for life in a world that will require a simultaneous, complex grasp of many interrelated problems, data, cultures, and possible solutions, in which a great deal is at stake. Students who are motivated by the value of sustainability are simultaneously practicing and learning about civic engagement. In advancing one, we advance both.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement requires an understanding of political, economic, cultural, scientific, and other institutions aimed at the public good; democratic principles and practices; and concern for public issues and scientific and cultural literacy. Civic engagement entails research, deliberation, principled advocacy, and direct action or service that enhances quality of life in the local, regional, national, or global community. It is essential for any progress in building the sustainability of our collective ways of life; it is also essential for the application to our civic life of any other dimensions of a liberal arts education.

The following experiences help build a foundational understanding for civic engagement for our students:

⁴⁶ Skidmore College Campus Sustainability Plan, online at <http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/documents/CampusSustainabilityPlan.pdf> .

- *Civic Learning*: includes foundational knowledge in historical, political, cultural matters that shape our civic life. It fosters a capacity to critically examine complex social, ethical, and environmental concerns from multiple perspectives.
- *Civic Skills*: include the ability to work cooperatively to solve complex social and environmental issues by forming and expressing opinions, interacting civilly with members of other groups to achieve goals, participating in collective decision-making processes, organizing people for action, and implementing policy decisions.
- *Community Service*: includes voluntary actions that seek to provide resources or services for the promotion of a public good.

Although many courses incorporate civic learning, civic skill development, and community service, Skidmore highlights a subset of civic engagement courses that require students to apply their understanding through one or more of the following:

- Community-Based Research is scholarship involving collaboration of faculty and/or students with community partners that is directed toward investigating, assessing, and addressing behavioral, social, educational, cultural, and environmental problems.
- Service Learning is a credit-bearing educational experience that (1) integrates meaningful community service with guided reflection to improve student learning of course content and student sense of social, artistic, and environmental responsibility; and (2) responds to an identified community need.

Applied Civic Engagement Course (ACE) Designation at Skidmore

The Applied Civic Engagement (ACE) course designation will help students identify courses that include these applied community-focused experiences. In addition, it will help the College assess and compare our civic engagement efforts to the expectations of incoming students, as well as to the CE efforts of other institutions. Skidmore may opt to develop additional course designations for other types of civic engagement experiences at some point in the future.

ACE-designated courses will be assessed by the following criteria:

1. Integration. The civic engagement project must be relevant to course content.
2. Benefit. The civic engagement project must seek to offer benefits beyond the class members. Projects should respond to behavioral, social, educational, cultural, and/or environmental problems.
3. Substantive Commitment. A significant portion of the course should be committed to the civic engagement project through class discussion, direct service, and/or research design, and/or data collection, analysis, and reporting.
4. Community Partnership. Where appropriate, community partners should be actively involved in the conceptualization and/or implementation of the civic engagement project.
5. Reflection. Intentional examination and assessment of the research project, course content, and student learning.

Historical Context and Current Status

Lucy Skidmore Scribner's commitment to education of "the mind and the hand" provides a longstanding context for the growth and development of CE activities and pedagogies. Continually preserving this legacy, Skidmore has historically provided opportunities for our students to engage in CE. Such efforts have become more strategic and widespread in the curriculum since our last Middle States Self-Study process. We provide data below on both the quantity and the quality of our students' participation in CE opportunities.

In May 2008, President Glotzbach and the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC) charged a task force to identify and support college efforts to advance Goal III of the *Strategic Plan 2005–2015*, which asks the College to "prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world." This task force, the Responsible Citizenship Task Force (RCTF), was active until 2011 when it was scheduled to sunset. RCTF was then transformed into the permanent Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship (SRC) of the IPPC, which is still active.

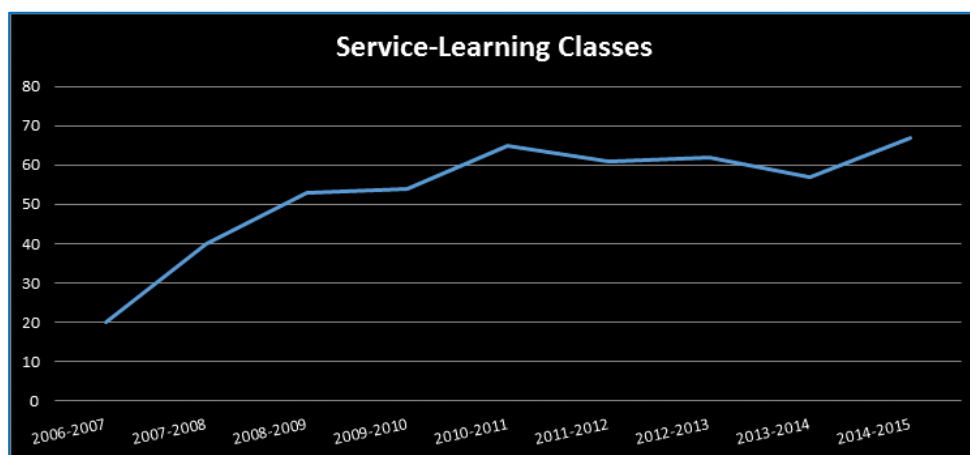
Also in 2011, Skidmore was awarded a grant of \$250,000 from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation (AVD) to create a comprehensive CE program within the curriculum. The purpose of the grant was to review Skidmore's academic programs with an eye toward increasing aspects that foster responsible citizenship and community engagement. The grant allowed the College to expand the roster of courses that entail community interaction, to provide faculty development opportunities to prepare for implementation of new forms of CE pedagogy, and to infuse CE in the First-Year Experience. Seven faculty members, designated as Civic Fellows, were identified to assist faculty in developing the new initiative, and Janet Casey, Professor of English, served as the director of the project. The faculty on this project collaborated closely with the members of the SRC. The AVD grant closed in September 2014. These combined efforts helped to increase the visibility of CE at Skidmore and produced several outcomes that dovetailed with Goal III of the current strategic plan.

Some of the tangible outcomes realized by the RCTF, the SRC, and the AVD Fellows include the following:

- Annually since 2009, Skidmore has been included in the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll by the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- In 2010, Skidmore obtained the Carnegie Elective Classification in Community Engagement.
- In 2013-14 and 2014-15, assessments of the Honors Forum concluded that the Citizenship Project, required now for a decade, is one of the strengths of the program (despite some needed amendments in procedures).⁴⁷
- In 2012–2013

⁴⁷ "State of the Honors Forum 2014: Honors Forum Survey Results" and "Honors Forum Citizenship Projects Assessment Report," 2015. <https://www.skidmore.edu/assessment/programs/index.php>

- o Sixty-six percent of students participated, at least occasionally, in CE activities, through coursework or cocurricular activities.
- o Sixty-two service-learning courses were offered, up from 20 in 2006–2007. The latest results for the academic year of 2014–2015 show an even greater increase, with 1,000 students studying in 67 courses.
- o Forty community agencies served as collaborative partners.
- o Twenty-two charitable fundraisers were held, donating over \$22,000.
- o Forty Honors Forum students completed Citizenship Projects.
- o Fifty-seven students were funded to participate in CE summer internships and See Beyond projects (76% of 75 funded projects).
- o Sixty-nine faculty members participated in AVD grant-funded divisional workshops to explore CE opportunities in their courses.
- o The interdisciplinary scientific literacy initiative was launched.
- o Most recently, we were awarded membership to Project Pericles, a highly visible and reputable organization focused on infusing civic engagement and social responsibility across the college experience



(<http://www.projectpericles.org/projectpericles/>).

