

PERIODIC REVIEW REPORT

Presented by:

**Skidmore College
Philip A. Glotzbach, President**

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of 2010, the College held education workshops for faculty on sexual harassment, conducted by John Bagyi from the law firm of Bond, Schoeneck & King. Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity, and Anti-Harassment Policies and Procedures (Part Six) of the Faculty Handbook was revised in 2007 to include language addressing our sexual harassment policy and the College's procedure for resolving complaints of harassment or discrimination. Additional training workshops will recur for all new employees, which will be followed by refresher online training every two years.

Concurrently, in spring 2010 students voiced concerns, and the result was a new Sexual Misconduct Policy. The new policy, implemented in October 2010, emphasizes the importance of "effective consent," the act of giving consent for sexual activity in a manner free of any pressure. The Sexual Assault Task Force, comprising a number of administrators, faculty members, and students, created this new draft after hearing students' opinions concerning the need for a new policy. The revisions of this policy were student-driven. Students reported that they felt their voices were heard, and the administrators were proud that the student body was so involved in the revision process. The meetings and rallies that occurred fostered an open discussion and made students more responsible, informed citizens (pursuant to Goal III of the President's *Strategic Plan*).

Further Assessment Results: Student Learning about and Perceptions of Intercultural Understanding

Our assessments have given us a large amount of data on students' learning about and perceptions of intercultural understanding, as well as a good sense of the campus climate for students of color and other underrepresented groups. The data provide us a picture, not surprisingly, of some accomplishments in recent years as well as many challenges still facing us.

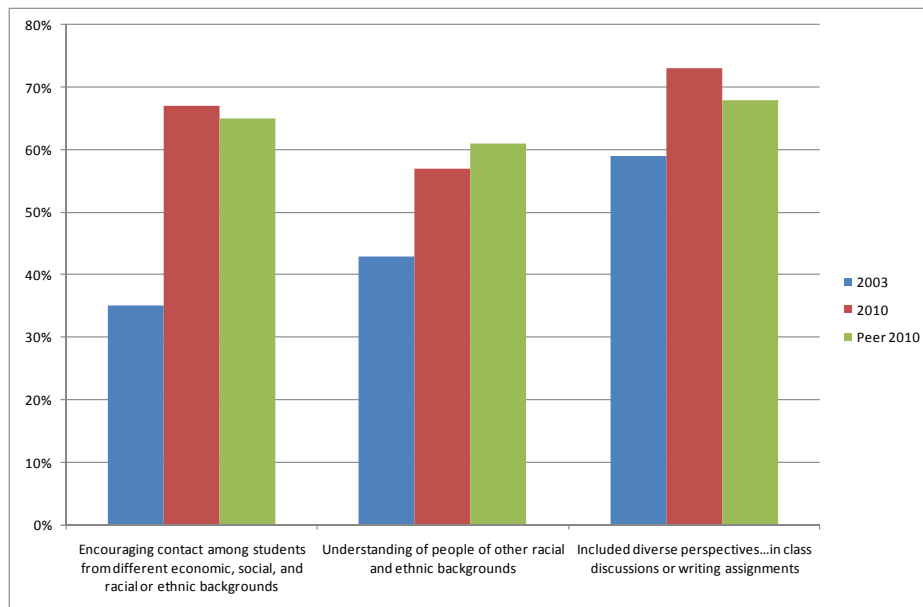
Two important sources of information regarding our students' learning about intercultural understanding are the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data and the Consortium on High Achievement and Success (CHAS) data, both surveys administered in spring 2010. NSSE has several questions that are designed to provide a measure of students' global and intercultural understanding and how well the College supports or encourages this understanding. A third assessment is the report "Exit Interviews with Graduating Students of Color," from interviews conducted in May 2010, cited at the end of this section below.

