

## CAS Annual Report, 2007-2008

### **Members of CAS, 2007-2008:**

Tillman Nechtman, History (Chair)  
William Standish, Physics  
Rachel Roe-Dale, Mathematics and Computer Science  
Beth DeBold '09, Student Representative (appointed in the Spring)  
Alison Shultz '09, Student Representative (appointed in the Fall)  
Michael Ennis-McMillan, Dean of Studies  
Ann Henderson, Registrar & Director of Institutional Research

### **Regular visitors (non-voting):**

Laurie Baker, Academic Advisor in the Dean of Studies Office  
David DeConno, Associate Registrar  
Tina Breakell, Program Coordinator, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchange

### **Summary of Activities**

The Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) met weekly during the academic year, and held two Academic Review sessions, one on 10 January 2008 and a second on 29 May 2008. In addition the committee held a separate end-of-the-year Academic Review session for cases involving graduating seniors on 13 May 2008.

During its weekly meetings, the CAS heard petitions and requests from the offices of the Dean of Studies, the Registrar, and Off-Campus Study and Exchange. In each case, the petitions brought before the CAS involved deviations from the college's established academic standards, and it was the committee's obligation to determine whether or not the petitions could be accommodated without compromising Skidmore's commitment to academic excellence.

In addition to the above responsibilities, this year's CAS undertook to revamp its operating procedures and to review and re-codify its operating guidelines. At the outset of the academic year, these revisions seemed to be an easy task, one immediately necessitated by Tina Levith's retirement from the college. As the definition of the membership of the CAS in the Faculty Handbook included the unique job title (Associate Director of the Dean of Studies) that Tina Levith held in the Dean of Studies Office and given that the on-going restructuring of that office had re-named and re-defined the position over the Summer months of 2007, a change was required in the definition of the committee's membership.

As a result, the CAS presented a motion through the FEC to the full faculty that officially changed the definition of the CAS' membership to include the Dean of Studies and/or his/her designee. The new language allows the Dean of Studies to appoint a representative to CAS meetings (in instances when the Dean of Studies is not personally able to attend CAS meetings) in much the same manner that the Associate Director of the Dean of Studies was once the Dean of Studies' representative to the committee. The

committee elected to leave the language somewhat open, allowing the Dean of Studies to appoint an unspecified representative, to allow the Dean of Studies flexibility with regard to representation at CAS meetings and to avoid having to revise the membership language every time there is a structural or personnel change in the Dean of Studies Office.

The committee also elected to submit a subsequent change in the definition of its membership relative to the Registrar. First, the committee amended the Registrar's title from simply "Registrar" to "Registrar and Director of Institutional Research" to reflect changes to Ann Henderson's role in the administration. Moreover, the committee elected to add language that would allow the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research the same flexibility in appointing a representative to CAS as is afforded to the Dean of Studies.

The CAS operating guidelines note that the committee takes a somewhat broader view of its constituent membership than what is stated in the official definition. This broader view includes (where appropriate) non-voting representatives from the Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (formerly the Office of International Programs), as representatives from these offices often have critical information that assists the committee in its deliberations. Though the changes that were made in the definition of the committee's membership reflect this tradition of a broadly defined CAS, none of the changes altered the voting structure of the CAS.

In reviewing the CAS' operating guidelines on membership, it quickly became evident that the guidelines themselves were in need of a total and systematic review and revision. As such, the committee began to set aside time during each of its weekly meetings to study the guidelines collectively and modify them so that they were in accord with the committee's actual practices and policies. Some of these revisions were minor. The more significant revisions included:

•***Off-Campus Study and Domestic Exchange Policies:*** The CAS found it necessary to review all policies relevant to study abroad in light of the college's new programs for domestic exchange. In most instances, this shift in policy only required that the committee re-word its existing policies to reflect that policies relevant to overseas study are also relevant to domestic exchange programs.

•***Policy on internship application deadlines:*** Dean Ennis-McMillan has been reviewing this matter since the 2006-2007 Academic Year, and, during this 2007-2008 academic year, he submitted a new set of policies and deadlines to the committee that needed to be reflected in the CAS' operating guidelines. In essence, the new policy moves deadlines for internship applications forward on the calendar for each semester or summer session. This earlier deadline allows the Dean of Studies Office more time to process the internships and forward the approved paperwork on to the Registrar's office, which in turn allows students to have a better

sense of their credit load for a specific term. When students can be sure of their credit load early in the term, they tend not to find themselves short of credits after the end of the add/drop period. As a result, this shift in policy should help students who wish to register for a credit-bearing internship to stay on top of their own academic record without having to petition for exceptions to the add/drop deadline when and if their internship is not approved.

•***Academic Review Standards:*** At previous Academic Review meetings questions had been raised about the equity of the stipulations that had tended to be placed on students on waivers. The question essentially was whether or not the committee had the right to mandate higher academic standards than those minimally required by the college for continuation. The committee's standing policy was that only by setting higher-than-minimal requirements could waiver students both 1) prove that they were on track to stay at the college and 2) begin to dig themselves out of the academic hole that had placed them on waiver in the first place. These waiver stipulations also typically required that students earn no single grade below a C, take no incompletes, and take no W's from any of their courses.

However, cases in recent years had complicated these stipulations. In some of those cases, students on waiver had dramatically improved their performance, earning GPA's above the college's minimal requirements, though still below the committee's mandated stipulations. As a result, the students in question had been held over for another semester on waiver. In working through this issue, the CAS met with representatives from Student Academic Services (SAS) and the HEOP program to better understand how students who had found themselves in this particular situation had handled it. As a result of these conversations, the CAS agreed that it would continue to use waiver stipulations it set out in the 2006-2007 academic year. Those stipulations demanded that the student in question complete the waiver semester without earning another term probation. They did not prohibit a student from taking an incomplete or a W, as those are tools available to all Skidmore students. Nor did the stipulations require that the students in question earn only grades above C, only that the overall GPA be above the probationary level.

As a result, the committee felt it had achieved a balance between seeing to it that students on waiver have goals set for them that will help them overcome the academic jeopardy in which they find themselves and the concern that the committee's previous stipulations had been overly harsh and/or that they denied students on waiver access to all of the academic tools that are available to non-waiver students.

•**Academic Grievance Policy:** As the result of an academic/grade grievance complaint from a previous Skidmore student, the committee found itself charged with reflecting on how, if at all, the college might address student concerns about and grievance with what they might construe as capricious and arbitrary grading by any of their Skidmore faculty members. This issue first emerged at the Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR) but came to the CAS through the Dean of Studies Office and the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP).

In the course of its discussions of this matter, the CAS remained concerned about its place in the process, in large part because the committee's guidelines make it clear that the CAS will (and can) only change a grade at the request of a faculty member and only then in cases where a computational error has occurred with the original grade. Tillman Nechtman, Ann Henderson, and Michael Ennis-McMillan attended a CEPP meeting to discuss CAS's policies on grade changes and to begin to try to work out some policy on this matter.

After that CEPP meeting, Dean Ennis-McMillan took the lead on this issue. He studied the grievance policies of many other institutions and, over the course of several weeks, presented a draft proposal to the committee for debate and review. At its core, that proposal argued that the CAS was not the proper committee to formulate such a substantive policy for the college as a whole. Without endorsing any of the specifics outlined in the proposal, the CAS did endorse the proposal's suggestion that CEPP was the body best placed to begin a college-wide conversation on this matter.

At this time, the CEPP has accepted Dean Ennis-McMillan's proposal to look into this matter further, and the CAS has communicated to the CEPP that it is will to take part in any conversations (including participating in potential the CEPP subcommittees on this matter) that arise in the future.

•**First Year Seminar Policies on Withdrawals, Failures, and Transfers:** In 2005, the CAS was charged with drafting temporary policies to guide the college when dealing with students who opted to withdraw from their Scribner Seminar, or those who failed their seminar for some reason, or those who transferred to Skidmore after their first year of college. At that time, the committee drafted a rather loose set of guidelines that allowed the CAS and the Director of the First Year Experience (DFYE) to work together in consultation to determine appropriate answers for each student. Some rules were specified in that document. For instance, students who transferred to Skidmore with a full semester's worth of credits (12 credits) or more would be exempted from the Scribner Seminar requirement.

