

**SKIDMORE COLLEGE SELF-STUDY DESIGN:
INTEGRATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT SKIDMORE**

June 2014

Skidmore College is a highly selective, independent, liberal arts college with an enrollment of approximately 2,700 men and women from nearly 50 states and more than 50 countries. With its relatively small size and student-faculty ratio of nine to one, the College is a close-knit academic community. Skidmore is known for its faculty of teacher-scholars devoted to the instruction and mentoring of students.

Founded in 1903 by Lucy Skidmore Scribner to meet the educational needs of women in the Saratoga Springs area, Skidmore was chartered as a four-year, liberal arts college in 1922. Throughout the College's history it has challenged itself to "make no small plans." Its bold initiatives include the decision in the early 1960s to build a new campus and the move to coeducation in 1971. In 1991 Skidmore began offering a master of arts in liberal studies degree. In 2000, the College opened the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, which has earned a national reputation for pushing beyond the boundaries of a traditional college museum in bringing fields of study together in creative ways. The Zankel Music Center, Skidmore's most ambitious building project ever, opened in 2010. Featuring an acoustically superb 600-seat concert hall where Grammy-award winning recordings have been made, an intimate 100-seat recital hall, expansive rehearsal facilities, and state-of-the-art technological infrastructure, it has quickly become a major resource not only for music but for college-wide and community events as well. Now in the planning stages, the new Center for Integrated Sciences is envisioned as an innovative, interdisciplinary science building to be used for our "intensely interdisciplinary, relentlessly creative approach to science teaching, learning, and research," according to President Philip A. Glotzbach.

One of Skidmore's distinguishing features is its approach to the liberal arts, expressed through a curriculum that combines traditional liberal arts disciplines with career-specific fields. With nearly 50 baccalaureate degree programs, the College emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to all areas of study and fosters experimentation and creativity across the disciplines. A central belief at Skidmore is that every life, every endeavor, and every career is made more profound with creative ability at its core, and creative thinking is an integral part of the campus culture: as we say, "Creative Thought Matters." The fabric of student experience is woven around this notion. Summer at Skidmore offers some of the jewels in the crown that distinctly identify Skidmore as a place where creativity flourishes. The summer campus hosts a number of prestigious arts institutes, and academic year artist/scholar residencies extend the vibrancy of summer

into the semesters, bringing artists and scholars into classrooms, lecture and performance halls, the library, the residence halls, the studios, and beyond into the local Saratoga Springs community. Fundamental to the Skidmore curriculum is the belief that a rigorous, creative, and engaged liberal arts education is the best preparation both for a life of continued learning and for a meaningful career, particularly as graduates face the challenges and opportunities of a world of rapid and unpredictable change.

The College's Mission Statement makes clear our commitment to undergraduate students' learning and development; as it states:

The principal mission of Skidmore College is the education of predominantly full-time undergraduates, a diverse population of talented students who are eager to engage actively in the learning process. The College seeks to prepare liberally educated graduates to continue their quest for knowledge and to make the choices required of informed, responsible citizens. Skidmore faculty and staff create a challenging yet supportive environment that cultivates students' intellectual and personal excellence, encouraging them to expand their expectations of themselves while they enrich their academic understanding.

In keeping with the College's founding principle of linking theoretical with applied learning, the Skidmore curriculum balances a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences with preparation for professions, careers, and community leadership. Education in the classroom, laboratory, and studio is enhanced by cocurricular and field experience opportunities of broad scope.