These data indicate significant increases in student, staff, and faculty involvement in CE activities since the last Middle States Review.

As described in Goal III of Skidmore's *Strategic Plan*, responsible citizens participate in the life of the community. They have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to build community and effectively evaluate and respond to public issues and concerns. Skidmore's liberal arts curriculum, coupled with the CE opportunities which are increasingly provided to students, lays the foundation for informed, responsible citizenship. Our students are increasingly participating in the life of the community in meaningful ways.

But how do our current efforts in CE contribute to integrative teaching and learning? CE learning helps students make connections across the border between our campus and the world

beyond, and, in some instances, across time as students progress through their education. One vehicle for integrative learning through CE is structured, guided experiences in the community that are accompanied by meaningful reflections connecting theory and disciplinary concepts with community engagement. This is happening in individual courses, in some events and exhibitions at the Tang Teaching Museum, and in some majors, as students progress through their discipline-specific coursework (such as Social Work and Environmental Studies).

In 2008 and 2010, Professor David Karp, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, conducted surveys on outcomes of service learning (one form of CE) in the College's First-Year Experience (FYE). During both waves of the research, first-year students were surveyed (n=169 in 2008 and n=676 in 2010); the responses from those students in seminars in which service learning was included were compared to those in which service learning was not a part of the pedagogy. On all learning outcomes, students in service-learning seminars had significantly higher self-assessments than those in seminars with no service learning. For example, students who completed a service-learning project in their FYE were more likely to indicate that the course helped them to achieve the following learning outcomes than students who did not engage in service learning:

- Developed the ability to change approaches to a problem based on the situation;
- Improved ability to comprehend, analyze, and interpret texts;
- Increased the probability of thinking further about issues raised in class;
- Improved the ability to solve quantitative problems (using math, statistics, etc.).

While these data are limited to CE efforts in the FYE, they provide evidence that Skidmore's CE efforts help students realize integrative learning goals.

Part of integrative learning involves learning across the boundaries that separate the curricular from the cocurricular; here too we lack data that specifically address students' integrative learning. There are, nonetheless, some efforts to promote learning between the curriculum and the cocurriculum; for example, Michelle Hubbs, as the Director of Community Service Programs in Student Affairs, sits on the SRC and has the vantage point to make connections between the curriculum and the cocurriculum for the faculty by virtue of the work she does with faculty, students, clubs, and the community. Also, the Tang Teaching Museum models integrative learning and civic engagement through faculty- and student-curated exhibitions. In Chapter IV we discussed some examples; another example is the summer 2013 *Transformer* exhibition, a collaborative, community-specific sculptural installation by artists Andrea Bowers and Olga Koumoundouros. That exhibition raised the awareness of local sociopolitical issues through the support of community and activist organizations (such as the Franklin Community Center Food Bank, the Saratoga Economic Opportunity Council's "Estamos Aquí," and LGBT Outreach and Education projects at Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson), all of which were made possible through the work of Skidmore student interns. We have no doubt that students are learning a great deal from these experiences that take them outside the curriculum, but need to be more intentional in helping students make the connections between curricular and co-curricular activities.

One exception appears to be off-campus study, as some departments are becoming much more intentional about the connection between study abroad and learning outcomes in the major. Off-campus study at Skidmore College is a popular option for many students. As we discussed in

Chapter IV, roughly 60% of matriculated students study off-campus during their undergraduate career, with a majority studying away during their junior year. Civic Engagement is an intentional theme in many of the approved programs offered through the Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (OCSE). Programs such as those that are approved through the School for International Training (SIT), the School for Field Studies (SFS), and the International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership (IPSL), in addition to those treated in Chapter IV above, focus on the themes of research, development, sustainability, and civic engagement. Of the 120 approved programs available to Skidmore students, roughly 40 offer CE experiences and topics. These programs include our Skidmore in Spain and Skidmore in Paris Programs, as well as many others, which span from Ecuador, Thailand, Peru, and Australia to South Africa and Tanzania, to name just a few of the many destinations; they are structured around academic and cultural issues that impact the diverse local communities. Upon completion of these study-abroad programs, many students choose to further develop their academic experience from study abroad in capstone projects, departmental presentations, and additional research in the classroom. Some students, particularly those majoring or minoring in Environmental Studies who have recently completed a semester abroad, are invited to act as a resource for other students by reflecting on and sharing their study-abroad experiences as a participant on a student panel discussion, as well as through student-to-student conversations.

CE thus provides an ideal context for meeting Skidmore's Goals for Student Learning and Development; however, the extent to which the Goals have been systematically measured across CE courses is difficult to ascertain. The Working Group could find no data that have been systematically collected that directly assess learning outcomes vis-à-vis the goals. We must look to indirect sources such as NSSE and alumni survey data to gauge how well we are doing. For example, alumni survey data show that several items related to CE were "areas of concern"⁴⁸ and NSSE 2013 data⁴⁹ show that Skidmore students fall significantly behind peers in several items related to CE. Nonetheless, the following examples show how certain specific courses are meeting the Goals for Student Learning and Development in an intentional manner.

The College's Social Work Department is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and uses a competency-based model in its pedagogy and assessment. Several of the Social Work competencies directly correspond to the Goals. Some examples include: (1) apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments; (2) engage diversity and difference in practice; (3) engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and deliver effective social work services; and (4) advance human rights and social and economic justice. Each of these is further operationalized through practice behaviors. These practice behaviors are then assessed through observations of the students' behavior by onsite field supervisors and student performance on various assignments completed throughout the major. The department uses a benchmark that indicates that at least 80% of students will receive a rating that indicates that the student performs above expectations for an intern in this practice behavior. In Social Work, students routinely exceed the benchmark and are demonstrating competency.

The only Student Government Association-sponsored student volunteer club, Beneficent Action, is dedicated to serving Skidmore's students and the Saratoga community by facilitating

⁴⁸ Goals white paper

⁴⁹ NSSE 2013 final report; Appendix XXX

community service experiences and publicizing volunteer opportunities. Benef-Action sponsors several subgroups and special events throughout the year, for organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Saratoga Mentoring, Special Olympics Swimming, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Shelters of Saratoga. While there is no direct assessment of the impact of involvement in these organizations on the students' integrative learning, the efforts of the club do connect with many of Skidmore's Goals for Student Learning and Development.