The 2005 guidelines were scheduled for review in two years. At the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, the CAS accordingly submitted the policies to the CEPP for review. In light of the committee's policy revisions during the 2007-2008 academic year, the CAS went to the CEPP again to assure that that committee approved of the CAS' intention to make the temporary guidelines permanent and to adopt them as part of the CAS' official operating code. Ann Henderson, Michael Ennis-McMillan, and Tillman Nechtman attended a CEPP meeting to discuss this matter, and Tillman worked with the CEPP Chair, Deb Hall, to finalize a text that both the CAS and the CEPP could agree on. The CEPP then reported on this revised set of guidelines to the full faculty. Absent any discussion or dissent on the matter, the CAS has adopted these guidelines as part of its official operating code.

•***Student Athletes on Waiver:*** The CAS heard one case during the 2007-2008 academic year that involved a student athlete on waiver. The student in question participated in a winter sport – that is a sport in which the season spanned the Fall and Spring semesters. Because the student in question was on waiver, he was denied the right to practice with his team during his waiver semester, in this case the Fall semester. The Athletics Department petitioned the committee as to whether or not an exception might be made in this case. Dean Ennis-McMillan, who also sits on the Athletic Council, suggested that new studies had indeed suggested that student-athletes perform better academically when their time is scheduled and structured around their sport and that we might do well to consider that scholarship.

The committee determined that it was not willing to make a policy decision based solely on a singular case, so it denied the petition in question but agreed to reflect on the bigger policy question at a later date. Tillman Nechtman requested that Gail Cummings-Danson, the Athletics Director, compile a file of material for the committee, and he then referred that material to the full CAS for review. After reviewing the materials in question, the full committee agreed that there was not sufficient scholarly evidence at this time to warrant a change in its policy that absolutely prohibits all students on waivers from participating in or practicing for any athletic program at the college. The committee agreed that it would continue to review new evidence on this topic as it comes to light. Dean Ennis-McMillan agreed to submit the issue to Athletic Council as well, since that may well be the best body to review this matter and to refer it back to the CAS in coming years.

•***Medical Leaves/Withdrawals:*** Since the 2006-2007 academic year, the CAS has been studying its policies regarding exceptions to the two-withdrawal limit in cases where 1) the student petitioning for additional withdrawals was forced to take one of his/her first two withdrawals for

purely medical reasons, 2) the student petitioning for additional withdrawals needs the additional W(s) for purely medical reasons, or 3) the student in question needs a full slate of Ws from most or all of his/her courses for a specified term because of medical reasons. In working through this issue during the 2006-2007 academic year, the committee met with representatives from the Counseling Center and concluded that would-be medical withdrawals ought only be allowed in cases where the student petitioning to have their withdrawal classified as “medical” in nature could demonstrate a direct correlation between their medical issue and their work in the course (ie. a broken leg and a course in dance). During the course of the 2007-2008 academic year, Dean Ennis-McMillan worked to revise the committee’s guidelines and policies on withdrawals, and the committee eventually approved his amendments.

In their new form, the committee’s policies on withdrawals makes it clear that the college still only allows students to take two Ws during the course of a Skidmore career. The new policy also makes it clear that Skidmore does not have a category for “medical withdrawals.” All requests for a W from a course after the two approved Ws must be made as a petition to the CAS. However, the CAS, with the help of the Registrar’s Office, will, from this point forward, accept medical documentation from all students who are asking for a W from a course. Indeed, in conjunction with the committee’s policy clarification on this matter, the Registrar’s Office re-drafted its Withdrawal Forms so that they now specifically ask students if there is a medical condition that directly necessitates the withdrawal. In such cases, the student is also now asked to supply medical documentation with the withdrawal form.

This information will be filed with the student’s paperwork and will be reviewed in all cases where a student is requesting a W beyond the two allowed. In cases where one of the first two Ws was the result of a medical condition that directly prohibited the student from participating in the class and/or in cases where the additional W being sought is directly linked to a medical condition that prohibits participation in the class, the CAS will use this information to help it deliberate on the petition.

Furthermore, the CAS’ new policies have clarified the committee’s policies in instances where a student needs more than two Ws in a single semester for medical reasons. In such cases, the Dean of Studies, acting as the committee’s representative, will guide students towards a full medical leave of absence. If the student in question agrees to such a leave and can provide documentation to support such a leave, the committee will grant the leave. The committee’s new policies specifically note that, in such cases, the leave will not be held against the student. That is to say, the student will return without being penalized for having taken an excessive

amount of Ws or for having fallen behind in terms of progress towards her/his degree.

At this time, the committee has included personal leaves of absence in this category, but it has also decided to make it clear in its guidelines that personal leaves can be held against a student and the student's degree progress record. Since personal leaves can result from a variety of reasons, the committee feels that it needs to consider whether or not to count personal leaves against a student's Skidmore record on a case-by-case basis.

•***Social Integrity violations***: At the end of the academic year 2006-2007, a question arose as to whether or not a social integrity violation should prevent a student who has otherwise qualified for Academic Honors at graduation from being awarded those honors. The CAS became a central part of that conversation in no small part because the committee is charged with generating a list of students who are eligible for academic honors and with forwarding that list on to the various departments and programs in which students have majored and from which they might be awarded honors.

In the course of our work this year, the CAS has concluded that it should not, and therefore will not, screen the list of students eligible for academic honors for social integrity violations in the way it does for academic integrity violations.

The committee arrived at this conclusion after several conversations on the matter and in consultation with the Dean of Student Affairs, the Director of Residential Life, and representatives of the Honor Code Commission. The committee endorsed a report detailing its decision and the reasons behind the decision and presented the report at a full faculty meeting.

These changes, along with other more procedural alterations to the committee's guidelines, were included in the CAS Operating Code, which has been posted on the DOS webpage, forwarded to the FEC to be included on that committee's webpage, and appended to this annual report.

Structurally, the policy work that the CAS accomplished was made possible by a more structured format for each of the committee's weekly meetings. At each of this year's meetings, the Chair provided a meeting agenda to divide out the committee's routine weekly business from its policy work. These agendas allow the committee to assign larger policy issues to committee members more effectively than in the past, and they allowed the committee to track policy matters and see them through to completion more efficiently.

As part of the new agenda-driven weekly meeting system, the CAS also established a tradition of keeping and approving “Policy Minutes” for each of the committee’s weekly meetings. These Policy Minutes do not contain personal, private, or confidential material regarding any of the committee’s routine weekly business. Rather, that information is held, as it always has been, in confidential minutes that are circulated only to those who need to be informed of the committee’s business and decisions vis-à-vis specific students. The Policy Minutes, on the other hand, are open documents and are recorded and archived in paper and electronic format. These minutes should allow future iterations of the CAS to reflect backwards on previous policy decisions with a better sense of the rationale that went into policies.

The 2007-2008 CAS hopes that such access to previous thinking on matters, coupled with the more streamlined and revised committee operating guidelines, will allow future iterations of the CAS to be a more active part of the college’s broader system of shared governance. Already the committee has found itself involved in more policy conversations with groups like the CEPP and the Office of the Director of the First Year Experience than in previous years.

The 2007-2008 CAS accomplished most of the items that were on its agenda for this year. Items which have been held over for the coming academic year include:

- A review (and possible revision) of the committee’s policies on personal leaves,
- A review (and possible revision) of the committee’s policies for readmitting students to the college who have previously been disqualified, and
- A review (and possible revision) of the committee’s policies for granting substitutions for all-college requirements.