In addition, the most recent Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, administered to incoming students, gives us a snapshot of our students as they arrive on campus. The results suggest that Skidmore first-years have high expectations for social interactions across differences, but they are more mixed on learning about race and cultural differences. Our students are already used to socializing in racially mixed groups (78% responded positively when asked if they had socialized with someone of a different race/ethnicity in the past year) and plan to continue to socialize with students of other races/ethnicities (89% said that chances are "very good"). In contrast, just 48% of students said that they think it is "essential" or "very important" that they help to promote racial understanding, although 75% felt it is important that they improve their

understanding of other countries and cultures. In other words, it seems that our incoming students consider themselves somewhat cosmopolitan and do not necessarily think that they need to promote racial understanding in an active way, though they are open to learning more. Results from the other three assessments suggest that the students do change their positions and their awareness over their time at Skidmore, and that the College could be doing more to encourage greater understanding.

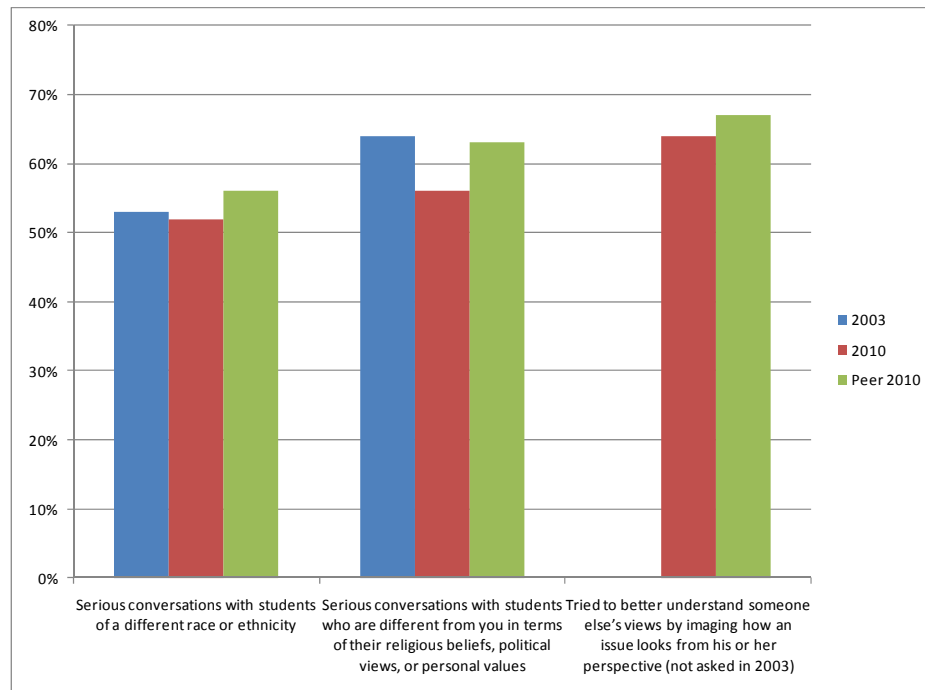
There are noteworthy patterns in the NSSE data from 2003 and 2010 that suggest we are making good progress towards our goals in some areas and are stagnant in others. As the data outlined below show, we have made significant leaps in most categories of response since 2003, and in most cases are now within a few percentage points of our peer institutions as well.

Figure 4: Percent of First-Year Students Reporting “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Selected NSSE Questions