The Tang Teaching Museum's mission as a laboratory of ideas for integrative learning allows faculty, staff, and students to use contemporary art to explore issues relevant to their areas of expertise. For example, the 2014–2015 exhibition *Hope and Anger—The Civil Rights Movement and Beyond* used work from such artists as Andy Warhol and Kara Walker as the starting point for student research in the American Studies class AM260A: "Race, Gender, Sexuality and the Civil Rights Movement." Students wrote extended label texts that were presented at a public event and printed for the edification of visitors to the museum throughout the duration of the exhibition.

In sum, there is a great deal of evidence, though not systematically gathered, that our students are learning increasingly how to draw connections between the knowledge they acquire through study and the skills they need to put that knowledge into practice to solve intransigent problems. At the same time, we could do more to establish goals more comprehensively and follow our progress more consistently, especially with respect to our students' learning. We are not yet convinced that every student who graduates from Skidmore has acquired the learning and skills required to be an effective citizen and participant in decision making on a global scale.

Values and Ethics

As we noted above, Skidmore does not have a history of cultivating learning about values and ethics as a broad goal. And yet the critical study of values has a role in many if not all disciplines, and institutionally we are committed to the expression of values embedded in our Honor Code and in the behaviors and beliefs it calls for. We thus ask our students both to learn to understand relativism through critical thinking and also to commit to a set of values that our community prescribes. We do not have a general education requirement that encompasses learning about values. The cocurriculum that is created alongside the Scribner Seminars for Peer Mentors to coach their first-year students includes a number of issues related to values, most notably a unit on plagiarism and the Honor Code. But even that is not required of all the seminars, just offered as an option.

That said, the concepts of values and ethics cross disciplines and are in the foundation of both curricular and cocurricular experiences. Furthermore, faculty, staff, and students shape the parameters of our values and ethical code and incorporate them in a variety of ways into our courses, our work, and our lives on campus and in the greater world community. Discussion has been underway on CEPP as to how best to ensure our students understand values and ethics in a more comprehensive way; as we note in Chapter I above, these discussions have been part of the planning for the revised curriculum.

Part of the motivation for those discussions has been the recognition that, for all of the teaching and learning we do that engages values and ethics, we nevertheless have some weaknesses in this area. NSSE data show that our students lag behind those of other colleges in their learning about values and ethics. Furthermore, only 50% or less of the faculty in each

division reported that they emphasize developing a code of ethics or values. These data are not definitive, of course, but they might be the starting point for further inquiry and discussion.⁵⁰

Still, our investigation revealed many sites of students' engagement with values and ethics, as the summary that follows will show. We know that every student engages with some ethical issues, and most encounter them repeatedly in many contexts. The question is whether we could be doing this better, more intentionally and consistently.

Section III (Personal and Social Values) of the Skidmore College Goals for Student Learning and Development states the following: students learn to

- Examine one's own values and their use as ethical criteria in thought and action;
- Interrogate one's own values in relation to those of others across social and cultural differences;
- Develop practical competencies for managing a personal, professional, and community life;
- Apply learning to find solutions for social, civic, and scientific problems.

We address these Goals in both the curriculum and the cocurriculum, both explicitly and implicitly, and we know that every student learns from at least one context—and almost always many different ones—about values and ethics.

Our Working Group posed the following questions to the Department Chairs, Program Directors, the IGR Director, the SGA, an Associate Dean of the Faculty, the then Director of Spiritual Life, President Glotzbach, the Assistant Director for Engagement of the Tang Museum, and the then Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Campus Life and Student Conduct. Our aim was to assess the ways that values and ethics relate to the concept of integrative learning at Skidmore:

- In what ways does Skidmore's work with students in the area of values and ethics contribute to integrative teaching and learning? What evidence do we have?
- Where and to what extent are students meeting the Goals for Student Learning and Development that are relevant to values and ethics? What evidence do we have?
- Where does creative thought emerge within these areas, and how could we cultivate it further? What evidence do we have of what is effective and ineffective?

From the responses we received, we have concluded that consideration of and learning about values and ethics are pervasive in the curriculum and the cocurriculum, although we have no way of ensuring that every student learns about them in some depth. The primary ways our students do learn about them are through the administration and support of the Honor Code and instruction about academic integrity; through instruction about information resources and technology issues in which values are important and, at times, contested; through specific courses and, in some departments, throughout the major; and in certain cocurricular activities, where attention to values is an explicit part of the experience. We will summarize here the responses we received about each of these areas.

⁵⁰ Cite some specific data and source in Appendix

The Honor Code, established at the request of the student body of 1921, is prevalent throughout all students' classroom experiences. The Director of Office of Academic Advising, reminds the faculty that students are to write and sign the Honor Code statement on all examinations: *While taking this examination, I have not witnessed any wrongdoing, nor have I personally violated any conditions of the Skidmore Honor Code.* As is explained on the Office of Academic Advising's integrity portal,⁵¹ all members of the Skidmore College community, including students, faculty, and staff, are parties to the honor contract and are expected to abide by its provisions. The Honor Code covers all aspects of integrity, whether academic or social. The Student Handbook attends particularly to codes of social behavior and outlines the College judicial system and procedures; both the Student Handbook and the New Student Advising and Registration Guide define academic integrity regulations. Every Skidmore student is required by the Honor Code to become thoroughly conversant with the standards of academic and social integrity that prevail at the College. The Integrity Board and the Board of Appeals will not regard claims of ignorance, of unintentional error, or of academic or personal pressures as adequate defense for violations of the Honor Code.

In his commencement speech on May 18, 2013, President Glotzbach offered insights into what Skidmore College represents, regarding values and ethics. As a liberal arts institution, he identified our shared common and expected value base—for example, sustainability (incorporated into our practice at the College) and our commitment to diversity and inclusion. He recognized, nonetheless, that there need to be more in-depth, explicit conversations among faculty and students about these topics as a community, as well as about such questions as the role of science in public policy, our commitment to social justice, zero tolerance of bias incidents and sexual misconduct, global poverty, and political engagement. One initiative that began a couple of years ago to instill honesty and integrity into first-year students' work and lives at Skidmore now takes place every fall. While the Honor Code is included in the Student Handbook which first-year students receive, the ethics of academic scholarship begin in very intentional ways during student orientation. During the Scribner Seminar meetings at the President's house, he has a very poignant conversation with students about what it means to be a member of a community that is both an academic and a social community (which is an example of integrative learning—bringing curricular and cocurricular lives together). Students are presented a card with the honor code after this conversation with President Glotzbach, and then they are instructed to sign it.

Skidmore has a no-tolerance policy for issues like bullying, hazing, plagiarism, and racism, and our means of promoting student involvement against these issues (the Bias Response Group, the Honor Code Commission, and so on) encourage students to reflect on, engage with, and actively perform actions according to their ethics and values. These incidents do occur, and we have developed and modified our policies for preventing and dealing with them.