The composition of CAS for the 2007-2008 academic year will be:

- Rachel Roe-Dale, Mathematics and Computer Science, Chair
- Kate Graney, Government
- Sonia Silva, Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work (Fall Only)
- Tillman Nechtman, History (Spring only)
- Michael Ennis-McMillan, Dean of Studies
- Ann Henderson, Registrar and Director of Institutional Research
- Two students to be named by SGA

Respectfully submitted,  
Tillman W. Nechtman, Department of History  
Chair, Committee on Academic Standing



## COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDING OPERATING GUIDELINES

Revised Spring 2008

### I. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

**A. Purpose of the Committee:** "To formulate and administer policy relating to the academic status of students including matters concerning probation, honors, requirements for graduation, acceleration, and leave of absence; to determine the academic status of each student on the basis of the record, reports of instructors, the opinion of the faculty in the major and any other relevant data; and to give any instructions and advice which seem necessary or advisable" (Faculty Handbook).

(Comment: the primary functions of the CAS are to interpret and apply—"administer"—established academic policies. On various occasions, however, the Committee also "formulates" academic policies, either for its own internal operations or to propose to the Faculty as a voting issue. In the past, for example, the CAS has made proposals regarding honors and probation criteria, plus/minus grading, the handling of "incomplete" grades, minimal standards for continuation, and deadlines for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from courses.)

**B. Membership:** three faculty members, at least one tenured and none of whom may be a member of the CAFR, appointed to serve three-year terms; the Dean of Studies or his or her designee, the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research or his or her designee, and two students selected by SGA, one junior to be appointed each year to serve a two-year term. (Faculty Handbook).

(Comment: in practice, the CAS has approved somewhat broader representation from the Office of the Registrar, the Dean of Studies Office, and the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges [formerly the Office of International Programs], for staff from these areas often have critical pieces of information to contribute and also have to explain the CAS decisions to the students affected by them. This expanded participation in CAS meetings can occur only with the consent of the regular CAS membership. In any case, the balance of voting rights on the CAS remains exactly as described in The Faculty Handbook.)

**C. General Philosophy:** The CAS has been given rather broad authority by the Faculty to act for them in the interpretation of policies and deadlines which affect the academic life of students. The CAS attempts to uphold such policies as they were intended by the Faculty, but at the same time attends to unusual circumstances presented by a particular case. When the CAS departs from a particular policy, it tries to recall and anticipate all similar cases and thus attempts, for the sake of fairness, to preserve philosophical continuity in its interpretation of special exceptions. The guiding principle in CAS decisions is to insure the integrity and quality of student academic experience, while at the same time taking various student hardships and confusions into account.

**D. Operating Procedures:** Requests from students (and in the case of grade changes, from faculty) are submitted to the Committee through the Office of the Registrar, the Dean of Studies Office, the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, or the Chair of the Committee. The Committee generally asks the three administrative offices to act upon very routine requests that clearly fall within CAS guidelines and to report the results to the Committee (e.g., routine medical or personal leaves, academic leaves from well qualified students, reclassifications, ordinary drop/adds and W requests, off-campus study applications). Petitions which require interpretation are, however, brought before the Committee at meetings held weekly during the academic year. Requests are discussed and judgments are made in accordance with the policies, procedures, and standards set forth in the *College Catalog* and the *Faculty Edition of the Student Academic Handbook*. The large majority of decisions are reached through discussion and consensus, though some issues may require a vote (for a total of 7 voting memberships as defined by the Faculty Handbook). When additional information is needed before making a decision, the Committee contacts the appropriate student, faculty member, academic department, or, occasionally, other college or institution. Decisions made by the CAS are incorporated into minutes prepared for each meeting by the Office of the Registrar, the Office of the Dean of Studies, and the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. Minutes are distributed to the members of the Committee and to other appropriate administrative and academic offices.

Students are notified of decisions in writing by the Dean of Studies Office, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, or occasionally by the Chair of the CAS. Copies of the decision letters are maintained by each administrative office and are sent only to those individuals at the College who must take action on the decision (such as faculty advisors, financial services, student aid, residential life).

Students (or faculty) who have concerns or who need clarification on Committee decisions may direct their questions to the offices of the Registrar, Dean of Studies, Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, or to the Chair. If the petitioner has a substantially new perspective or piece of evidence to offer for the Committee's further consideration, he or she may submit an appeal in writing to the Committee.

The Committee on Academic Standing makes every effort to maintain confidentiality in all of its petition, notification, and appeal processes.

## **II. GUIDELINES FOR CAS DECISIONS**

### **A. Change in Course Registration:**

**1) Late Drop or Add:** students may add or drop a course with their instructors' approval during the first week of classes. During the second week of classes, adding a course may be approved by the CAS if there is clear evidence, from the instructor, that the student has been a full participant in the course since its beginning or within the established period for adding a course (thus the integrity of the course experience would be preserved). The adding of a course is seldom approved after the second week. Dropping a

course during the second week of classes may be approved if the student has a valid reason for submitting the drop request late. A drop after this point may be allowed only if there is strong evidence of understandable student confusion over the drop/add process, or some other serious delay beyond the student's control. Usually, however, the CAS allows a W instead of a drop.

(Comment: the possibility that the student may incur an overload fee has no bearing on the CAS drop/add/W decision and is entirely under the authority of Financial Services. Further, students who are lax about dropping or withdrawing from a course may have prevented another student from enrolling in the course.)

**2) Withdrawal and Late Withdrawal (W) from a Course:** In May 1999, the CAS proposed, and the faculty approved by vote, a policy of 2 withdrawals only per student during the period of enrollment at the College. The policy's effective start date was Fall 1999 for entering new and transfer students. These 2 withdrawals without grade penalty may be used at the student's discretion with each instructor's approval and in consultation with his or her faculty advisor for a variety of academic, personal, and medical reasons. The final grade is registered as a W on the transcript, and the student's official record does not indicate the reason for a withdrawal.

The CAS may entertain a late withdrawal from a course or courses, with strong support from the instructor(s), if the student was experiencing severe emotional or medical distress which significantly delayed or confused the student's ability to exercise responsibility. In certain severe cases, of medical emergency or emotional distress, the Office of the Dean of Studies, on behalf of the student and with CAS approval, may initiate late withdrawals from courses (or even a late drop) and so notify the student's instructors (who may decline the recommendation if they wish, since a W can be granted only with permission from the instructor).

**Special Notes on Course Withdrawals** (Approved by CAS February 17, 2005)

- Please see the section of the CAS Guidelines below that address "Preapproved Course Load Reductions" (II.A.5) and "Leaves of Absence" (II.C.1) for course withdrawal policies specifically related to personal and medical leaves.
- The CAS will rarely approve such a radical change in a student's course schedule that it effectively makes him/her a part time student (for example, from full-time student to a course schedule with one—or possibly two—courses remaining). CAS believes that Skidmore, as an academic institution and residential college, demands full and energetic participation on the part of its matriculated students. All petitions to seriously limit one's academic course load will require a withdrawal form, a letter from the student, and appropriate accompanying documentation (such as a letter from a medical professional supporting the limited course load).

- Withdrawals taken while participating in an off-campus study program will appear on the student's transcript and will count toward the 2 withdrawal limitation.

### **3) Withdrawal from a course due to a medical condition or personal circumstance**

CAS reviews petitions from students requesting to exceed the 2 withdrawal limit due to a medical condition or personal circumstance. Similar to reviewing medical leave applications, the CAS applies an ethic of caring about the well being of the student when considering withdrawal petitions due to medical conditions. The CAS recognizes that medical and personal issues present inherently complicated situations that require the committee to consider competing and conflicting concerns. Specifically, CAS balances the important and conflicting needs in the student's personal life with the concerns the College has about academic achievement and fairness. Because there are numerous issues to consider in any particular case, including the nature of the illness, time of semester, prospects for recovery, and so on, the policy grants CAS and the Dean of Studies broad discretion.

When the committee approves an exception to the 2 withdrawal limit due to a medical condition or personal circumstance, then the final grades is registered as a W on the transcript. In other words, there is no withdrawal that does not count even when the student provides medical documentation to support the withdrawal. If CAS does not approve a student's request to exceed the 2 withdrawal limit during a particular semester, then the student must consider alternative options: (a) finish the registered courses; (b) apply for a medical leave of absence; or (c) request a Withdrawal Failing (WF) grade for any course that will not be completed.

