

## **Students' Bill of Rights**

### **PREAMBLE:**

We, the students of Skidmore College, recognize that this academic institution exists for the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and individual development. Free inquiry and free speech are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the Skidmore community, we have the responsibility to contribute to an environment of trust that protects the freedom of all to exchange and develop ideas; only in such trust and freedom is it possible for students to live together and learn from the faculty and one another.

Any violation of the principles embodied in this document, the Student/College Handbooks, the Skidmore Catalogue, or other documents pertaining to student rights that have been ratified by the student body, should be handled in a manner that protects the rights of all parties involved. The following rights are inalienable and belong to the students of Skidmore College:

### **I. Rights of Citizenship**

As members of the Skidmore community, students enjoy freedom of speech, of peaceful assembly, of the press, and of religion, and the right to petition, limited only by protection of property safety and mutual respect. Students' personal mail or electronic mail cannot be opened or read without their expressed permission. Students expect to be treated fairly and with respect by all members of the Skidmore community.

### **II. Rights in Academic Affairs**

Skidmore College affirms the following principles outlined in the American Association of University Professors' Statement of Professional Ethics:

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty.

### III. Rights in Student Affairs

#### A. Freedom of Association

1. Students have the right to participate in the formulation of college policy by serving as members of appropriate committees as described in the Faculty Handbook, SGA Constitution, and Student Handbook.
2. Students are free to organize and join associations to promote their common interests.
3. Membership in all SGA clubs and organizations, including those affiliated with outside organizations, must be open to students who meet the criteria set forth in the respective charters.
4. Students who are members of the Student Government Association, and who meet the criteria set forth in the Student Government handbook, may hold any elected or willingness-to-serve position.

#### B. Freedom of Inquiry and Speech

1. Students, independently and collectively, are free to examine and discuss all questions of interest. Students are free to support all causes through peaceful means and to debate opinions both publicly and privately.
2. Skidmore students may invite and hear the views and ideas of any person as long as the safety of all parties is ensured.
3. The institutional control of campus facilities cannot be used as a device of censorship.

### IV. Rights in Disciplinary Proceedings

A. Students have the right to be informed of the College's expectations for student behavior, both inside and outside of the classroom. Actions violating stated rules and regulations in the College Handbook will not be excused with pleas of ignorance. If the handbook seems unclear, students are encouraged to contact the Dean of Student Affairs for clarification.

B. Students' personal possessions or residences can only be searched as agreed upon in the Room and Board Agreement.

C. Any student charged with violating College policy has the right to receive a fair hearing. All disciplinary procedures must be clearly formulated, promulgated, and consistent. Students must be informed of the nature of the charges against them and given a fair opportunity to respond to them.

## V. Community Accountability

Students may pursue appropriate recourse as outlined in Skidmore College Policy, utilizing the appropriate judicial body or officer, if administrators, faculty, students, or other community members violate the Skidmore College Honor Code and/or other College regulations, including this Student Bill of Rights.

## VI. Amendments and Changes

The procedure for the amendment of this Students' Bill of Rights shall be:

Any matters deemed to affect the faculty, the administration, and the students, or any grouping of the above, will be referred to the All College Council (ACC). Any matters deemed to affect solely SGA will be handled by steps 1-5 below.

1. A recommendation from any member or division of the SGA to the Senate.
2. The study and approval of two-thirds of the Senate.
3. The presentation of the proposed amendment to the student body.
4. The approval by the students, as constituted by a majority of the votes cast voting *yes* for the passage.
5. The presentation of proposed changes to ACC by a member of SGA.

This document, like all others at Skidmore College, is subject to changes in Federal, State and Local law and shall be altered accordingly in the event of a modification to such law.