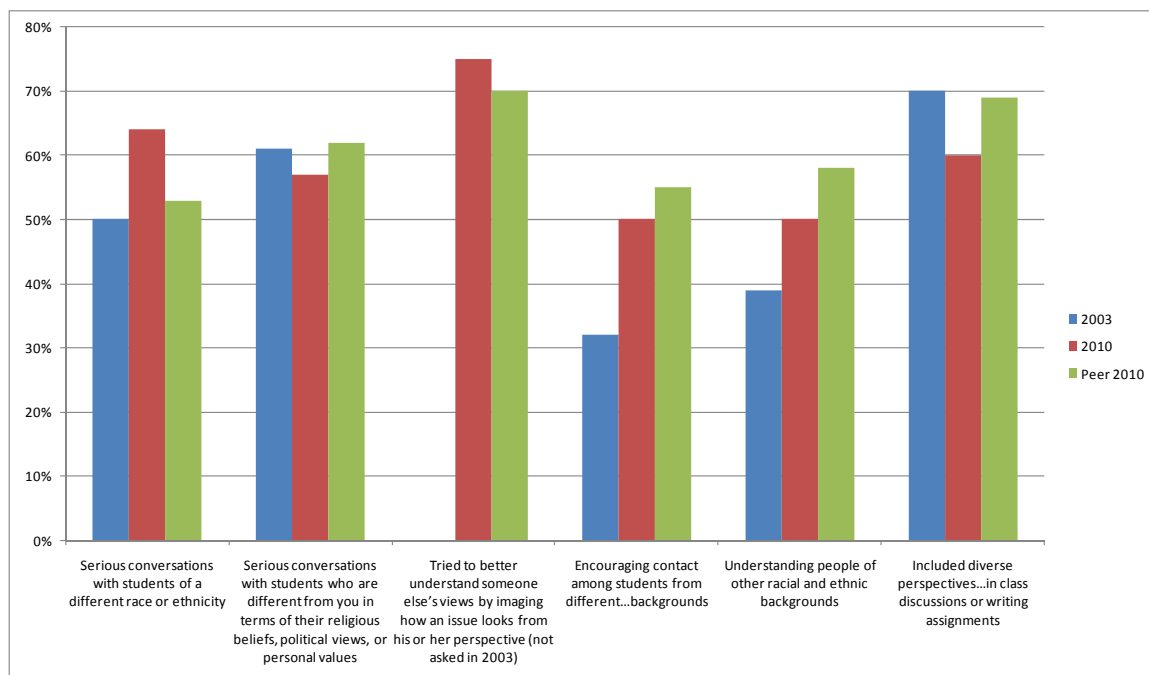
However, other questions showed modest decreases or remained flat (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Percent of First-Year Students Reporting “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Selected NSSE Questions



Seniors at Skidmore reported an increase on most NSSE questions pertaining to global and intercultural understanding in 2010 compared with 2003 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Percent of Seniors Reporting “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” to Selected NSSE Questions



One question for which Skidmore seniors notably did not report an increase relates to what happens in the classroom. On whether students “...included diverse perspectives...in class discussions or writing assignments,” there is actually a decrease (Figure 6). On this question, then, there is both a surprising decrease and a deficit relative to our peers. This outcome bears further discussion to identify possible causes and initiatives in response.

The results of the CHAS survey corroborate and expand upon the NSSE findings in some sobering ways. While both white and ALANA students reported being satisfied with their overall Skidmore experience (mean 4.2 on a 5-point satisfaction scale for both), neither group was satisfied with items associated with the amount of diversity, respect, and community found on campus (3.5/5 for white and 3.4/5 for ALANA students). In addition, both groups of students were not satisfied with the climate for minority students (3.2/5 for white and 3.1/5 for ALANA students) or the ethnic/racial diversity on campus (3.1/5 for white and 2.9/5 for ALANA students). For specific items on the survey relating to diversity, respect, and community, 30% of ALANA students reported *experiencing* racial/ethnic insensitivity, and 38% of white students and 51% of ALANA students reported *witnessing* racial/ethnic insensitivity. For a college that aims for all students to learn to communicate effectively across cultural differences, these numbers clearly represent a problem.

Furthermore, the CHAS data suggest that interactions among Skidmore students of different races/ethnicities decreased across class years. For example, 49% of seniors reported that they *never or only occasionally* interacted with someone of a different race—in contrast to only 28.5% of the first-years. And 60% of seniors reported never or only occasionally interacting with international students.

In addition, ALANA students reported much lower rates of participation in high-impact practices—particularly performing arts/music, intercollegiate sports, research with a faculty member, study abroad, and independent study for credit—than did white students. Considerably higher percentages of ALANA students also reported fairly high levels of stress with concerns over future plans than did white students: 55% of white and 73.1% of ALANA students reported moderately to very stressful concerns about the future.

In sum, although the NSSE and the CHAS data give us some basis for believing we have made some real progress against our benchmarks five years ago, we are also learning about some more complex and disturbing matters related in particular to our ALANA students’ lives on campus, and to campus climate more generally, that are more challenging to address.