**a) Individual withdrawals:** The CAS may make exceptions to the 2 withdrawal limit only when a documented medical condition or personal situation arises that directly affects a student's ability to complete a particular course. A student requesting an exception to the withdrawal policy must support the request with information that demonstrates a direct connection between a medical condition and the inability to complete coursework for a particular course. For example, a student who has an accident resulting in a broken leg may not be able to complete required work for a dance course, or a student with a previously undiagnosed psychiatric condition may not be able to attend a class at a particular time due to side effects of a new medication.

**b) Multiple withdrawals:** If a student is petitioning for more than two withdrawals in a single semester due to medical reasons, the Dean of Studies will recommend in most cases that the student take a medical leave or personal leave without penalty, particularly if the withdrawals will result in the student dropping from full- to part-time status. Requests for reduced course loads must be approved prior to the start of a semester (see II.A.5).

**4) Course Overloads and Underloads:** a course schedule overload (over 18 semester hours, to a maximum of 20 semester hours) or an underload (fewer than 12 semester

hours) must be approved by the CAS. Students with a 3.00 GPA or above are automatically approved by the Office of the Registrar for an overload. For students whose GPA is lower than 3.00, the CAS may approve an overload if the student record shows sufficient strength, and assuming the quality of the student's academic experience would be preserved. Generally the CAS is more lenient with overload requests from final-term seniors, unless the overload would likely diminish the quality of the student's culminating academic experience. Overloads are never approved above 20 semester hours and are not available to first-term, first-year students.

Students studying off campus are subject to the same guidelines except in cases where the program's curricular structure requires students to earn an overload. Students may never earn more than 20 semester hours in a semester.

**5) Preapproved Reduced Course Loads:** Students requesting reduced course loads as part of an accommodation for an ongoing medical condition must follow the appropriate procedures for applying for academic accommodations and submit a request to the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities no later than two weeks prior to the start of each semester. Preapproved reduced course loads are meant to assist students whose impairment significantly limits their ability to manage a full-time course load and will be evaluated on the basis of clear and convincing evidence that, due to the impact of a medical condition or disability or the corresponding time demands of associated treatment, it would be unreasonable for a student to manage a full-time course schedule.

## **B. Grades and Grading:**

**1) Late Change in Grading Option:** after the two-week deadline for changing from grade to S/U or S/U to a grade, the CAS will not approve a change unless there is documentary evidence of the student's confusion in making his or her choice or evidence of a clerical or procedural error.

**2) Change in Grade:** a grade change is allowable only under very limited circumstances. Requests for a change of grade must be initiated by the instructor of record and will be granted only for "computational or clerical error. No grade may be changed on the basis of re-examination or supplementary work" (Faculty Handbook). The instructor requesting a change of grade must assure the CAS that she/he has checked the entire class list for other potential errors. On rare occasions a grade-change request comes to the CAS as the result of a CAFR, Academic Integrity Board, or Board of Review decision. The CAS implements these decisions when the faculty member concurs with or does not oppose the grade-change request (even under these circumstances, the instructor retains full authority over the grade).

(Comment: in order to protect the integrity of the grading process, the Committee has held firmly to the distinctions made in the Faculty Handbook. Routine grade changes for clerical or computational error are approved by the Office of the Registrar and reported to the Committee.)

**3) Extension of Grade of Incomplete:** a faculty member may request, through the Office of the Registrar, an extension beyond the normal six-week period for completion of Incomplete course work. Many such requests are routine; in other cases the CAS may consider whether the extension is warranted on academic or other grounds. Sometimes the CAS disallows an extension because of a pending "disqualification" or other important question of the student's academic standing.

### **C. Leaves of Absence (Personal, Medical, and US-based Academic):**

**1) Medical and Personal Leaves:** most requests for medical and personal leaves are routinely handled by the Office of the Dean of Studies and reported to the CAS. A leave is granted when the student is too ill to continue at school and the committee believes it wise to suspend the usual expectations we have for a student so that he or she may attend to the illness or in the case of a personal leave, the personal issues that prevent a student from remaining at the College. Similar to reviewing withdrawal petitions related to medical conditions, the CAS applies an ethic of caring about the well being of the student when considering medical and personal leave requests. When the College grants a student a medical, the student leaves school with the assurance that they will be reinstated without consequence. The College requires documentation of the illness or circumstance and grants the leave for the express purpose of permitting the student to devote themselves to recovering from the distressing condition. CAS will determine the impact of personal leaves on a case-by-case basis.

**a) Special considerations:** Some requests may need special consideration by the Committee: a) when the student's request would be for more than one continuous year (rarely granted); b) when the student is in academic jeopardy; c) when the request is of an emergency nature and also requires late drops or withdrawals from courses. A student may not be on "leave" and also enrolled in a Skidmore course or courses.

**b) Withdrawal requests and Leaves of Absence:** If a student is petitioning for more than two withdrawals in a single semester due to medical reasons, the Dean of Studies will recommend in most cases that the student take a medical leave or personal leave without penalty, particularly if the withdrawals will result in the student dropping from full- to part-time status.

**c) Medical leave without penalty:** The committee will not consider the semester of a medical leave as a failure and will not penalize a student because he or she was ill. Students who are approved for a medical leave for a semester will not be disqualified for then failing to meet continuation standards, even when a student was in academic jeopardy before taking the leave. Likewise, a one-semester medical leave will not be later counted against a student when the CAS is reviewing satisfactory academic progress.

With appropriate documentation, a second medical leave or an extension of the initial medical leave may be approved by CAS without penalty and will not be taken into account when the CAS evaluates a student's cumulative academic progress. As an institution, we expect students to make timely progress towards their degrees, but we also recognize that some illnesses by their cyclical nature have a likelihood of reoccurrence. Similarly, other illnesses may take a while to diagnose and may have a likelihood of relapse or going off medication, especially when the illness is first diagnosed.

**d) Withdrawing from the College after a medical leave:** A student who has sequential or multiple leaves and is unable to maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree may be withdrawn from the College without penalty and apply for readmission once the medical condition has been addressed.

All petitions for a third semester (or more) of medical leave will be reviewed by the CAS on a case-by-case basis, and may be rejected without sufficient documentation supporting the need for the third semester (or more) of medical leave. In those cases, the CAS may recommend that the student withdraw from the College and apply for readmission once the medical condition has been addressed.

**2) Academic Leaves (US-based):** for students with upper-division standing and 3.00 GPA or better, academic leaves are routinely approved by the Office of the Dean of Studies and reported to the CAS. Academic leaves are granted only for study at institutions that are not available to students through Skidmore's established portfolio of approved domestic off-campus study programs (i.e. National Student Exchange, Washington Semester, etc.). The CAS does review academic leave requests from first-year students and sophomores, however, and from students with a GPA below 3.00. First-year students and sophomores who have not completed the first two years of all-college requirements may be denied a leave until they complete the "Foundation" component of the curriculum.

The GPA expectations are much more flexible when the student will be participating in a traditional academic program at another college in the U.S. The CAS assumes that other college programs in the U.S. will operate by standards similar to Skidmore's and supply similar degrees of guidance and support to the student.

**3) Guidelines for Earning Transfer Credits During US-based Academic Study While on Medical or Personal Leave (Revised Policy approved April 2004)**

The CAS policy for transfer credits for domestic off-campus study when a student is on a personal or medical leave mirrors that utilized for international off-campus study. Students may not earn credits for a personal or medical leave when studying at U.S. institutions that are available to students through Skidmore's established portfolio of approved domestic off-campus study programs (i.e. National Student Exchange, Washington Semester, etc.). Students may petition CAS for an exception to this policy.

Exceptions will be considered by the CAS based on the nature of the leave and the rationale presented by the student.