The Office of Academic Policy and Advising offers a perspective on instilling values and ethics in our students in preparation for their work before entering the classroom or dealing with reparations for missteps occurring in their classroom work. In an effort to address past issues and disappointing increases in the number of violations, many important changes dealing with the honor code and academic integrity have been put into place over the past five years. For example, the "Academic Integrity Handbook" has been updated; now it is given in print to all

⁵¹ See <https://www.skidmore.edu/advising/integrity/>.

FYE Scribner Seminar (SS) instructors to distribute to each of their students and to discuss it with them during their advising sessions. The majority of faculty do follow through with this in a serious way. The Office of Academic Advising (OAA) also developed a module on academic integrity that can be led by the SS peer mentor or by the instructor. This includes a film with four Skidmore students (identities are protected) who talk about their academic integrity violations; they talk about how important academic integrity is and what violating it can mean. The module, which is generally presented by the Peer Mentor, includes talking points for a conversation around the film and academic integrity.

In addition, four years ago the Associate Dean of the Office of Academic Policy and Advising wrote to the entire faculty about academic integrity and asked what might be preventing them from following through on suspected violations. He learned that faculty felt that if they turned someone in, it was going to be an emotionally draining and time-consuming experience. As a result, there have been several changes to the reporting process, in order to reduce the drain on faculty time. If a suspected violation is reported, OAA helps guide the conversation with the student and the faculty member, after which the OAA takes over. The OAA has also made a push to make people aware of tools to use to help detect academic violations.

Additionally, the OAA implemented policies that were aimed more at restoration as opposed to just punishment. For example, there is now a first-year forgiveness policy around any academic violation as long as the violation is not egregious. If it is egregious, there is a violation on record, but the student is given the opportunity for junior-year reflective forgiveness. In addition, there is now a warning opportunity, and then if there is a future violation, the penalty is increased. OAA is tracking and assessing how these new policies are impacting academic integrity violations; the policies do seem to be reversing the trend line of violations. OAA is also tracking identity variables within the academic violation data to look for reporting biases, etc., to help guide future outreach and conversation. The conversations in OAA with students are now much more geared toward student development and why it is important to the community to maintain academic and community integrity. Kim Marsella (Director of Academic Advising) goes to the Opportunity Program meetings and the International Pre-orientation to talk about academic integrity with the students. Finally, the Curriculum Committee now asks every course to include an integrity statement on the syllabus.

The Scribner Library is also a site where students learn about academic integrity. The Library's one-credit information literacy course, LI 100: "Electronic Information Resources," addresses some of the legal, social, ethical, and political issues regarding the creation and use of information. Course topics that deal with values and ethics include such topics as evaluation, plagiarism, academic integrity, copyright, privacy, confidentiality, security, media monopolization, cost of information, and social media implications. Discussions are underway with CEPP to find ways to bring this learning to all students.

A new development on campus, the John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative Documentary Studies or MDOCS, described in more detail above in Chapter III, provides a different perspective and tools for students to explore values and ethics related to IT and information resources but also extending well beyond them into other complex considerations. Documentary Studies asks students to develop skills in evidence-based storytelling, communicating the big ideas and arguments and cases found in academic work in a way that can reach a more general public. Much documentary work engages the community, tackles big social

issues, addresses humanitarian concerns, and prompts students to consider legal and ethical questions. Whose story is a documentary work about? What say does a documentary subject have in influencing a final product? How truthful does a documentarian need to be to get the evidence she or he needs? There are many models to follow; students in Documentary Studies learn to grapple not just with technology but with their own role in creating knowledge. As such, documentary work—which cuts across boundaries and disciplines and asks students to apply their theoretical knowledge in documentary films, photography, essays, exhibits, sound pieces, and multimedia—contributes to integrative teaching and engagement with ethical questions even as it also by its nature prompts engagement with questions about intellectual property and integrity.

Values and Ethics in Departments and Programs

Beyond the Honor Code, academic integrity instruction, and library and technology instruction about ethical uses, our students are also learning about values and ethics in many parts of the curriculum. Some departments and programs explicitly infuse their goals for their students with learning about discipline-based ethical issues and behaviors (examples include Health and Exercise Science; Management and Business; IGR; Social Work). Others, such as Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, and Chemistry, teach values from disciplinary perspectives in multiple courses, so that student majors learn about them repeatedly. Yet others introduce values-related issues deliberately in their gateway courses or in their capstone seminars. Not all of the chairs replied to the survey, so our findings are preliminary, but as the elaborations below indicate, in many majors there is rich and complex consideration of values and ethics.

The Department of Health and Exercise Science, for example, has aligned its departmental goals with the College's Goals for Student Learning and Development. As a consequence, the faculty made it central for their students to develop values and ethics appropriate in professional settings. These include:

- Devise appropriate research protocols that 'do no harm';
- Treat all human participants in an ethical manner (no deception and in a safe manner);
- Treat all documentation and information gathered from the study in a way that ensures confidentiality;
- Handle all data in a manner that befits ethical behavior.

In the Department of Social Work, values and ethics are central and are infused throughout the curriculum. The course "Social Work Values and Populations at Risk," for example, directly addresses these topics. One of the overall Social Work program objectives is: Practice according to the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession. Furthermore, the program has the following practice competency that all students are expected to attain upon graduation in relationship to ethics: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. These are assessed through observations of students by field instructors and embedded ethics assignments throughout the core curriculum. Students consistently meet the benchmarks in these areas in the department's assessment data. The program is also planning to introduce the concept of digital ethics in Social Work practice as a result of information that emerged from their recent Self-Study.

In the Department of Psychology, the ethics of doing psychological research is taught in all of their methods courses, as well as in all content-based lab courses. Many types of experimental methods are used to test hypotheses, such as how to design empirical studies that protect the rights of participants. There is a college-wide Institutional Review Board and a departmental Participant Review Board that has to approve research before it can be conducted. Every participant signs a consent form that explains what participants will experience. Students learn about all of this in the methods courses.

The Chemistry Department approaches questions of values and ethics with their students from several different angles. Several professors in the department do an exercise at the beginning of their 100-level courses in which they ask students to reflect on their values and how they relate to chemistry. This is an intervention which has been shown to help with the retention of women and underrepresented minorities in the STEM fields by focusing on matters of personal values. Students are encouraged to integrate their own values into learning a subject which at the 100-level may seem valueless (that is, one that may not reflect on one's personal values). Research-based ethics is integrative in that most of the students conduct research for multiple years. This is an integrative dialogue between ethics and best practices they experience in their courses and what they do and practice within the less prescriptive research environment. During the junior and/or senior year, students take a one-credit course, the "senior seminar," in which they engage in discussion of ethics and the Chemist's Code of Conduct written by the American Chemical Society. This is an integrative exercise because they bring to bear all of their course and research experiences to the discussion of the scenarios. They also write scenarios and describe the most ethical path forward. Finally, students who take the CH385 course (a four-credit research course) will go through ethical conduct of research training (ECR), which is delivered either by a faculty member or online training. Again, the department aims for students constantly to integrate research with considerations of values and ethics.