While members of the Committee for Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) support quantitative assessment such as NSSE and CHAS, several members have suggested the importance of gathering qualitative information as well. The increase in student diversity has been accompanied by a growing effort to gauge the experiences of students of color, both domestic and international, through qualitative assessments. In the spring of 2010, CIGU conducted two group exit interviews with students of color to provide qualitative assessments that complement our quantitative assessments with greater depth. Such interviews had previously been conducted, but without a clear

protocol that would enable CIGU to disseminate the findings; so the spring 2010 interviews are the first for which we have a public report. The report does not lend itself to easy summary, because it presents a range of students' views in response to questions, but there are some common threads. The students reported a number of experiences of racial insensitivity on campus (and also off campus). They also expressed a strong desire to see more faculty and staff of color and more LGBTQ faculty and staff, as well as the sense that current faculty and staff of underrepresented identities are not as well supported as they could be. Finally, they voiced support for the IGR program, and most of them had participated in it.

Interestingly, the responses to the Alumni Learning Census confirm the general picture of Skidmore as a college that does not yet teach our students very well how to communicate across social and cultural differences. Alumni in this year's cohort, asked to rank intellectual skills according to how well they had been enhanced by Skidmore, ranked "Work with People of Different Cultures" fifth from the bottom. They also ranked this as a relatively *important* skill, so that the disparity is significant. The skill may be important in part because 96% of them report that they interact at times with people of different races or ethnicities, with almost two-thirds responding that it happens very often.

These data call for a multifaceted response and sustained efforts. In a related development, in 2010 the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs launched focus group discussions with international students in response to their concerns regarding the classroom climate, particularly assumptions made by U.S. students about their experiences, as well as the institution's response to their specific needs. We anticipate following up on these efforts as well.

Opportunities and Challenges

On the whole, then, our data seem to suggest that we have made some progress in encouraging learning about intercultural understanding over the past seven years and are becoming a more inclusive community; nevertheless, it is clear that much more progress remains to be made. During these years, as we have noted, the most significant structural changes that parallel these results are the strengthening of the administrative core overseeing diversity at the College; the significant increase in the diversity of the student body; the launching of InterGroup Relations (IGR) as a pilot program; and a significant increase in the numbers of students studying abroad. Additionally, as we note below, we observe a plateau in the racial and ethnic diversity of the College's faculty and staff. It seems that IGR and our cocurricular programming are having a positive impact on the students, but that we need to continue expanding that impact and look for ways to reinforce it. Further, we need to recruit and retain more faculty of color and international faculty; to cultivate existing faculty's awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of an increasingly diverse student body, faculty, and staff; and to be more intentional in our curriculum. We note that even at their most positive, the NSSE data show that we have barely managed to catch up with our peers. It is likely to require a significantly greater effort and commitment of resources to sustain this momentum and make further changes.

The IGR program is a quintessential example of how specific *Strategic Plan* Goal II initiatives present both opportunities and challenges. Students, faculty, and staff who have participated in IGR classes and workshops have praised the program's effort to connect theoretical work and lived experience inextricably in ways that ultimately serve to complicate and deepen our understanding of particular social constructions. Responses from the 2010 exit interviews with graduating students of color speak to the transformative nature of the program for many of these students, with some suggesting that the sequence should be mandatory for all students.⁵⁶ As one white male student in the IGR sequence noted: "Now my race means I have two choices. I can decide to continue ignoring my race, which is unlikely and almost impossible due to my experiences in the racial dialogues, or to confront my white racial identity and fulfill my obligation to reconcile my privilege and become a white ally."⁵⁷

Recognizing the assessment results showing the impact that the IGR sequence has had on individual students, the College administration has been supportive of the program financially. Nevertheless, two challenges remain: developing the budget for a sustainable program, and growing faculty support and participation. Some faculty members have expressed a reluctance to participate in an academic program that stresses the importance of lived experience, while others have suggested that the program is "too activist" in nature. A core group of faculty members have committed themselves to the program and the number has grown slowly but steadily; however, for IGR to be fully institutionalized, more individual members of the faculty, particularly tenure-line faculty, need to become involved. As noted above, Professor Ford's detailed assessment of the program provides substantive, compelling evidence of the need for IGR and for its success in meeting our Goals for Student Learning among those who take the dialogue courses.