CAS uses its discretion to pre-approve up to and including as many as eleven credits for students studying at a U.S. institution that is not available through Skidmore's approved domestic off-campus study programs. Any student on a personal or medical leave who wishes to study full time (12 credits or more), will be required to complete an academic leave application and will be subject to the limitations in place for credits earned on an academic leave (see Section II, C, 2 of these guidelines). (4/04) Credits must be pre-approved by the Office of the Registrar.

#### **4) Effective Dates for All Leaves of Absence (Personal, Medical, Academic)**

Effective dates of approved leaves: the large majority of leaves are "effective" as of the date they were approved by the CAS. In a few cases of personal and medical leaves, we may determine an earlier effective date based on the point at which the student actually left campus. This effective date is recorded in the CAS minutes and communicated to Financial Services so that Financial Services can determine whether the student is eligible for a refund.

### **D. Eligibility Standards for Off-Campus Study** (Approved by CAS Feb. 27, 2003):

#### **1) Background**

Off-campus study is an important educational opportunity one whose success requires that the student applicant meet defined standards and expectations. The Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) observes certain threshold criteria in determining whether an applicant is sufficiently prepared to succeed in his/her off-campus study experience. Experience has shown that a student's record of academic performance and personal qualities are important for the following reasons:

- When studying off campus the student typically needs to rely on self-discipline and self-direction in planning and carrying through with a course of study to a much greater degree than s/he might need while on campus. In addition, international off-campus study typically requires more academic ability to work independently on papers and preparation for exams than is true in the educational system in the US.
- Self-reliance is also of telling importance as the student encounters the myriad distractions of studying off campus, becomes his or her own guide through many new academic, cultural, and social situations, and seeks support among resources that are usually much less abundant than at Skidmore. Thus personal maturity, resourcefulness, and flexibility of mind are required as one encounters the cultural patterns of the host institution and culture.
- When Skidmore approves an off-campus study application, the College is not merely permitting a student to study off campus but must actually recommend the student to a particular program or institution. The College's ongoing credibility



with its partners, and thus the successful admission of subsequent Skidmore students, are a matter of some concern.

## 2) Eligibility Standards and Evidence

a) In keeping with the challenges outlined above, Skidmore requires applicants for off-campus study to present the following evidence of their academic and personal preparedness for success in the host program:

- A 3.00 GPA that also demonstrates solid academic performance from one semester to the next across the various disciplines—or, a more modest cumulative GPA but with 3.00 work during the two most recent semesters of study. (Note that nearly two-thirds of Skidmore sophomores and juniors attain a 3.00 or better GPA; thus the 3.00 criterion does not present a narrow window of opportunity.)
- It must also be clear that the student has the academic background and performance levels appropriate for the program to which he or she is applying.
- The student must have met all-college requirements appropriate to his or her year of study or present an acceptable plan for completing such requirements, and the student must have declared a major *prior* to applying to the CAS, unless studying off campus in the sophomore year.
- The student must have a clear academic and social integrity record as determined by the Dean of Studies and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs who oversee integrity issues.

b) The CAS will also consider students who are below the 3.00 requirements described above but whose academic records show a preponderance of B-level work from one semester to the next *or* recent 3.00 performance that convincingly demonstrates growth in academic ability and diligence since earlier difficulties. Such students must present for review:

- Two letters of support from Skidmore faculty that assess the student's academic abilities and classroom behavior patterns (e.g., intellectual commitment, diligence, reliability). The CAS may also request further testimony directly from faculty.
- An off-campus study plan from the student that outlines his or her broad academic interests and ambitions, assesses his or her academic and personal strengths in relation to the challenges of studying off campus, and describes his or her academic and cultural learning goals as they relate to the proposed off-campus experience.

- It must also be clear that the student has the academic background and performance levels appropriate for the program to which he or she is applying.
- The student must have met all-college requirements appropriate to his or her year of study or present an acceptable plan for completing such requirements, and the student must have declared a major *prior* to applying to the CAS, unless studying off campus in the sophomore year.
- The student must have a clear academic and social integrity record as determined by the Dean of Studies and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs who oversee integrity issues.

### **3) Other Eligibility Considerations for *all* Student Applicants**

- Other factors that may contribute to the CAS approval of off-campus study include the student's previous experience with the host culture of the program abroad (or successful experience with other cultures), fluency in the language needed for success in the program abroad, and the academic focus of the program on the student's area of special academic strength (for both U.S. programs and those abroad). These factors may enhance the strength of the application; however, they cannot replace the need for a record of solid academic achievement.
- A student's record of co-curricular and related accomplishments may suggest personal and intellectual qualities that help prepare the student for off-campus study; such evidence may be considered as a complement to the academic record but not as a substitute for solid academic achievement or as an explanation why the academic record is not stronger.

### **4) Maintaining Standards After the CAS Approval**

The student must sustain the pattern of academic performance and the integrity record upon which the off-campus study application was approved by the CAS or risk having his or her approval rescinded. If the CAS (or the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and the Dean of Studies at times when the CAS is not available for a further review) cancels the student's participation in an off-campus program, the student will remain responsible for all financial and other obligations as determined by Skidmore and by the sponsoring program. The student whose off-campus study participation has been rescinded (because of inferior academic performance, an integrity violation, or failure to be in good financial standing with the College) is expected either to register for classes at Skidmore (if the timeframe allows) or to apply for a personal leave of absence from Skidmore. (Note: at the end of each semester the Registrar will generate a summary list of term and cumulative GPAs for students studying off campus; any significant drop in an academic record will prompt a closer look by the DOS Office and Off-Campus Study & Exchanges.)

The Committee on Academic Standing, in consultation with the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and the Dean of Studies, holds final authority over all applications

for off-campus study. In meeting its obligations to represent the faculty on such matters, the CAS considers each application on its own merits and in relation to other applications of similar quality.

**5) Students Studying Off Campus Outside the Junior Year** (Approved by CAS March 10, 2005)

Students who will not be juniors at the time they study off campus will be required to attend a mandatory advising session with an advisor in the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (OCSE). This advising session will serve as an unofficial interview in which the OCSE advisor will work with the student to determine the student's ability to succeed and also the feasibility of studying off campus during the desired semester. OCSE will use this opportunity to advise students regarding academic issues and regarding program selection. After this initial advising session, students will submit a letter of faculty support (for first-year students, preferably from the instructor of the appropriate Scribner Seminar) and a one page letter explaining why they want to study off campus outside of the junior year. Students will also need to indicate in the letter what their academic plans are for the remainder of their time at Skidmore. OCSE will request a graduation audit from the Registrar's Office. The OCSE will review the materials and meet with students whose materials raise questions regarding students' academic plans or reasons for needing to study off campus in the proposed semester.

**All students with below a 3.0 GPA, regardless of class year, must still petition to the Committee on Academic Standing.**

**6) Department of State Warnings** (Approved by CAS September 13, 2005)

Skidmore does not endorse or approve study abroad to countries where there is an active Department of State warning. There is no petition process, and no credit will be granted to a student who studies in a country with such a warning.

**7) Students Who Choose to Study Off Campus Without OCSE Approval (While on Personal Leave)** (Approved April 2004)

The student who participates in a given program without OCSE/CAS authorization will receive no credits in transfer upon his or her return.

**E. Acceleration and Reclassification:**

Acceleration requests are reviewed for their completeness and feasibility by the Office of the Registrar and given to the CAS for approval. The CAS routinely approves accelerations for students with relatively strong records, assuming that the acceleration plan preserves the quality of the student's academic experience. If the plan requires semesters of "overload," the overload criteria (see above II A 3) come into play. The student is not actually reclassified until he/she completes the requisite number of semester hours for a particular class year.

Reclassification may be requested by a student or, of necessity, decided by the Office of the Registrar (because the student has fallen too far behind his or her original class year). Most reclassifications are routine and are simply reported in the CAS minutes.