In the Philosophy Department, a department in which one would expect to find the teaching of values and ethics, their own analysis identifies areas of strength and also opportunities for further development. In all of their introductory courses, students study the philosophical basis of ethical systems, with 60% of their 200- and 300-level courses having some foundational or applied ethical content. Furthermore, foundational work in value theory, ethical action, and ethical thinking renders the students' understanding more sophisticated and effective. Applied work always connects the theoretical studies to other human practices (i.e. law, health care, business, race, gender, class, etc.). Ninety percent of students pass the introductory course.

The complexity of teaching values and ethics, and indeed which values and ethics one should embrace, is particularly clear in the responses of the Sociology Department. Their students learn the sociological axiom that no ethical or value system can fairly be said to be superior to any other. Students come to reflect on theorists' assumptions and, in so doing, reflect on the values and ethics they embrace and their rationales for doing so. Those examinations begin in the gateway courses and extend to every course thereafter. Students are invited to learn about different kinds of religious experiences through reading primary and secondary texts and firsthand observation of religious practices that are unfamiliar to them. They actively consider the values, morality, mythology, rituals, and symbolism of different religious traditions. One of the main goals is to wrestle with the dilemma of respecting particular, local circumstances that might make one sympathetic to cultural relativism; this competes with the need for ethical

discernment and moral judgment relative to legal rights, civil, and human rights, and fundamental decency

The Intergroup Relations (IGR) Program, treated at length above in Chapter IV, offers yet a different approach to the incorporation of integrative learning and values and ethics into their program. IGR is both guided by disciplinary principles and composed of practices that emphasize integrated and applied learning. It is an explicit part of the IGR framework, as it is of Environmental Studies, to learn that the difficult problems studied in the courses have an ethical dimension and require collaborative solutions. This is particularly evident in the training and experience of students who are minors. IGR minors build content knowledge and skills across a scaffold of courses that ultimately prepare them to become dialogue course peer-facilitators. Minors are also often called upon to use their training and skills both on and off-campus; for instance, in 201X IGR partnered with faculty from Theater and American Studies, as well as Student Affairs and the Bias Response Group, to develop the cocurricular campus performance, *On the Record*. Addressing bias incidents and awareness on campus over several performances, IGR faculty, staff, and students served as facilitators for post-performance dialogues.

Since its inception, IGR has been collecting pre- and post-test qualitative and quantitative data to assess student learning regarding a range of measures including understanding values or ethics related to issues of diversity and social justice. We report on those data on pp. xx-xx above, as well as the preliminary results of a new research project to study how, if at all, former IGR student facilitators are applying what they learned to their personal and professional lives three years after college. Not surprisingly, preliminary results show that social justice values do appear to inform IGR's alumni's work and larger frame of reference.

The Department of Management and Business, too, has made a concerted move to infuse values and ethics in its curriculum. Over the past five years, the Department faculty engaged in a rigorous analysis and restructuring of their curriculum. The faculty adopted six dimensions for studying management and business in context to help students become well-rounded leaders in an increasingly complex world. Three of these dimensions, in particular, stress learning about values and ethics. In the first dimension, "The History, Philosophy, and Ethics of Management and Business," students develop a historical understanding of modern capitalism and the rise of different entrepreneurial and commercial organizational forms. Seventy percent of the department's courses address this first dimension. One of many examples of how ethics and values are covered in specific courses can be found in "MB107: Business and Organization Management," which includes study of the notion of doing business while "doing good," stakeholder theory and stakeholder analysis, definitions of corporate social responsibility and the triple bottom line, present findings on ethical behavior linked to firm profitability, examples of ethical lapses and well-handled crises, illustrations of best corporate citizens and the criteria that lead to those distinctions, and, in general, cases chosen for discussion which bring ethics and values to the forefront. In the third dimension, "Culture and Global Awareness," and in "Natural Environment and Sustainability," the fifth dimension, students learn about ethics and cultural contexts, as well as about close connections between business and the natural environment. Students come to understand the environmental impact of businesses and the role of local and national governments and international bodies in regulating the relationships between business and the environment. Management and Business students thus learn about a wide range of ethical issues at virtually every stage of their curriculum.

Beyond the Curriculum

At the borderline between the curriculum and the cocurriculum, the Tang Teaching Museum has also been the site of repeated exhibitions and events that raise ethical questions, often in specific connection with courses. In Chapter IV above we treat at length the Tang's engagement with diversity and inclusion and social justice issues. The Tang also frequently addresses other ethical issues and questions of value. For example, during the 2014–2015 academic year, students from the introductory business course MB107: "Business Organization and Management" explored issues of ethics and values in relationship to contemporary art. Topics included the ethics of authorship, intellectual property, the economic cost of making art, the price of art, and the value of a work of art. Some exhibitions are specifically designed to provoke difficult questions about conflicting models of value or ethical dilemmas.

More firmly outside the curriculum, many of the offices and programs under Student Affairs encompass important learning about ethics and values. The Office of Campus Life encompasses many areas that directly inspire our students to gain an understanding of values and ethics and to incorporate them into their lives. The offices of Leadership Activities, Student Diversity Programs, Religious and Spiritual Life, Community Service, and Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution all assist students in making meaningful connections to campus life and in fostering informed citizenship, leadership, and social responsibility. The Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR, "Seeker"), in particular, promotes responsible community membership and positive relationships through the values of honesty, integrity, and consideration. They do this by teaching conflict resolution skills, addressing the harm of student misconduct, and helping to resolve conflicts and conduct violations as they arise. In essence, SCCR staff and its many volunteers are "seekers" of justice in the Skidmore community.

The Student Handbook is accessible on the website of the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs; it informs students about the expectations of their values and behavior at Skidmore. The Office explains that

Skidmore College is an academic community committed to learning and personal development. The offices and programs in Student Affairs support, deepen, and extend the academic program by providing cocurricular and residential programs that promote academic accomplishment, citizenship, diversity, leadership, and personal responsibility. The cocurricular and residential programs at Skidmore consider students to be adults ready to take responsibility for their learning, the quality of their social environment, and their daily life. We support your rights to privacy, freedom of inquiry and expression, and your participation in College governance. We also expect you to meet high standards for academic integrity and personal conduct.⁵²

The first section of the Student Handbook discusses the Honor Code, the Student Code of Conduct, and the College Conduct process, as well as the College's expectations and the students' obligations as members of the community, all in terms that implicitly and at times explicitly invoke ethics and values.