Significant developments since our Periodic Review Report have included continuing to achieve fiscal stability in the wake of the 2008 financial challenges; a new leadership structure in Academic Affairs, with a return to a combined Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs position, and a new DoF/VPAA, Beau Breslin; and a newly consolidated and appropriately staffed Office of Institutional Research. After considerable research and reflection, we have closed our longstanding external degree program, the University Without Walls. We completed our comprehensive campaign, *Creative Thought. Bold Promise*, with a record \$216.5 million. We have continued to increase the diversity and internationalization of the faculty, the student body, and the curriculum. Along with that accomplishment, we have given significant attention to campus climate and new pedagogical demands stemming from our increased diversity. We have completed a major student housing project—replacing the outdated Scribner Village with the Sussman Village apartments, bringing approximately 200 more students back to campus from off campus. As noted above, we are laying plans for a new Center for Integrated Sciences, which is a primary focus in our new comprehensive campaign, *Creating Our Future*. Another major new initiative (supported by both a Mellon Foundation grant and a significant private donation) is a multifaceted approach to visual communication and understanding, building on strengths we already have and developing a number of new programs, including a Documentary Studies Collaborative. Finally, we have embarked upon the next cycle of strategic planning to follow our current *Strategic Plan*, now nearing the end of its scope.

Our topic of integrative learning dovetails well with the areas of interest that are emerging from our broadly inclusive first stage of strategic planning. Over the course of this spring, the President's Office has been seeking 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 have 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 will continue to cultivate strong links between the strategic planning process and the Middle States process so as to make the best possible use of one of our most precious resources: staff and faculty time.

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 with the New York 6 colleges (Hamilton, Union, St. Lawrence, Hobart & 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 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 later in this document (one staff member left the College after starting to serve on the committee, and we are in the process of appointing a replacement).

The Steering Committee has planned and vetted this design over the course of this academic year and is prepared to lead the College in the Self-Study process. We have since 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 are providing a range of pertinent documentation to the Working Groups as they undertake their research this summer and draft their sections of the Self-Study in the fall.

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

- 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 existing *Strategic Plan (Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College 2005-2015)* and specifically, also, to the strategic planning effort that we began this spring.
- 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.

We understand integrative learning to mean educational experiences that are shaped intentionally to engage students in drawing connections across traditional boundaries. As the AAC&U's VALUE rubric on Integrative Learning states:

Integrative and applied learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus. ... [It] is one of the most important goals and challenges for higher education.

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. Our approach aims for both breadth--outlining the many kinds of integrative learning we further--and depth, in a handful of initiatives that we may be able to understand better and support through the Self-Study process.

Deeply integrative learning requires creative structures for both teaching and learning, and we propose 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 will aim both to document what we are doing now and also support the development of future possibilities, based in part on evidence we will present.

As we prepare for this Self-Study, we have begun to understand integrative learning as it occurs across both time and space. We want to consider 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?

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, one of the first IGR programs 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.

These kinds of interdisciplinary programs have become the norm on liberal arts campuses, and Skidmore is now in good company in offering them. Skidmore also has a strong recent history of creating innovative interdisciplinary spaces. As we have noted, learning that bridges the disciplines takes place in our remarkable new Zankel Music Center, and in the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. Since our last Self-Study, we have launched a major initiative to build a Center for Integrated Sciences, a space that will encourage collaborations across the physical and life sciences—and among the sciences and other disciplines—in its very architecture. We also continue to offer strong support for study abroad, so that approximately 60% of our students study off campus for part of their time here; the Self-Study will give some attention to how we are bridging their on-campus learning with their learning and development off campus. Altogether, we will inquire into our use of our students’ educational spaces and whether they might contribute more to their integrative learning.

Among our primary concerns will be 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 eventually proposing a new model to the faculty. Among the topics under discussion is the place of interdisciplinary, integrative learning throughout students’ academic careers, including, potentially, a more intentionally-shaped culmination of their studies and transition into their lives after college. We are also considering a wealth of assessment data relating to campus climate, our existing Cultural Diversity requirement, and our students’ scientific literacy--all information that will bear on the ways we reframe our general education requirements, curriculum and pedagogies.

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, 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 plan in our Self-Study to examine 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. We have a number of initiatives under way—to better support students’ transitions to the workplace, to cultivate a greater sense of civic engagement, to develop students’ ability to

communicate and function across different social identities—that we could investigate and further by building them into this study.