## **F. Transfer Credits:**

The large majority of transfer credit decisions are handled directly by the Office of the Registrar, often in consultation with department chairs. There are a few transfer questions which need review by the CAS:

- 1) requests for **non-Western or Cultural Diversity credit** for a transfer course;
- 2) **elective credit** which may not meet the criteria ordinarily used by the Office of the Registrar;
- 3) credit for other **all-college requirements** which do not fall under the authority of another department or committee (the Foreign Language Department is consulted on FL transfer requests; the English Department is consulted on writing-course credit);
- 4) **Maturity-Level Credit**: in an effort to preserve some minimal core of advanced-level Skidmore course work for each student's Skidmore degree, the CAS grants only a limited amount of transfer credit toward the 24 semester hours of Skidmore maturity credit.

For personal, medical or academic leaves of absence the CAS may, at its discretion, under a few compelling circumstances, approve as many as eight semester hours of maturity-level credit for study at another institution—a maximum of one course for up to four maturity credits for each semester spent at the other institution. The transfer of credits will necessarily follow the guidelines outlined in Section II, C, “Leaves of Absence.”

CAS does not limit the amount of maturity level credit that may be awarded for transfer for students participating in an approved off-campus study program. Maturity level credit is approved by the department or academic program in consultation with the Registrar.

**5) Summer School Transfer Courses:** the CAS has approved and published criteria for the acceptance of summer school transfer credit, and these criteria are routinely administered by the Office of the Registrar. The CAS holds strongly to the view that summer sessions must cover, minimally, a four-week period to be eligible for transfer credit (and, of course, meet N.Y. State Education Department standards for contact hours). Students participating on non-Skidmore study abroad programs during the summer may receive transfer credit for their courses. These students must complete an approval form through the Registrar's office. The course(s) must comply with all the qualifications and policies listed on the Registrar's form. In addition, this form must be signed by the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges prior to submission to the Registrar's office. All courses must be a minimum of four weeks in length. One course may be taken in a four-week session. Two courses (maximum of 8 credits) may be taken

in a five-week (or longer) session. All courses must meet for at least 36 hours of class time. Studio art, dance, and theater courses must meet for at least 72 hours of class time. A grade of "C" or better is required for transfer credit. A maximum of 16 credits, including four maturity level credits, may be transferred each summer. The only exception sometimes granted by the CAS is for intensive study of a foreign language during a summer session of at least three weeks duration.

**6) Transfer credits for Other Off-Campus Study:** on occasion the CAS may be asked by the Office of the Dean of Studies, the Office of the Registrar, or the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges to review the possibility of giving transfer credit to programs with which we are unfamiliar or which are not themselves sponsored academically by an accredited college or university (or are accredited by an agency which we don't usually recognize). In such cases, it has been CAS practice to review course descriptions and syllabi, faculty credentials, and the general academic tenor and educational purposes of the sponsoring organization. The CAS is particularly concerned with the academic credibility of the proposed experience and its potential connection to liberal arts and science education.

**7) Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Credits** (CAS approved October 2005)

Skidmore College will grant a total of up to 16 credit hours toward graduation to those achieving a grade of 4 or 5 on an **Advanced Placement Test** of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). The College will grant 4 credits per exam grade of 4 or 5. In most cases AP credits will count only as elective credit toward the degree and, with few exceptions, will not replace specific all-college or major requirements. For class years 2007 and beyond, AP credits do not exclude students from the Foreign Language Requirement. Academic departments and programs will determine how, if at all, AP exam grades of 4 or 5 will apply to the major.

The College will grant four semester hours of credit for each examination taken at the **Advanced ("A") Level of the British Certificate of Education** on which the student received a grade of C or better. Also, four semester hours of credit will be granted for each **Higher Level Examination in the International Baccalaureate Program** on which a student earned a score of 5, 6, or 7. A maximum of 16 semester hours of credit may be granted through subject examinations of the College Level Examination Program. All such examinations presented must be taken prior to enrollment at Skidmore.

Note: these CAS decisions are distinct from proposed academic "affiliations," which are reviewed by CEPP.

### **G. Course Substitutions for All-College Requirements:**

**1) General guidelines:** Under no circumstances does the CAS waive a course requirement for the Skidmore degree. (Note that chairs of departments, in consultation with the Office of the Registrar, do have authority to make various course substitutions for established major or minor requirements.) There are a few circumstances, however, in

which the CAS will consider substituting Skidmore courses for those specifically designated in the Catalog as meeting a particular degree requirement. For example, the CAS occasionally receives requests to substitute upper-level lab science courses for the courses designated in the Catalog. If the appropriate department supports the substitution, the CAS usually concurs.

## **2) Substitution Request Based on a Documented Learning Disability**

The only other substitution requests, thus far, are based on documented evidence of a learning disability. Through a carefully established process, students with a severe learning disability may file a petition with the Office of the Dean of Studies, requesting course substitutions for a particular all-college requirement. The Dean of Studies Office then seeks a recommendation from the academic department most closely linked with the requirement (e.g., the Foreign Language Department for a substitution in the FL requirement, or the English Department for a substitution in the Writing requirement).

Department recommendations for approval or denial of the petition are forwarded to the CAS. CAS makes the final determination for approval or denial of the petition.

## **3) Foreign Language Requirement Substitution Petitions** (approved by CAS and added to Guidelines 12/03)

Core requirements are never waived at Skidmore. However, on rare occasion, a student with an appropriately documented disability (who is also "registered" with the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities in the Office of Student Academic Services) may seek a substitution of course work in lieu of the College Foreign Language Requirement. The Coordinator for Students with Disabilities will assist the student in completing the petition. A subcommittee of the Foreign Language Department will meet twice each year (in the fall prior to October 1, and in spring prior to March 1), to examine such requests. The FL subcommittee will then make a recommendation in writing to the CAS who will, in turn, decide to approve or deny the petition. In most cases, the CAS will require the successful student petitioner to take one pre-approved culture course in lieu of a course in a foreign language. Petitions to CAS regarding the FL Requirement must be submitted to the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities in the Office of Student Academic Services no later than the end of the junior year. Again, CAS is responsible for the final decision.

## **4) Culture-Centered Inquiry Requirement** (approved by CAS following consultation with and approval by CEPP, January 2007)

The Culture-Centered Inquiry requirement requires both a foreign language as well as one course that is designated as either a non-Western course or a Cultural Diversity course. No student is exempt from taking a foreign language course, even if they have already studied or speak a foreign language. CAS will not entertain petitions from students requesting a substitution for this requirement.

## **H. Progress Toward the Degree:**

In addition to the minimal standards for continuation which the CAS establishes (with Faculty approval), monitors, and interprets, the CAS reviews the records of students who have not completed all the appropriate "Foundation" and "Interdisciplinary Study" requirements by the end of the sophomore year. The Registrar orchestrates the review process. The student is asked to "show cause," so to speak, why she or he has not completed these all-college requirements. The Registrar brings the explanations to the CAS, which fairly routinely hears of legitimate reasons for delay (for example, closed courses, a medical or personal leave, a heavy schedule of pre-med courses). The CAS sometimes requires a student to complete the first-year/sophomore requirements within some specified period of time. While the CAS does have the right to disqualify a student based on the student's inadequate progress in completing the all-college requirements, the CAS has not yet done so.

### **I. Eligibility for August Graduation:**

The CAS, guided by the Office of the Registrar, is responsible for approving students for graduation. The CAS, represented by the Registrar, presents the candidates for graduation to the Faculty at a special meeting each May. Before that point the CAS reviews the records of students who have not yet met all graduation requirements (both course and GPA requirements) but who might be able to do so by the August after graduation. In deciding whether a student should remain on the May graduation list (with an asterisk indicating August graduation), and thus be allowed to participate in all Commencement exercises, the CAS determines whether it is "mathematically possible and academically feasible" (CAS decision of May 5, 1989) for the student to graduate by August. The completion plan must also possess "educational integrity." If the student's plan for completing remaining degree requirements does not meet these criteria, the CAS will not approve the student for inclusion on the graduation list (the student is then reclassified for a later time of graduation).