Another area with ongoing challenges is off-campus study. Despite Skidmore's achievements in study away, the College continues to face important challenges in terms of Goal II, Intercultural and Global Understanding. Of significant importance is the need to link students' study-away experiences to their academic and cocurricular work on campus—both before they study away and upon their return. In an attempt to go beyond the data point of how many students study away and to truly achieve internationalization on campus, Skidmore must carefully evaluate how on-campus curricula and cocurricular activities support students' efforts to prepare for their off-campus experiences and to allow them to engage in ongoing exploration of intercultural issues when they return from study away. This is a serious challenge, given the competing demands on our limited resources within the College departments and offices; however, if Skidmore is serious about internationalizing the College, we must determine to what degree we are willing to support our efforts through gathering evidence and making true curricular and cocurricular change. In the coming years, we plan to work with departments and programs that are actively engaged with returned study-away students to develop best practices to be shared across the College in the hope that all disciplines and offices will find significant and effective ways to engage these students in and out of the classroom. We also hope to inventory (and perhaps expand) the courses offered on campus that help

⁵⁶ "Exit Interviews with Graduating Students of Color" (May 14, 2010), on the compact disc.

⁵⁷ Ford (2009), p.1.

to prepare students for study away and to engage students more substantially upon return. We will share this inventory with students and faculty in the hope that students will take advantage of the resources available to allow them to maximize their study-away experience.

The curriculum provides other sites for both opportunities and challenges. An extensive audit of cultural diversity (CD) and non-Western (NW) course syllabi by the Assessment Facilitator has demonstrated that while some courses do provide explicit learning outcomes that dovetail with the College's Goals for Student Learning and Development endorsed by the faculty in December 2009, there is much work to be done to ensure that the courses fulfilling this requirement are addressing these goals—and that students are actually meeting the goals in their learning.

An analysis of CD courses by the Director of Intercultural Studies suggests that the guidelines for defining such courses need to be revised.⁵⁸ For instance, although the terms *race* and *ethnicity* are not explicitly mentioned in the guidelines, the survey of CD courses suggests that they are implied. Terms such as *sex*, *gender*, and *patriarchy* are also not explicitly mentioned in the guidelines, and it is apparent that they are not implied either. Issues of cultural difference can certainly be analyzed in gendered terms, as the Gender Studies curriculum indicates. The faculty should consider whether CD guidelines should reflect this fact, particularly in the growing number of courses that apply an intersectional analytical frame that explicitly interrogates relationships among gender, race, class, sexuality, and other variables. There are several CD courses that embrace an intersectional analysis, such as “Black Feminist Thoughts (AM 342), “Critical Whiteness in the U.S.” (AM 331), and “Race and Power” (SO 219 C), but each is clearly identified in some way by an explicit connection to race and ethnicity. Other courses, such as “Language and Gender” (EN 208 01) and “Queer Fiction” (EN 338 01), should also be up for serious discussion as potential CD courses, as we consider more fully how the CD requirement aligns with the Goals for Student Learning and Development.

The discussion of these guidelines is related to another issue, namely, the nature of the College's culture-centered inquiry requirement, which includes the CD course as one option. One analysis of such courses would urge CEPP to consider a proposal that would mandate that the NW/CD component of the requirement be increased from one to two courses. That a student can complete this requirement by enrolling in only one such course—perhaps in her or his final semester at Skidmore—raises legitimate concerns about the seriousness with which we view our commitment to intercultural literacy, as well as intercultural and global understanding. These tasks can hardly be accomplished with integrity if students are expected to confront these issues explicitly in only one course during their intellectual journey at Skidmore. However, another analysis of curricular offerings suggests that it is not the number of said courses, but rather, the substantive content of them—and their pedagogy, as the assessment of student learning in the IGR courses demonstrates—that is of far more consequence.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Winston Grady-Willis, “Survey and Analysis of Cultural Diversity Courses at Skidmore College,” on the compact disc

⁵⁹ Ford (2009).

