

Alumni Learning Census: Summary of data from classes of 2001 – 2010, five years after graduation

The ALC asked alumni five years after graduation to rate on a 5-point scale how well each of 34 skills was enhanced by Skidmore and how important those skills were to them (Table 1). Skidmore alumni rated their development of several skills highly, including written and oral communication, independent learning, and analytical thinking, and they also found those skills to be useful in their personal or professional lives.

Looking at the data presented in a scatter plot (Figure 1), where the X-axis shows to what extent alumni felt that each skill was enhanced at Skidmore and the Y-axis shows how important that skill has been, it is clear that four skills fall at the low end of “enhanced”. The two skills pertaining to scientific literacy and quantitative reasoning were rated by alumni as not particularly important. The two other skills that appeared low on the enhancement rating were rated fairly high on importance: maintaining healthy living habits and working with people of different cultures, both of which relate directly to the GSLD.

Summary

Areas of strength:

- Write effectively
- Communicate well orally
- Present ideas with self-confidence
- Think analytically

Areas of concern:

- Use quantitative tools
- Apply scientific principles and methods
- Work with people of different cultures
- Maintain healthy living habits

The ALC also asked Skidmore alumni to respond to two open-ended questions:

1) What was the most valuable part of your educational experience at Skidmore? By far the most common response to this question was students’ relationships with faculty and the quality of the faculty. Students also valued the tight-knit community. Among the GSLD-related responses, alumni valued the opportunity to study a variety of subjects and the integration of their studies; they felt that their ability to write and their critical thinking and analytical skills were greatly enhanced; and they appreciated their study-abroad and research experiences.

2) In what ways could Skidmore have improved your overall experience? The most common response pertained to preparation for life after college, both in the academic departments and in the Career Development office, including more access to internships, more guidance in applying for jobs, and better preparation for the real world (practical and financial). The second most common response pertained to diversity on campus: racial and economic, the lack of diversity and intolerance for others. These responses relate directly to the GSLD and Goal II of Skidmore’s Strategic Plan. The third most common response was that alumni felt they needed a stronger background in science and/or math and more challenging courses in general.

Summary

Areas of strength:

- Relationships with faculty
- Quality of faculty
- Interdisciplinary, integrative curriculum
- Written and oral communication

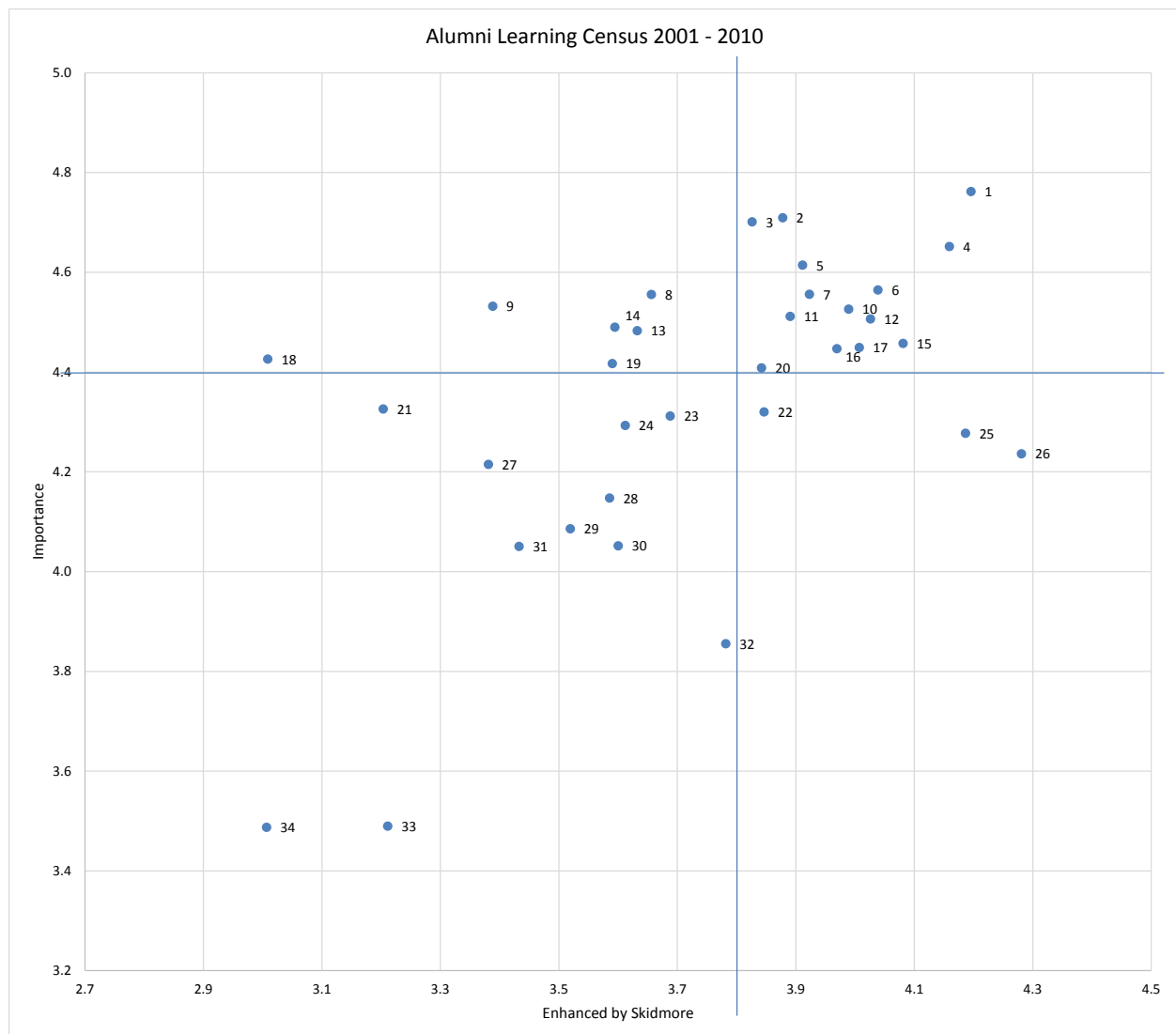
Areas of concern:

- Preparation for life after college
- Diversity on campus
- Need more science and math
- Need more challenging courses

Alumni Learning Census: Summary of data from classes of 2001 – 2010, five years after graduation

	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

Alumni Learning Census: Summary of data from classes of 2001 – 2010, five years after graduation



The two items with the lowest “importance” and “enhanced by Skidmore” scores are:

18: Maintain healthy living habits

21: Get along with people of different cultures

Two items that were also low on “enhanced by Skidmore” but relatively high on “importance”:

33: Apply scientific principles and methods

34: Use quantitative tools to solve problems

Alumni Learning Census: Summary of data from classes of 2001 – 2010, five years after graduation

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

Alumni Learning Census: Summary of data from classes of 2001 – 2010, five years after graduation

Year	(N)
2001	57
2002	82
2003	80
2004	75
2005	70
2006	91
2007	108
2008	91
2009	111
2010	106