(Comment: the CAS criteria are an effort to preserve the quality of the student's degree and academic experience and to present to the Faculty a credible graduation list for their approval. The CAS never approves for graduation in May a student who has not fully met every GPA criterion and course requirement: a departure of this sort, except for "course substitutions" as defined above, would require a vote by the full Faculty.)

### **J. Eligibility for College and Departmental Honors at Graduation:**

The CAS, with information provided by the Office of the Dean of Studies and the Office of the Registrar, approves candidates for honors at graduation. Departmental Honors are based on GPA plus the support of the major department; College Honors (cum laude, etc.) are based solely on cumulative GPA. There is no departure from the published criteria.

### **K. Disqualifications and Waivers:**

**1) General Guidelines:** The most difficult task of the CAS occurs every January and June as the CAS reviews the records of students who have not met minimal standards for continuation. The Office of the Registrar supplies the data for these considerations, and the individual cases are presented to the CAS by the Office of the Dean of Studies. The CAS has three options when a student has not met minimal standards:

**a)** The student may be disqualified from continuing studies at Skidmore. All cases are reviewed, first, according to the "minimal standards for continuation" established by the Faculty. Any departures from these criteria are made on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the decline or improvement in the student's record, the quality of the previous high school record (as a measure of potential and promise), the academic and numerical feasibility of the student's being able to improve the record sufficiently, extenuating problems of a serious medical or personal nature, etc. When a HEOP/AOP student has failed to meet minimal standards, the CAS invites the HEOP/AOP office to provide recommendations to the Committee. The Committee then considers these recommendations in relation to other student records under review.

**b)** The student may be granted a one-semester waiver in order to improve her or his academic record and to meet the next minimal standard. If the CAS believes the student should have a second chance of this sort, but that one semester would not be sufficient for the student to meet the next minimal standard, the CAS may require the waiver student to meet a specified GPA by the conclusion of the next semester of study or to be disqualified at that time. If the student meets the specified mark, then CAS may grant a second waiver with a new stipulation. A student studying at Skidmore on a waiver may be required, at the discretion of the CAS and/or the Office of the Dean of Studies, to meet regularly with an academic counselor.

**c)** In rare cases, when we know a student has experienced very serious personal or medical problems that still need to be addressed, the CAS may require the student to take a leave of absence for a semester, followed by a one-semester waiver. The CAS uses this option very sparingly, only when we believe the student needs time away from the College. With the approval of the CAS, the leave/waiver student may be permitted to take one or two courses at another institution for transfer to Skidmore while the student is on leave.

The Office of the Dean of Studies communicates the CAS decisions on disqualifications and waivers to the students and their families. Appeals from any CAS decision must be based on new and compelling evidence and must be addressed only to the chair of the Committee on Academic Standing or to the Dean of Studies. If either the chair or dean believes that significant new evidence is available, either party may re-convene the CAS for further consideration.

(Comment: it has been the general experience of the CAS that appeals from disqualification decisions are rarely successful. The Committee almost always has sufficient evidence at hand to reach its decisions, and the Committee takes great care to compare the different cases in an equitable way and to take into account all serious



extenuating factors. The Committee's decisions are, moreover, made in the context of all other DQ decisions. A subsequent appeal from an individual student may require the CAS to reconsider a number of its previous decisions.)

**2) Social Integrity Information and Academic Review** (approved by CAS and added to Guidelines 12/03)

As of the 2004 January Academic Review meeting, and at CAS's discretion, information about students' social integrity records at the College may be incorporated into the committee's deliberations. Social integrity information may help guide CAS decision-making in regards to the granting of Waivers of Minimal Standards to students by shedding light on the advisability and feasibility of such decisions as well as the students' potential for academic success. Information provided by the Dean of Student Affairs will be considered in the context of a student's overall academic and social profile at the College. The process for soliciting social integrity information will be as follows: (1) the Dean of Studies Office will provide the Dean of Student Affairs with a list of all students to be reviewed prior to the Review meeting, and (2) the Dean of Student Affairs will attend the Review meeting and supply information about only those student cases he deems most serious.

In all DQ considerations, the CAS is much more concerned about the quality of the transcript record than about small shortages of earned semester hours. The CAS gives special consideration to first-semester, first-year students, and in most cases gives them a one-term waiver or requires them to take a leave for a semester followed by a one-term waiver rather than disqualify them. Effective June 2004, CAS decided that first-year students enrolled in Skidmore's London Program will be required to meet the same first semester minimal standards as first-year students at the home campus: i.e., complete 6 (six) semester hours and earn a GPA of 1.67 or higher. Semester hour credits and/or GPA credits earned by a student prior to the first semester (such as AP credits, Skidmore summer programs, HEOP/AOP summer program, etc.) do not factor into Academic Review decisions for these students.

**3) Academic Integrity Information and Academic Review** (CAS 1/26/06)

CAS includes academic integrity violation information in Academic Review sessions.

**L. Readmission:**

Application for readmission to the College is made through the Office of the Dean of Studies. The more routine readmissions (for example, for in absentia completion of a few degree requirements, or to reverse a financial withdrawal during the summer) are decided by the Office of the Dean of Studies and reported to the CAS. The CAS regularly reviews readmission requests in which the student's previous academic record is at issue. Students who were disqualified from Skidmore must usually wait for one year before applying for readmission. In the case of a disqualified first-year students, the waiting period has sometimes been reduced to one semester. The CAS bases its readmission decisions primarily on the student's previous Skidmore record, the evidence of a subsequent college

record, the likelihood that the student can be academically successful at Skidmore, and the availability of courses in the student's field(s) of interest (CAS memo Nov. 8, 1988). At certain times (especially as we consider the numbers of incoming and returning students for the Fall semester), the CAS may be limited in the number of students it can consider for readmission. The number of available slots is determined by the Data Group at the College.

Candidates for readmission who originally entered Skidmore prior to Fall 1985, and who have earned fewer than 90 semester hours of Skidmore credit, will be expected to fulfill all-College requirements in effect at the point of readmission.

**M. UWW Admission and Previously Disqualified Students** (CAS approved October 2006 following consultation with the Director of UWW)

Occasionally a student formerly enrolled in the residential college but disqualified by CAS will subsequently apply for admission to Skidmore's University Without Walls. UWW and CAS have agreed that UWW will forward applications of all students who have been previously academically disqualified for CAS review. In such cases, CAS must grant its approval before UWW takes action on the applicant's admission to UWW (see memo from UWW Acting Director to CAS Chair, Aug. 17, 2006).

The Director of UWW will forward to the Office of the Dean of Studies, for transmittal to CAS, a previously disqualified student's full academic record (Skidmore and all other official transcripts), along with UWW's assessment of the likelihood that the student can be academically successful in the UWW program. CAS bases its decision to approve or disapprove primarily on this information.

**N. Academic Eligibility Standards for Skidmore Student Athletes**  
(Athletic Council and CAS 12/02)

1) The Director of Athletics will maintain accurate, up-to-date rosters of all competing athletes according to class year, sport, and semester(s) of sport involvement. These rosters will be disseminated at regular intervals to the Dean of Studies Office, Office of the Registrar, and the Dean of the Faculty. This information will enable the Dean of Studies Office to respond more effectively to any athlete whose academic performance is slipping (just as we do for all students), especially to prompt a discussion with students regarding the balance of time commitments between academics and athletics.

2) Information concerning a student athlete's poor academic performance will also be communicated periodically to the Athletic Director (through joint meetings between the AD and the DOS) who, in turn, will notify the relevant coach who will meet with the student athlete to help the athlete fulfill his or her academic responsibilities. The faculty advisor, the coach, and the Athletic Director all have the same goal-- which is to be sure that the student athlete is academically successful and knows about the available academic support services and the academic standards expected of him or her in order to earn a Skidmore degree.

3) According to Division III bylaws, in order "to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics, a student athlete must be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies" (Division III Bylaw 14.01.2). At Skidmore this minimum is 12 semester hours each term.

4) No student who has failed to meet any of Skidmore's semester-by-semester minimal continuation standards, as determined by the Committee on Academic Standing in its application of faculty-approved progress standards, and is thus placed on a one-semester "waiver" from those standards, will be eligible to practice with or play on the intercollegiate sports teams.