As we consider whether we are generally using a capacious enough definition of “diversity” in our conceptions of intercultural understanding, it makes sense to note that gender remains an important category of difference on this campus that was once a women’s college. Recent developments include changing the name of our Women’s Studies program to Gender Studies, and we are in the process of making the conceptual changes that entails. Increased numbers of events exploring the campus climate for our GLBTQ students and faculty reflect a growing community awareness that “diversity” includes members of sexual minorities, who often remain invisible and marginal. Much more remains to be done in this regard.

Another area for curricular development that we targeted in our Self-Study was the need to develop courses and programming in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and other areas of global studies that historically have not been well represented at Skidmore. Meeting this goal on campus continues to be a challenge. It will require a renewed commitment not only to course development, but also to hiring and retaining appropriate faculty and staff.

As we have noted, faculty and staff diversity has not kept pace with increases in student diversity. Recruiting and retaining faculty and staff of color remains a priority. This is a long-standing effort—going back at least to the early 1990s and reinvigorated under the new *Strategic Plan*—that has yielded mixed results. We have had some successes. In the spring of 2007, as part of a major Mellon consortial grant for faculty development, Skidmore cosponsored a symposium on faculty diversity along with Union College and Colgate and Hamilton Universities. The symposium focused on understanding and developing strategies for cultivating a more diverse faculty through hiring and retention.⁶⁰ A second symposium followed it a year later. The immediate results seemed positive. In 2008, Skidmore made tenure-line target-of-opportunity hires in two fields, Classics and Music. The effort to identify and utilize College resources to make such tenure-line appointments resulted in part from the Mellon symposia and is a concrete example of collaboration between individual departments and the administration to further the *Strategic Plan*. In 2008–2009 the College then launched the CASE Liberal Arts Diversity Initiative in an effort to recruit individuals from underrepresented groups to the field of Advancement.

Although the President has publicly written on the importance of faculty and staff diversity, and despite several workshops addressing the need for a diverse applicant pool in faculty searches, the relative absence of progress on this front is fairly palpable.⁶¹ The movement forward represented by the aforementioned target-of-opportunity hires is complicated by the impact that the economic crisis has had on faculty diversity. Specifically, the suspension of the NYU Minority Dissertation Fellowship and Consortium for Faculty Diversity positions—along with the decision to change a contract for one African American scholar teaching jointly in English and History, resulting in his resignation—represented a tangible blow. The most recent IPEDS data, for 2009–2010, tell us that of the 249 full-time faculty (tenure-line and non-tenure-line), 85% are white;

⁶⁰ See “Four-College M. Mellon Foundation Symposium on Faculty Diversity Issues” (March 2–3, 2007) and “Final Assessment of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Four-College Collaborative Faculty Enhancement Grant” (December 2008), pp. 9–13; both are on the compact disc.

⁶¹ “Diversity in Hiring: Strategic Considerations” (2007), on the compact disc.

2% are black; 3% are Hispanic; 5% are Asian; and 4% are nonresident alien. In sum, 10% are people of color, and 4% are international faculty. This represents a minimal change over the figures for 2005–2006, despite our initiatives: at that time, 9% of the full-time faculty were people of color. The one significant change is in an increase in international faculty: in 2005–2006, fewer than 1% were foreign nationals.

The data for staff show that the staff is even more predominately white, with, again, little change over time. In 2005–2006, 5% of staff were people of color; in 2009–2010, this had increased to 7%. This includes staff in all areas of the College.