Specific experiences in the cocurriculum reinforce these messages and the students' learning. One important example is the teaching of values in the athletics program. In addition to the Code of Conduct and all that has been explained above, Skidmore athletes must adhere also to the Student-Athlete Expectations adopted by the Athletics Department. Skidmore student-

⁵² See http://www.skidmore.edu/student_handbook/.

athletes are expected to represent the College in a positive manner at all times, whether in season, out of season, on-campus or off-campus. Being a Skidmore College student-athlete brings with it not only the responsibility of representing one's team and the athletic program, but the privilege and responsibility of representing Skidmore College. A student-athlete's behavior during competition, at practice, in the classroom, on campus, and through media outlets (Facebook, My Space, Twitter, the Internet, newspapers, etc.) should reflect positively on oneself, the team, the Athletic Department and the College. The following is expected of every Skidmore student-athlete:

- Support your fellow athletic teams and do so in a positive manner that is respectful of the opponent;
- Respect the coaching and administrative staff;
- Conduct yourself in a manner representative of the institution at all times. Being a student-athlete is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week responsibility. All 19 teams, along with the Athletic Department staff, comprise one big team representing Skidmore;
- Perform well academically and be accountable to the same high standards as the general Skidmore student body. Student-athletes are subject to the same disciplinary process as the general student body populations, in addition to policies set forth by the Athletic Department and individual teams.

Skidmore College will not condone unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the student-athlete, coach, administrator, spectator or any individual associated with a member institution. Good sportsmanship includes:

- Observing and supporting the rules of sport;
- Promoting the spirit as well as the letter of the rules;
- Placing fairness first as a goal in competition;
- Taking a personal responsibility for high standards of play;
- Showing respect toward competitors, coaches, and officials;
- Playing cleanly while playing hard;
- Showing maturity and integrity in conduct on and off the field of play;
- Being a gracious winner and accepting defeat with grace and dignity.

These expectations of athletes' behavior clearly reflect a system of values that places overall integrity and respect at the top, and that includes a sense of responsibility to their various communities.

There are many other areas beyond the classroom on campus where values and ethics are taught, nurtured, and acted upon. Some we do not address in detail here are the Bias Response Group, which engages students in recognizing and addressing bias incidents on campus (see Chapter IV above), as well as the many scheduled speakers and events that regularly address

themes related to ethics and values.⁵³ The above represents a strong sample of what Skidmore College stands for and demands of all faculty, staff, and students. But the examples do not address the question of whether every Skidmore student graduates with a complex sense of both the importance and the contingency of values and ethical codes.

One co-curricular area where learning about values and ethics is particularly strong is the Office of Spiritual Life. The outgoing chaplain and Director of the Office of Spiritual Life, who retired in spring 2015, responded to our questions in detail and with a number of reflections and suggestions. His sense was that the Director of Spiritual Life, and that office as a whole, must play an important role in teaching and learning about values. For example, his office offered a one-credit interdisciplinary, freestanding course on values called “Meaningful Work and Life.” The summary of the Director’s interview continues:

Nonetheless, even as the Director of Religious and Spiritual Life, [he] does not have as large an interface with the student body as he deems desirable. He interacts with them as they may require for personal issues, but, except for programs and events he sponsors, he is not part of other community-wide efforts of the college. Regarding the Director as a team-member would be a healthy development for the campus.

...[R]ecognizing that this Office is a natural point of departure, he states that it requires strengthening if it is to have an effective role in the teaching of ethics and values. To that end, [...] the College foresees restoring the Director position to full-time status [in the fall of 2016].

The Director went on to say that although the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life can and should teach about values and ethics, it is the faculty who can best teach these subjects to the students. He suggested, in fact, that all departments should require an ethics course as part of their major, addressing what ethics means in the context of their discipline. He argued that only through a discipline-based study of ethics and values would students acquire a sufficiently deep and complex understanding of the subjects.

Whether or not we are prepared to adopt departmental requirements for the study of ethics and values, we recommend that one outcome of this report be a more complete study of the teaching of ethics and values in the departments and programs, as well as a discussion among the faculty and Student Affairs leadership and staff of ways we might strengthen our students’ engagement with these topics.

It is perhaps especially appropriate that we conclude this Self-Study on integrative learning with a set of questions about values and ethics. Establishing values and behaving according to ethical principles are inherently integrative in all of the ways that we understand that set of concepts here: they entail thinking through lenses that know no disciplinary boundaries; they connect theory with practice; they relate to the ways in which liberally-educated people inhabit the world as individuals and as part of communities. Several of our subtopics in

⁵³ Recent examples include the 2014 FYE summer reading, *What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* by Michael Sandel; Russell Muirhead’s presentation “How to Think Like an Economist but Act Like a Human Being”; Tim Kasser’s “Capitalism, Values and Quality of Life: An empirical, Psychological Approach” guest lecture; and “Visual Ethics and Image-Based Research,” a presentation by two anthropologists (Jerome Crowder and Jonathan Marion) exploring the ethical challenges of image-based research.

this study relate explicitly to matters of value and often difficult choices: sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and of course civic engagement. And indeed our choices as faculty and staff model for our students the values that we want them to learn. These choices include how we organize and prioritize space, how we expend resources, and how we ourselves understand and use emerging technologies in ethical terms.

The process of refining this Self-Study is itself a study in civic engagement and shared values. Ideally it will have led to a better-informed and educated community, and some clear goals as a pathway to change for the better.

Recommendations

Our recommendations come from our own research during this process as well as recommendations previously made by the SRC and the AVD Fellows.

1. To continue to honor and fully realize our institution's legacy of mind and hand, explicit engagement with CE, sustainability, and explicit engagement with values and ethics should be prominent in our new strategic plan.
2. CE, sustainability, and values and ethics should appear in the new General Education requirements, and there should be an increase in the number of course offerings that address these issues across the college, so that each student encounters these aspects of Responsible Communities in their lives at Skidmore.
3. Integrative learning necessitates time for reflection. When integrative learning involves CE, sustainability, and values and ethics, intentional and guided reflection are required to fully realize associated learning goals. We recommend formalized reflection for students each year as they progress through their education at Skidmore.
4. More intentional networking and collaboration among the various parties involved in CE and sustainability are needed, including more deliberate connections between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Such efforts are needed to increase awareness among members of the campus community, as well as among external stakeholders (broader community, parents of students, prospective students, and alumni) about CE and sustainability efforts, accomplishments, and dilemmas.
5. Work with students in the areas of values and ethics should include an emphasis on intellectual openness and humility to equip our students to fully interrogate the complex causes of and solutions to issues that challenge societies both domestically and globally.
6. Content on values and ethics should be intentionally infused across disciplines and throughout Student Affairs programming. This process should begin with a dialogue across divisions about how and where our students best learn about values and ethics.

