

Charge to Transition and Transformation Subcommittee

INTRODUCTION

The Skidmore Faculty has asserted that "we want our students to acquire both knowledge and capacities that enable them to initiate and embrace change and apply their lifelong learning in new contexts. We believe this learning takes place throughout our students' experience—both inside the classroom and out, on campus and off."¹ Further, the President has drawn attention to a future wherein "we send students out into the world to access resources and explore opportunities that Skidmore cannot provide on its own."² Both are visions of an education where the boundaries between Skidmore and "the rest of a student's life" are increasingly porous. The value, influence, and provision of our undergraduate education are not confined to one place or one time. Rather, a Skidmore education informs, frames and enriches other experiences in the lives of our students and alumni. To better support this aspiration, CEPP will form a subcommittee to advance conversation across the College, and especially within the faculty, about the ways in which college teaching and learning may prepare students for the transition to post-baccalaureate life.

This work has already begun. Beginning in 2010, an informal group explored the theme of Transition and Transformation within the context of the College as a whole. An institutional committee, the Transition and Transformation Working Group, was created in the spring of 2010 and charged to develop an initiative. In October of 2010, a Transition and Transformation Faculty Working Group was added to consider relevant curricular issues. While neither of these groups was a formal CEPP subcommittee, CEPP received regular progress reports. Ultimately, a draft document, *Transition and Transformation: Using a Liberal Arts Education to Shape a Life*, was presented to and discussed with various campus groups (Chairs and Directors, Divisional Roundtables, IPPC, SGA Senate and Academic Council, Board of Trustees, CEPP-FEC Faculty Forum). Consultation was broad because some aspects of the initiative are not strictly within the purview of CEPP or the faculty.

CEPP recognizes that a growing body of evidence demonstrates how elements included in the broad concept of "transition and transformation" have meaningful, positive influences within other educational institutions, and that many of these elements are highly valued by our students. Further, we recognize that the proposals of the *Transition and Transformation* document prompt concerns regarding resource allocation, the nature of faculty work, and the nature of a Skidmore education. Thus, the subcommittee is charged to examine benefits and challenges of linking college learning with post-baccalaureate experience; to investigate how elements often associated with "transition and transformation" may enhance student learning during the undergraduate years and prepare them for post-graduate work and study; and to identify the kinds of support faculty may require in order to better support students' academic progress and enhance their preparedness for post-baccalaureate opportunities.

In creating this subcommittee, we seek to inform the faculty on matters that may affect it; to facilitate robust, inclusive discussion; and to clarify the faculty's role in the academic components of the *Transition and Transformation* initiative. Our intent is to affirm the centrality of the faculty-student relationship in our academic life, even as we recognize that the nature of this relationship is neither static over time nor consistent among faculty.

¹ "Skidmore College Goals for Student Learning and Development", unanimously approved by the faculty on November 6, 2009.

² *Strategic Renewal: Reframing our Priorities at the Midpoint of the Strategic Plan*", May 2010.

CEPP charges the subcommittee as follows :

1. Review current understandings, both within and beyond the Skidmore community, of the relationship between college learning and post-baccalaureate experience, and how elements often associated with “transition and transformation” may enhance student learning during the undergraduate years and prepare them for post-graduate work and study.

2. Determine the extent to which the College already offers learning experiences that may contribute to students’ post-baccalaureate transitions. Review delivery of and participation in these experiences to determine if it is equally distributed among academic units, and if awareness of opportunities and participation in them is well distributed throughout the student body.

3. Determine what types of institutional support and resources the faculty may require in order to strengthen delivery of and participation in learning experiences that may enhance students’ undergraduate experiences and post-baccalaureate transitions.

CEPP recommends that the subcommittee consult: current scholarship; existing data and institutional research; documents produced by the various working groups as well as the materials they relied upon; models used by other institutions, including peer and aspirant schools; the student body; colleagues with a wide range of perspectives and expertise; and any appropriate committees, offices, and personnel.

The subcommittee will consist of the faculty members of CEPP and one CEPP student representative. It will convene in October 2011, report on its work at CEPP’s January 2012 retreat and spring 2012 retreat, and submit a final report at the end of the spring 2012 semester.