Given the persistent low numbers of faculty and staff of color at Skidmore, can the institution stand to diminish the presence of any such teaching scholars, even those who are not permanent or tenure-line? This question takes on more significance in light of recent hiring cycles, in which so many searches have yielded so few finalists of color, let alone actual hires. Clearly, tenure-track lines are the gold standard. However, at an institution that has not had a stellar history of attracting and retaining faculty from underrepresented populations, every individual presence takes on even more meaning. With this in mind, Skidmore participated in spring 2010 in a major workshop, co-organized with Union College and funded by an NSF Advance grant, to cultivate more inclusive hiring practices. A somewhat similar workshop was launched on campus in fall 2010 for chairs and supervisors. But the single greatest challenge remains building the community's commitment to the goal of hiring more faculty and staff of color, along with faculty and staff from other underrepresented groups, along with the need to support and retain those hires.

The specific concerns of international faculty complicate the discussion further. In spring 2009 international faculty met to address: (1) the immigration/visa process, (2) specific classroom concerns, and (3) the overall culture and climate at Skidmore. International faculty have become increasingly concerned about disrespectful and condescending behavior on the part of students both in the classroom and at office hours. Some U.S. faculty have made patronizing remarks and assumptions about the socioeconomic backgrounds of international faculty and have suggested that there is little in the way of intellectual production overseas. "I thank my lucky stars that I didn't come here as a junior faculty member," one professor, a foreign national, noted, indicating that things are tougher for international faculty early in the tenure process. The attitudes of faculty affect how departments assess student evaluations of international faculty, as well as how U.S. faculty gauge participation by international faculty socially. Not enough substantive effort has been made to understand the cultural styles of societies outside the United States. The 2009 gathering of international faculty was followed up by a faculty-led Faculty Interest Group discussion, based on readings, of the challenges to international faculty in the U.S. college context; plans are under way to sustain this group or a similar one.

As daunting as the challenges in terms of hiring may be, opportunities await. With as many as 25.5 faculty positions being authorized during the next several years, the College has an opportunity to move forward in a way that underscores that diversity is inextricably bound with academic excellence. In doing so, and to meet the goals of the *Strategic Plan*, the College will need to build further support for assertive hiring of faculty of color; and it will need to sustain ongoing dialogues to build understanding

across cultural differences among the faculty and staff as well as among students. With faculty, it is clearly not enough just to hire individuals; creating an inclusive faculty community will require collaboration, effort, and strategies. Similar challenges face us in the hiring and retention of more staff from underrepresented groups.

As members of the community discuss our shared goals for our students' learning, and the ways that we gather evidence of that learning, we also find ourselves changing and learning in that process. If we are to meet the goals for our students' learning around intercultural understanding, so ambitiously laid out in the *Strategic Plan* and the Goals for Student Learning and Development, it is clear that we must be prepared as a community to learn and to change ourselves.

Section Four: Analysis of Enrollment and Finance Projections

In his May 2010 *Strategic Renewal* report, President Glotzbach described the context, challenges, and opportunities impacting Skidmore's enrollment and financial decision making:

We have just weathered the worst economic recession since the great Depression. Beginning in fall 2008, this national (and international) crisis affected the College directly through endowment losses and reductions in giving, and indirectly through economic disruptions experienced by families of current and potential students. In response, we identified our financial problems and faced them head-on. Our community demonstrated that by working together—by *combining creative thought with discipline*—we could lower expenses significantly, reducing current and future budget commitments by nearly \$12 million. None of these efforts was easy, and we are still coming to terms with the full implications of some of the changes we have made. Through this process, we also increased our community's *strategic literacy*: our shared understanding that every decision to deploy our precious resources—whether time, energy, or financial assets—represents a *strategic* investment and must be evaluated as such.

In the face of this daunting economic climate, Skidmore has had considerable success in enrolling large and strong classes, reducing expenses—notably with a strategic hiring freeze and highly successful voluntary early retirement program—and completing the Creative Thought–Bold Promise campaign in May 2010 with a total of \$216.5 million, well above the \$200 million goal.

Finance Trends

Against this backdrop of continued economic variability and uncertainty, Skidmore has experienced overall favorable financial results, although the past three years have proven to be challenging for the College, particularly on an operating basis. The College responded to constrained resources by reducing expenses, offering a one-time early retirement incentive program to certain employees, eliminating several programs, controlling growth in compensation, and delaying many new initiatives. We