5) Summer (or January) academic work completed at Skidmore or elsewhere will not alter a waiver student's academic standing or his or her athletic eligibility for the following semester.

**O. Disruptive Student Withdrawal Procedure** (Draft of August 11, 2003; revised 10/31/03, 11/11/03, 11/19/03, 1/24/04, 1/29/04; APPROVED by the Committee on Academic Standing and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights)

**1) Overview:** Central to Skidmore's philosophy is a commitment to freedom of thought, expression, and behavior. The College is also committed to providing supportive assistance to students who may be experiencing academic or personal difficulties. It is never the intention of the College to stifle debate, to discourage the expression of different and provocative points of view, to prescribe a particular behavior pattern in the classroom, or to exclude students from the educational opportunities provided at Skidmore without serious cause. Any initiative to require a student to withdraw from a classroom must reflect Skidmore's care and concern for its students' well being and for their rights and freedoms.

The College also takes seriously the responsibility of all members of a learning community to interact in a respectful and civil manner in every area of community life. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior that subverts the efforts of faculty and students to pursue the teaching and learning process cannot be sanctioned. In some extreme cases of disruptive and/or disrespectful student behavior in the classroom, it may be necessary for an instructor to request the withdrawal of a student from a class in order to insure the educational rights of other students, to protect the personal and pedagogical rights of the instructor, or to protect the personal or academic well being of an individual student.

If a very serious case needing immediate intervention arises, College officials may draw on policy and procedure already outlined in the Student Handbook, which states that "the College has the right and obligation to act upon conduct not in accord with the informing principles of the Honor Code or codes of conduct. Violations of the Skidmore Honor Code and code of conduct include...obstruction or disruption of teaching or other educational activities on the College campus or other property used for educational purposes" (page 6). If the instructor confronts an issue requiring swift attention, he or she

should consult immediately with the department chair and the Dean of Studies, who may recommend to the Dean of Student Affairs that the student withdraw from, or be withdrawn from, the class. The Director of Campus Safety may be asked in these situations to interview the student and others who may have witnessed the disruptive behavior. The Director of Campus Safety also has the authority to intervene immediately in any seriously disruptive situation. If the student's withdrawal from the class is the only viable course of action, the student may be allowed to withdraw immediately with a grade of W or WF or be required to do so by the Dean of Student Affairs.

## **2) Definitions of Disruptive Classroom Behavior:**

- a) The student routinely or periodically exhibits language or behavior that makes it difficult for instructional activities to continue.
- b) The student on one or more occasions exhibits language or behavior of such a disturbing, disrespectful, or threatening nature as to make the student's return to class untenable.

## **3) Procedures:**

- a) Whenever the situation allows, the College will try to resolve behavioral conflicts through a deliberative process. Thus, in cases of disruptive behavior not requiring immediate intervention from the Dean of Student Affairs and/or Campus Safety (as described above), the instructor should speak with the student privately and in a confidential setting; however, if the behavior seems threatening to the instructor, she or he should ask the chair of the department and/or the Dean of Studies to join the initial discussion. (Here, too, the Director of Campus Safety may be asked to aid the process.) The conversation should occur soon after the first sign of disruptive behavior, and the instructor should express clearly the difficulties caused by the student's behavior and describe the changes in behavior that need to take place. If appropriate, the instructor may recommend that the student seek help from the Counseling Center. The instructor is advised to give the student a written summary of expectations and should also retain a documented record of the student's disruptive behavior and of all interactions he/she has with the student regarding the behavior. (Instructor notes should focus entirely on the behavior itself, not speculate regarding motives or underlying causes of the behavior.)
- b) If the disruptive behavior persists after the first conversation, the instructor should seek the advice and intervention of the department chair and the Dean of Studies, both of whom can help the instructor consider alternative classroom strategies, can speak directly with the student about the situation, or can move to the procedure in (d) below. If the consulting group believes that the student behavior might still be ameliorated, the Dean of Studies will prepare a formal letter for the student that outlines the faculty member's expectations regarding acceptable (and unacceptable) classroom behavior. The Dean will also indicate in the same letter his/her recommendation in the event there is a recurrence of unacceptable behavior (for example, immediate withdrawal from the course). Copies of this letter will go to the instructor and the department chair.

c) If an involuntary withdrawal seems necessary, the decision-making process will be as follows (except when, as described above, the case has required immediate intervention by Campus Safety and/or the Dean of Student Affairs): the instructor, the department chair, and the Dean of Studies will interview the student when possible (if this has not already occurred) and make their recommendation to the Dean of Student Affairs (a letter from the Dean of Studies may already be on file as a result of action in (b) above). If the chair is also the instructor of the class, then a tenured, senior member of the department will join this deliberation. A recommendation for course withdrawal requires the concurrence of the instructor and one other member of the consulting team (either the chair or the Dean of Studies).

d) If the consulting team makes a recommendation to the Dean of Student Affairs, the Dean will determine whether the student should be withdrawn from the class or whether a different course of action is more appropriate. Under most circumstances the student will receive a grade of "W" (or a "WF" if appropriate). If the deadline has passed, CAS will deliberate on any petitions for change in status.

**P. Policies on Withdrawals, Failures, Transfers, and First-Year Student Deferrals (Vetted by CAS and CEPP, Fall 2007, and Reported to the Faculty, 29 February 2008)**

**1. Introduction:** Skidmore requires all incoming first-year students to be enrolled in a Scribner Seminar during the fall semester of their first year. The heavy mentoring component and emphasis on academic transition make these seminars the keystone of the "First-Year Experience." For a number of reasons, some students will be unable either to complete their Scribner Seminar or to enroll in the fall. This small group includes, (a) withdrawals (due to illness, injury, or medical or personal leave), (b) failures (students who fail the course), (c) transfers, and (d) first-year students for whom the spring semester is their first semester.

The Director of the First-Year Experience (DFYE) in conjunction with the Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) have developed the following guidelines to determine if and when it makes sense for that student to repeat a Scribner Seminar, to find a substitution for the course, or to move on with the student's academic program.

**2. Procedures**

**a) Withdrawals:** Students who withdraw from all of their first-semester classes and take a full year medical/personal leave are required to enroll in a Scribner Seminar upon their return the following fall. Students in this situation have no credits on their academic transcript and are still considered first-year students.

For students who return in the spring, the CAS, in conjunction with the DFYE, will determine whether the student has experienced enough of the Scribner Seminar to move on or whether a substitution is appropriate.

Students who seek to withdraw because they are doing poorly in their Scribner Seminar must consult with their faculty instructor and the DFYE to determine 1) if a withdrawal is appropriate, and 2) what action should be taken, if any, to substitute the SSP on the student's academic transcript. In such cases, the DFYE will make a recommendation to CAS, and the committee will make a final determination on the matter.

**b) Failures:** CAS recognizes that students receive failing grades for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, students attempt to do the work but fail to meet the expectations for success. Other times, they do not complete the work, either because they stopped attending a class or because they failed to hand in assignments. In still other instances, failing grades may result because of academic integrity violations. In all such instances, the CAS and the DFYE will consider failing grades on a case-by-case basis to decide if the student in question should be required to repeat the seminar, find a substitution for it, or be permitted to move on without re-taking a Scribner Seminar. CAS will make a final determination on the matter.

**c) Transfers:** All transfer students who have been matriculated at another institution for at least one full semester (12 credits) will be exempt from the Scribner Seminars. They have already made the first-semester transition to college.

The small number of January transfer students who have fewer than 12 credits will take the Scribner Seminar the following fall.

First-year students for whom the spring semester is their first semester of college will take the Scribner Seminar the following fall.

#### **Q. Other CAS Decisions:**

The CAS may make other decisions, as appropriate, on questions relating to academic standing and standards and may initiate proposals on these issues with the Faculty.

Revised and updated Academic Year 2006-2007

Last revision: April 24, 2008

APPROVED by the Committee on Academic Standing