In a much more capacious, conceptual framework, we would like also to consider 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. 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, will be 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?

Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

Part of the thrust of our proposed Self-Study will be to analyze how well we are fulfilling our mission for our students today. More than that, we would like to consider whether we might be more ambitious in realizing this mission, particularly in the ways our students integrate their learning across traditional boundaries over the arc of their undergraduate years. Our hope is that among the outcomes of the Self-Study—in addition to meeting the standards for re-accreditation—will be a deeper understanding of our institutional identity and distinctiveness and our shared goals for improvement. We expect that the process will help us to build consensus within the college community about current and future changes. To achieve all of this, we hope to demonstrate not only to Middle States but to ourselves how well we are meeting our goals, and to make recommendations in tandem with the strategic planning process so that we can put what we learn to good use.

In writing this Self-Study, we anticipate that we will address all fourteen Standards of Excellence in an Early Document Review in the fall of 2015. At the same time, we will ask the Working Groups to bear the standards in mind and illustrate in their reports some of the ways that we are meeting the fundamental elements for re-accreditation, particularly for Standards 7, 9, 12, and 14. The formal charges to the Working Groups will include copies of the standards and their fundamental and optional elements, and the Steering Committee will include as well a virtual file of assessments whose results will be of use to each group, so that the work of the group can both make use of and exemplify ways that we meet the relevant standards. The Working Group chairs will be asked to address explicitly, whenever possible, the connections between the standards and the matter under discussion.

Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and the Working Groups

The Self-Study process is led by a Steering Committee comprising administrators, faculty, staff, students, and a member of the Board of Trustees:

- Beau Breslin, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Cochair)
- W. Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs
- Miles Calzini, Skidmore Class of 2016
- Lisa Christenson, Assessment Facilitator
- Sarah Goodwin, Professor English and Faculty Assessment Coordinator (Cochair)
- Mark Huibregtse, Professor of Mathematics
- Linda Jackson-Chalmers, Trustee
- Madeleine Kanazawa, Skidmore Class of 2015
- Kelley Patton-Ostrander, Director of Financial Planning and Budgeting
- Javier Perez-Moreno, Assistant Professor of Physics
- Beth Post-Lundquist, Director of Financial Aid
- Michael Sposili, Executive Director of Alumni Affairs and College Events
- Joseph Stankovich, Director of Institutional Research
- Auden Thomas, Director of Summer Academic Programs and Residencies
- Joshua Woodfork, Executive Director of the Office of the President and Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives
- One additional member from among the support staff

Working Groups have been organized around each of the subtopics within the time-and-space structure of the Self-Study. All Working Groups include faculty, administrators/staff, and students. Most members of the Steering Committee are working with one of the Working Groups (see Charges to the Working Groups for assignments of responsibility).

Charges to the Working Groups

The Working Groups will each research and report on one of the five sub-topic areas listed below. We anticipate that their reports will be revised, enfolded into the Self-Study as a whole, and further revised in the context of public discussions of the Self-Study. Each report should aim to be approximately 15 pages long, in Times New Roman 12-point font. Working Groups will take as a starting point the definition of integrative learning that appears on pages 4-5 of this Design. They should aim for both breadth and depth, offering an overview of integrative learning related to their topic as well as a

closer look at selected initiatives about which the Self-Study process could help us to cultivate greater knowledge and consensus.

We are in the process of finalizing the membership of the Working Groups and will complete that process by late September, 2014, when we complete appointments of students to each of the groups. We also anticipate that we may add some support staff members this summer. In three of the five cases, the membership of the Working Group originates with a standing committee that is close to the subject under discussion, with the expectation that the committees will be involved in the groups' inquiry and reports. The groups' work is beginning this summer with preliminary research and readings.