APPENDICES

NSSE DATA on Integrative Learning

NSSE 2013				
Reflective & Integrative Learning	Skidmore	Selected Peers	Bac A&S Private	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	
First-year students	40.5	39.0	38.0	**
Seniors	42.8	42.8	42.0	
Notes: Results weighted by gender and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups); *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Response rate: FY: 31%, SSR: 32%				

FSSE 2013: Reflective & Integrative Learning		
	Percentage of faculty who reported that it is important that the typical student do the following in their selected course	
Combine ideas from different courses when completing assignments	LD	67
	UD	75
Connect his or her learning to societal problems or issues	LD	66
	UD	76
Include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	LD	50
	UD	67
Examine the strengths and weaknesses of his or her own views on a topic or issue	LD	77
	UD	93
Try to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	LD	67
	UD	85
Learn something that changes the way he or she understands an issue or concept	LD	97
	UD	96
Connect ideas from your course to his or her prior experiences and knowledge	LD	81
	UD	94
LD: Lower division course; UD: Upper division		
LD faculty n = 60; UD faculty n = 55		

NSSE 2013	Frequencies		Means				
Reflective & Integrative Learning	Skidmore	Selected Peers		Skidmore	Selected Peers		
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?	Very often or Often %	Very often or Often %		Mean	Mean	Effect size	
First-year students Skidmore n = 174; Selected peers n = 5478							
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	64	59		2.8	2.8		0.10
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	64	64		2.9	2.8		0.05
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	64	62		2.8	2.8		0.01
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	72	70		3.0	2.9		0.08
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	76	73		3.1	3.0		0.15
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	81	74		3.2	3.0	*	0.17
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	90	86		3.3	3.3		0.12
Seniors Skidmore n = 178; Selected peers n = 5258							
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	83	79		3.2	3.2		0.07
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	79	74		3.2	3.1		0.06
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	62	68		2.9	3.0		-0.10
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	77	75		3.0	3.0		-0.06
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	79	77		3.1	3.1		0.02
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	83	80		3.1	3.2		-0.06
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	92	91		3.5	3.4		0.06
Response rate: FY: 31%; SR: 32%							

Appendix Internship Table

Survey Questions	Credit-Bearing Internships			RCIA Internships		Goals for Student Learning and Development
	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...

Internship Table 2

	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%

Topical Module: Experiences with Diverse Perspectives -- First-Year Students

First-Year Students 2013		Distributions		Statistical Comparisons			
		Skidmore	Comp Group	Skidmore	Comparison Group		
		<i>Very much or Quite a bit %</i>	<i>Very much or Quite a bit %</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	
1. During the current school year, to what extent have events or activities offered at your institution emphasized perspectives on societal differences (economic, ethnic, political, religious, etc.)?							
		62	50	2.8	2.5	***	.28
		<i>Very often or Often %</i>	<i>Very often or Often %</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	
2. During the current school year, about how often have you <i>attended</i> events or activities that encouraged you to examine your understanding of the following?							
a.	Economic or social inequality	28	18	2.1	1.7	***	.39
b.	Issues of race, ethnicity, or nationality	33	18	2.2	1.7	***	.55
c.	Religious or philosophical differences	18	19	1.7	1.8		-.02
d.	Different political viewpoints	22	16	1.9	1.7	*	.22
e.	Issues of gender or sexual orientation	32	15	2.2	1.6	***	.62
3. During the current school year, about how often have you had <i>discussions about</i> the following?							
a.	Economic or social inequality	58	41	2.8	2.4	***	.41
b.	Issues of race, ethnicity, or nationality	61	42	2.8	2.4	***	.49
c.	Religious or philosophical differences	56	44	2.7	2.4	**	.25
d.	Different political viewpoints	47	41	2.6	2.4	*	.20
e.	Issues of gender or sexual orientation	57	34	2.8	2.2	***	.61
Skidmore n = 140; Other institutions n = 9041							

Topical Module: Experiences with Diverse Perspectives --Seniors							
Seniors 2013		Distributions		Statistical Comparisons			
		Skidmore	Comp Group		Skidmore	Comparison Group	
	Item wording or description	Very much or Quite a bit %	Very much or Quite a bit %		Mean	Mean	Effect size
1. During the current school year, to what extent have events or activities <i>offered at your institution</i> emphasized perspectives on societal differences (economic, ethnic, political, religious, etc.)?							
		64	43		2.7	2.4	*** .36
	Item wording or description	Very often or Often %	Very often or Often %		Mean	Mean	Effect size
2. During the current school year, about how often have you <i>attended</i> events or activities that encouraged you to examine your understanding of the following?							
a.	Economic or social inequality	21	15		1.9	1.6	*** .36
b.	Issues of race, ethnicity, or nationality	23	15		2.0	1.6	*** .43
c.	Religious or philosophical differences	15	15		1.7	1.6	.11
d.	Different political viewpoints	15	14		1.7	1.6	.16
e.	Issues of gender or sexual orientation	29	13		2.0	1.5	*** .62
3. During the current school year, about how often have you had <i>discussions about</i> the following?							
a.	Economic or social inequality	56	47		2.7	2.5	** .24
b.	Issues of race, ethnicity, or nationality	52	43		2.7	2.4	** .28
c.	Religious or philosophical differences	48	41		2.5	2.4	.15
d.	Different political viewpoints	53	44		2.5	2.4	.08
e.	Issues of gender or sexual orientation	57	35		2.7	2.2	*** .44
Skidmore n = 414; Other institutions n = 14,104							

NSSE Data on Diversity

NSSE 2013		Frequency		Statistical Comparisons			
		Skidmore	Selected Peers	Skidmore	Selected Peers		
First-Year Students		%	%	Mean	Mean		Effect size
2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?							
c.	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	64	62	2.8	2.8		.01
8. During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?							
a.	People of a race or ethnicity other than your own	82	75	3.3	3.2	*	.17
b.	People from an economic background other than your own	81	80	3.3	3.3		.09
c.	People with religious beliefs other than your own	82	73	3.3	3.1	*	.18
d.	People with political views other than your own	51	68	2.7	3.0	***	-.31
Seniors							
2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?							
c.	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	62	68	2.9	3.0		-.10
8. During the current school year, about how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups?							
a.	People of a race or ethnicity other than your own	77	69	3.1	3.1		.05
b.	People from an economic background other than your own	78	77	3.2	3.2		.03
c.	People with religious beliefs other than your own	70	70	3.0	3.1		-.08
d.	People with political views other than your own	48	67	2.6	3.0	***	-.40

NSSE Data on Civic Engagement

NSSE 2013	Skidmore	Selected Peers		
First-Year Students	Mean	Mean		Effect size
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?				
Writing clearly and effectively	3.0	3.0		.00
Speaking clearly and effectively	2.7	2.7		-.03
Thinking critically and analytically	3.3	3.3		-.02
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	2.4	2.5		-.11
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	2.5	2.6		-.13
Working effectively with others	2.7	2.9	*	-.21
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	2.7	2.9	*	-.21
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	2.8	2.9		-.12
Solving complex real-world problems	2.5	2.7	*	-.22
Being an informed and active citizen	2.7	2.9		-.17
Seniors	Mean	Mean		Effect size
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?				
Writing clearly and effectively	3.4	3.4		.08
Speaking clearly and effectively	3.2	3.2		.03
Thinking critically and analytically	3.6	3.6		.00
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	2.5	2.8	***	-.28
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	2.8	2.8		-.09
Working effectively with others	3.2	3.2		.06
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	2.9	3.1	*	-.17
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	2.8	2.9		-.07
Solving complex real-world problems	2.8	2.9		-.09
Being an informed and active citizen	2.9	3.0		-.13

