

Commencement Remarks

Good morning President Glotzbach, Board of Trustees, Faculty and Staff, Parents and Families, and my fellow classmates. My name is Matthew Lueckheide, next to me is Abude Al-Asaad, and we've had the honor to be your Senior Gift Committee Co-Chairs this year. We're humbled by the opportunity to reveal to you the success of this year's campaign.

After the last four years, I think you've all seen around campus, the impact of the generosity of Skidmore's donors and alumni. For example, The Arthur Zankel Music Center, or The Tang Teaching Museum, would not have been possible without the help of Skidmore's donors, just as the fundraising for the upcoming Center for Integrated Sciences has needed those same generous contributions.

This year, you, my fellow graduates, have all impressed the college with your generosity. Whether you gave on Giving Tuesday in November, added the optional dollar when purchasing your 100 Days Dance ticket in February, or willingly gave when approached by a friend on the committee, most of you have felt that special connection to the Skidmore community to give something back before we enter the alumni community today.

Hopefully you are all aware that this year, our committee set out, back in August, to break a 11-year old Skidmore Senior Gift class participation record of 93.6%, set by the committee chaired by Jerome Mopsik and Ashley McGinnis, Class of '06, which we were told was near impossible.

Well, it gives me immense pleasure to report that this year, **Skidmore's Class of 2017 raised over \$5200 with a class participation record of 94.4%**. There is a new participation record at Skidmore College!

But there's more! Back in November, when we revealed our plan to break the participation record to the alumni community, we were offered a challenge from Ashley McGinnis' mother, Carol Strickland, also a Skidmore alumna from the Class of 1972, who said she would generously and willingly match the total amount raised by our class if we broke her daughter's record. Therefore, President Glotzbach, thanks to inspiration from Ashley and the Class of 2006, and the generosity of Carol Strickland, it is our pleasure to announce that the Class of 2017 has raised a record-breaking \$10,400 for the Skidmore Fund.

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I think this is just one more amazing feat from the Class of 2017 that has earned the college's praise, and I think that the students who helped us reach this milestone deserve recognition for their steadfast dedication this year. From the Executive Committee, Julia Elstein, Dani Ostrove, Jonathon Ogunleye, and Madison Plummer, would you four please stand and be recognized for your passionate hard work.

In addition, there are 13 other individuals who helped our class reach our goal as part of a larger committee, and are also deserving of acknowledgement from the Skidmore community. Morgan Baum, Belle Chen, Orr Genish, Ian Gregory-Davis, Hadley Haselmann, Mari Manica, Thabang Maphothoane, Felicia Mazibuko Lillian Philbrick, Yianni Stathopoulos, Keldwin Taveras, Jennifer Vise, and Kevin Wang, thank you all as well.

Before I pass the mic over to Abude, who has been a true friend and fantastic partner on this journey as well, I want to leave you all with this. Ultimately I have my mother to thank for my inspiration and drive in my life, but if my four years at Skidmore have taught me anything, it is that we should never let unexpected barriers or walls stop us from achieving what we set out to achieve. Everything is theoretically impossible until it is done, so let's go out there into the world and do the impossible. Thank you!