In each case, Working Groups will address the questions below, and will design additional research questions as they see fit:

- Most importantly: In what ways does this initiative, or what we're doing in this area, 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 this topic? What evidence do we have?
- Where does creative thought emerge within this area or topic, and how could we cultivate it further? What further evidence do we have of what is effective and ineffective?
- What high-priority, broad changes does the group recommend for the community to consider, changes that we would plan to review in five years for the Periodic Review Report?
- How does our work on these issues dovetail with strategic planning?
- How does our work in this area exemplify our compliance with the standards for accreditation?

Working Groups as of 6/24/14

1. General Education Review and Reform. Committee on Educational Policies and Planning.

WG Members:

April Bernard, Professor of English

Beau Breslin, Cochair, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ruth Copans, College/Special Collections Librarian

Bill Duffy, Chief Technology Officer

Mike Eckmann, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science
Corey Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Policy and Advising
Eliza Kent, Professor of Religion
Viviana Rangil, Associate Professor of Spanish
Rachel Roe-Dale, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science;
Peter von Allmen, Cochair, Professor and Chair - Economics

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

WG Members:

Michael Arnush, Associate Professor and Chair— Classics
Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs
Miles Calzini, Class of 2016
Janet Casey, Cochair, Director, First-Year Experience
Kim Crabbe, Director, Career Development Center
Beth DuPont, Director of Academic Technologies
Ben Harwood, Lead Instructional Technologist
Madeleine Kanazawa, Class of 2015
Kim Marsella, Director of Academic Advising
Marla Melito, Student Academic Development Coordinator, First-Year Experience
Barbara Norelli, Social Sciences & Instructional Services Associate Librarian

3. Physical and Digital Spaces for Integrative Learning.

WG Members:

Erica Bastress-Dukehart, Cochair, Associate Professor of History, and Director of Faculty Development and Faculty Network Facilitator
Kelly Dempsey, Instructional Technologist and Training Coordinator
Jordana Dym, Professor of History
Cindy Evans, Director of the Foreign Language Resource Center
Kathryn Frederick, Systems Librarian
Kim Frederick, Professor and Chair— Chemistry
Mark Huibregtse, The Class of 1964 Term Professorship, Mathematics and Computer Science
Kathy Kinnin, Director of IT User Services
Jennifer Napierski, Assistant Director for Finance and Administration, Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery
Kelley Patton-Ostrander, Director, Financial Planning & Budgeting
Auden Thomas, Cochair, Director of Summer Academic Programs and Residencies

4. Diversity, Inclusion, and Integrative Learning. Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding.

WG Members:

Cori Filson, Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges

Maria Lander, Associate Professor of Spanish and Director of Latin American Studies

Sue Layden, Research Analyst—Enrollment, Retention, Student Achievement

Javier Perez-Moreno, Assistant Professor of Physics

Pushi Prasad, Cochair, The Zankel Chair in Management for Liberal Arts Students

Paty Rubio, Cochair, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel and Diversity

Rachel Seligman, Assistant Director for Curatorial Affairs/Associate Curator, Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery

Jamin Totino, Director of Student Academic Services

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

Committee: IPPC Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship, and others.

WG Members:

Alex Chaucer, GIS Instructional Technologist

Charlene Grant, Lecturer, Foreign Languages & Literatures

Michael Janairo, Assistant Director for Engagement, Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery

David Karp, Cochair [to be confirmed], Associate Dean of Student Affairs/Director of Campus Life

Karen Kellogg, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Infrastructure, Sustainability & Civic Engagement

Crystal Moore, Cochair, Professor and Chair— Social Work

Beth Post-Lundquist, Director of Financial Aid

The Steering Committee will ask the Working Groups to gather and analyze existing evidence, to propose new studies only if necessary, and to produce an outline, a preliminary draft, and a final draft of their report. Working Groups will report their findings to the Steering Committee according to the following timetable:

Summer/Fall 2014 Working Groups gather data, confer widely, begin drafts

December 15, 2014 Outline for draft report due

February 17, 2015 Preliminary draft due

May 30, 2015 Final Working Group reports due

Each Working Group will be provided with the following template for their final report:

Working Group Report:

- A. Overview of the Working Group’s charge and of the questions the group has chosen to address
- B. Analytical, evidence-based discussion of the inquiry undertaken, the nature of the evidence, and the outcomes of that inquiry; the inquiry should both provide an overview and narrow its focus to selected initiatives. It should provide evidence of both strengths of existing programs and areas where we are challenged to do better.
- C. Some explanation of how the Working Group’s findings and conclusions relate to the standards, particularly Standards 7, 9, 12, and/or 14
- D. Discussion of the connection between the Working Group’s topic and those of the other groups, including any collaboration among Working Groups
- E. Broad, high-priority recommendations for improvement that we can aim to implement and will report back on in the Periodic Review Report

Organization of the Self-Study Report

The final Self-Study report will be organized according to the outline below. The body of the report will take its shape primarily from the Working Groups and their recommendations. It will most likely contain five chapters, one for each Working Group topic. However, there are many overlapping areas of concern and we hope to work together closely; we also aim to dovetail with our strategic planning efforts. It may also be possible to organize at least part of the report around key new initiatives related to the Self-Study process.

Skidmore College Self-Study Final Report Outline:

- A. Executive Summary and Certification Statement
- B. Introduction (overview of Skidmore and description of the Self-Study process)
- C. Integrative Learning at Skidmore
 - 1. The five topics: general education review; the FYE, the Sophomore Experience, and beyond college; physical and digital spaces; diversity and inclusion; and responsible communities

- 2. Findings, new initiatives, and strategic planning
- D. Conclusion

Editorial Style and Format

Our editor has been on board from the beginning. Kathryn Gallien, former publications manager at Skidmore, has edited our Middle States reports for the last several cycles. Guidelines include: MS Word, Times New Roman 12 point type, 1 1/4” margins, use of the serial comma, a single set of page numbers and footnotes throughout, and placement of urls in appropriate footnotes rather than in running text. Acronyms will be spelled out on first reference in each section and elsewhere as needed for clarity. Authorities are the Chicago Manual of Style (16th edition) and Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (10th edition). The style sheet specifies rules to insure consistency in capitalization of committees, fields, departments, programs, documents, reports, and titles; in use of italics and quotation marks; in the treatment of dates and numbers; and specific treatment of numerous words and phrases.

Timetable for the Self-Study and Evaluation

Fall 2013	Steering Committee established Document collection begins Self-Study model chosen
Spring 2014	Working Groups established Self-Study Design completed and submitted MSCHE liaison Christy Faison visits Design approved by fall
Summer/Fall 2014	Working Groups gather data, confer widely, begin drafts
Winter 2014–2015	MSCHE chooses Evaluation Team chair Dates for the campus visit are set Design sent to Evaluation Team chair
Spring 2015	Working Groups submit reports Steering Committee begins Self-Study draft
Summer 2015	Draft is completed

Fall 2015 Community vets draft; revisions made
Self-Study draft sent to Evaluation Team chair
Revisions completed 12 weeks before team visit
Early Document Review

Winter–Spring 2016 Final, edited Self-Study sent to team
Team visit
Commission action Spring/Fall 2016

Profile of the Visiting Evaluation Team

For our team chair, we ask to have someone who is a leader—preferably a president—at an excellent, high-profile liberal arts college that is achieving many of the goals that for us are still aspirational, particularly with regard to the physical and life sciences and/or diversity and inclusion. Ideally this would be a college with whom we don't compete directly for students except in rare cases.

For the rest of the team, our preferences are less pronounced, but again we would prefer team members from excellent liberal arts colleges. Given our topic of integrative learning and our aspirations for the sciences, for diversity and inclusion, and for our students' civic engagement, it would be especially helpful if the team that comes for the Self-Study-related visit has experience with and values those aspirations.