FSSE 2013	Class	Very much or Quite a bit %
Percentage of faculty who report substantially structuring their selected course section so that students learn and develop in the following areas:		
Writing clearly and effectively	LD	66
	UD	85
Speaking clearly and effectively	LD	66
	UD	77
Thinking critically and analytically	LD	100
	UD	98
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	LD	36
	UD	33
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	LD	31
	UD	48
Working effectively with others	LD	71
	UD	75
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	LD	31
	UD	50
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	LD	45
	UD	50
Solving complex real-world problems	LD	45
	UD	55
Being an informed and active citizen	LD	58
	UD	63

HEDS Alumni Survey 2011

HEDS Alumni Survey 2011							
To what extent did your experience as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	Class of 2006 (5 years out)		Class of 2001 (10 years out)				
	Skidmore	NY6	Skidmore	NY6			
	Sufficiently or Considerably						
Critical thinking	89%	93%	89%	93%			
Effective writing	87%	89%	90%	87%			
Information literacy	86%	85%	87%	87%			
Careful reading	83%	87%	85%	85%			
Integrative thinking	83%	81%	78%	80%			
Creative thinking	79%	80%	85%	80%			
Ethical reasoning	75%	67%	63%	73%			
Problem solving	72%	78%	81%	77%			
Teamwork	68%	71%	69%	70%			
Effective speaking	64%	74%	70%	71%			
Intercultural knowledge and competence	61%	65%	50%	61%			
Quantitative literacy	60%	75%	73%	74%			
Civic engagement	44%	50%	39%	53%			
To what extent did your experience as an undergraduate contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	Class of 2006			Class of 2001			
	Skidmore	NY6	P value*	Skidmore	NY6	P value*	
Quantitative literacy	60%	75%	<.001	73%	74%	NS	
Effective speaking	64%	74%	<.05	70%	71%	NS	
Civic engagement	44%	50%	<.10	39%	53%	<.01	
Intercultural knowledge and competence	61%	65%	NS	50%	61%	<.10	
Ethical reasoning	75%	67%	NS	63%	73%	<.10	

Development of Transferable Skills		Frequency Distributions		Statistical Comparisons		
		Skidmore	Comp Group	Skidmore	Comparison Group	
First-Year Students 2013		<i>Very often or Often %</i>	<i>Very often or Often %</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
1. During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you done the following?						
a.	Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance	68	52	2.9	2.6	*** .38
b.	Made a speech to a group	23	32	2.0	2.2	* -.19
c.	Worked in a group with people who differed from you in terms of background, political orientation, points of view, etc.	63	56	2.8	2.7	* .18
d.	Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	58	45	2.7	2.4	*** .30
e.	Creatively thought about new ideas or about ways to improve things	74	63	3.1	2.8	*** .33
f.	Critically evaluated multiple solutions to a problem	65	61	2.9	2.8	* .17
g.	Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	60	55	2.8	2.7	* .17
2. During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you written something (paper, report, article, blog, etc.) that:						
a.	Used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	83	72	3.3	3.0	*** .30
b.	Assessed the conclusions of a published work	64	51	2.9	2.6	*** .34
c.	Included ideas from more than one academic discipline	67	54	2.9	2.6	*** .30
d.	Presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	71	57	3.0	2.7	*** .30
		n = 138	n = 16,800			

Development of Transferable Skills		Frequency Distributions		Statistical Comparisons		
		Skidmore	Comp Group	Skidmore	Comparison Group	
Seniors 2013		<i>Very often or Often %</i>	<i>Very often or Often %</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
1. During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you done the following?						
a.	Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance	67	55	2.9	2.7	** .26
b.	Made a speech to a group	36	46	2.3	2.5	** -.22
c.	Worked in a group with people who differed from you in terms of background, political orientation, points of view, etc.	59	65	2.8	2.9	.09
d.	Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	52	52	2.7	2.6	.08
e.	Creatively thought about new ideas or about ways to improve things	78	73	3.3	3.0	** .27
f.	Critically evaluated multiple solutions to a problem	75	72	3.1	3.0	.16
g.	Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	72	67	3.1	2.9	* .17
2. During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you written something (paper, report, article, blog, etc.) that:						
a.	Used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	89	77	3.5	3.2	*** .37
b.	Assessed the conclusions of a published work	85	57	3.2	2.7	*** .53
c.	Included ideas from more than one academic discipline	80	61	3.2	2.8	*** .44
d.	Presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	75	60	3.1	2.8	*** .35
		n = 144	n = 20,500			

NSSE Data on Civic Engagement

NSSE 2013								
First-Year Students		Frequency		Statistical Comparisons				
	Skidmore n = 173; Selected Peers n = 5420	Skidmore	Selected Peers		Skidmore	Selected Peers		
		%	%		Mean	Mean		Effect size
2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?								
	Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	64	64		2.9	2.8		.05
	Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	36	37		2.2	2.3		-.06
4. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?								
	Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	76	79		3.0	3.1		-.11
12. About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?								
	None	54	54					
	Some	44	41					
	Most	1	4		1.5	1.5		-.04
	All	1	1					
	Total	100	100					
14. How much does your institution emphasize the following?								
	Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	63	74		2.8	3.0	***	-.32
15. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?								
	Doing community service or volunteer	0 hrs	79	54		1.0	2.0	***
		1-5 hrs	16	38				-.28
		6-10 hrs	3	4				
		11-15 hrs	1	2				
		16-20 hrs	1	1				
		Total	100	100				
17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?								
	Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	58	68		2.7	2.9	*	-.21
	Solving complex real-world problems	48	59		2.5	2.7	*	-.22
	Being an informed and active citizen	56	66		2.7	2.9		-.17

NSSE Data on Civic Engagement

Seniors									
Skidmore n = 177; Selected Peers n = 9206									
2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?									
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues		79	74		3.2	3.1		.06	
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)		37	44		2.1	2.4	***	-.30	
4. During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?									
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations		77	82		3.0	3.2	**	-.22	
12. About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?									
	None	43	35						
	Some	51	60						
	Most	5	5		1.6	1.7		-.12	
	All	0	0						
	Total	100	100						
14. How much does your institution emphasize the following?									
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues		64	70		2.8	2.9	*	-.20	
15. About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?									
Doing community service or volunteer	0 hrs	71	46		1.7	2.6	*	-.22	
	1-5 hrs	22	43						
	6-10 hrs	2	7						
	11-15 hrs	2	2						
	16-20 hrs	1	1						
	21-25 hrs	0	0						
	26-30 hrs	2	0						
	More than 30 hrs	0	1						
	Total	100	100						
17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?									
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics		69	74		2.9	3.1	*	-.17	
Solving complex real-world problems		67	66		2.8	2.9		-.09	
Being an informed and active citizen		64	70		2.9	3.0		-.13	