

Motion 1: CEPP moves that Skidmore establish the Skidmore in Beijing Program at Peking University in Beijing, China.

Rationale: Please see the attached proposal that outlines all features, details, and logistics of the proposed Skidmore abroad program.

Motion 2: CEPP requests that the faculty set aside the layover period so that the faculty may vote on the proposed Skidmore in Beijing Program at the April 25, 2003, Faculty Meeting.

Rationale: exigencies of the planning process underlie this request. The target for the program's first semester of operation is Fall 2004, and the Beijing Program Steering Committee need still to present Skidmore course proposals to the Curriculum Committee, bring the negotiations with the host university in Beijing to a conclusion, set an agenda for the Program Director in Beijing for summer 2003 and the academic year 2003-2004, and prepare descriptive program literature for September 2003 in order to meet an application deadline in December 2003. Clearly the Beijing Program is a complex undertaking in every aspect of academic and logistical planning and negotiation, and the Freeman Grant itself carries its own timetable for our moving forward.

TO: Committee on Educational Policy and Planning

FROM: Beijing Program Steering Committee (Mao Chen, Director; Cori Filson, Director of International Programs; Sarah Goodwin, Associate Dean of Faculty; Joel Smith, Associate Professor, Philosophy; Adam Chau, Luce Assistant Professor of Asian Studies; Jack Ling, Director, Diversity and Affirmative Action; Birgit Linder, Freeman Teaching Fellow; Yang Yu, Program Coordinator, Office of International Programs)
Jon Ramsey, Dean of Studies

DATE: April 1, 2003

RE: **PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SKIDMORE IN BEIJING PROGRAM AT PEKING UNIVERISTY IN BEIJING, CHINA**

We propose to the Committee on Educational Policy and Planning (CEPP) the establishment of a Skidmore in Beijing Program at Peking University in Beijing, China, that will be run during the fall semester. This program will join our Skidmore programs in India, Paris, London, Madrid, and Alcalá, as well as the Shakespeare Programme in the UK, as an extraordinary international opportunity for our students and for selected students from other colleges. Currently funded by a grant from the Freeman Foundation, the Skidmore in Beijing Program will provide students from a variety of academic areas with a site and resources to study Chinese language and culture through a combination of traditional classroom and integrated field work – language study will be part of their

on-site program within the context of a broader study of contemporary themes in Chinese culture.

This is particularly exciting time to develop a program in China due to the country's increasing importance and visibility in the global political and economic arenas. This program gives our students the opportunity to experience a critical period in China's history. According to the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, published by the Institute of International Education in 2001, China is the country that showed the largest percentage of growth in terms of study abroad participation between 98-99 and 99-00 (29.5% growth). Between fall 2000 and spring 2003, Skidmore sent a total of 7 students to China to study during the academic year. For the 2003-2004 academic year we currently have 7 students planning to attend programs in China. This growth mirrors the national trend and is promising as we develop our own program in China.

The Skidmore in Beijing Program has been designed by the Beijing Steering Committee, and comes with the strong support of the Asian Studies Program, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, the Office of International Programs, and the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action. This program advances institutional goals that are at the core of our identity as a college. Most importantly, it makes us more genuinely international in the reach of our programs abroad. As a corollary, it enhances the international component of our college curriculum and our learning environment, through the presence of both our own students who will have studied in China and the Chinese students, faculty and administrators who will visit our campus as part in the exchange. The Skidmore in Beijing Program will also advance our shared goal of a more genuinely diverse student body and campus culture. Finally, the Beijing Program, with its integrated field work component, reinforces our college practice of interdisciplinary studies.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The program, based at Peking University (Beida), is designed as a one-semester experience available in the fall and open to students with a minimum of one year of Chinese language study. The program is unique among programs in Beijing in that it integrates a strong field studies component into more conventional language instruction and course work, thus offering an innovative curriculum designed to take full advantage of its location. As such it may well appeal to both East Asian Studies majors and students in other disciplines with a strong interest in China.

The program also allows for two Chinese students to study at Skidmore during the spring semester and offers the opportunity for faculty and administrative exchange in the form of delegations between Peking University and Skidmore College.

We expect the program to open in fall 2004 with a minimum of 10 students. It will build to a level of some 15-20 students as it moves out of the grant-supported phase and into financial independence. In order to maintain the program after the term of the grant, we will need to rely on selected students from outside of Skidmore. Although we cannot now know what the exact proportion of Skidmore students to non-Skidmore students will be, we hope that the majority of the participants will come from Skidmore. This model (in which we use non-Skidmore students to support a Skidmore program) is common among the existing Skidmore programs. The Skidmore in London Program is the only

program that does not accept students from outside of Skidmore. In Spain, we share our programs with Tufts University; in India, we run the program through a consortium of five schools; and in Paris, we typically accept one-fourth to one-third of our program participants from other schools. As the Skidmore in Beijing Program develops, we will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this model in relation to the program's overall objectives.

THE BEIJING PROGRAM IN RELATION TO SKIDMORE COLLEGE

In December of 2001, Skidmore learned that it had been awarded a grant for \$909,321 from the Freeman Foundation to enhance Asian Studies at Skidmore by establishing a field studies program in Beijing, China. The proposal to the foundation describes the program as follows: "Skidmore College proposes to establish a unique field-centered, interdisciplinary study-abroad program ... in Beijing, China ... The program goes beyond the traditional model of classroom studies by emphasizing field-based learning and the challenge of understanding a different culture." The proposal outlines a program that would send up to 20 American sophomores and juniors to Beijing, and would bring up to four students from Beijing to study at Skidmore for a semester each year. It also outlines possibilities for faculty and administrators to visit reciprocally. The proposal describes requirements, sketches a curriculum that is strong in field-based experiences, and sets up a five-year plan with funding for hiring staff at Skidmore and in Beijing, setting up a Beijing office, developing the program, and recruiting students.

The Freeman grant was awarded to Skidmore not only to establish the Beijing program, but also thereby to strengthen Asian Studies on campus. The number of Asian Studies majors has fluctuated over the past few years, with 4 majors in 2000, 10 majors in 2001, and 3 majors in 2002. During that time we have seen a decrease in the number of students taking Chinese language courses, with 67 enrollments for 1999-2000, 50 enrollments for 2000-2001, and 34 enrollments for 2001-2002. As an interdisciplinary program with a language requirement of one year of Mandarin Chinese, the Skidmore in Beijing Program will offer students in a variety of academic areas the opportunity to study Chinese language and culture and also engage in field research specific to their discipline. In this way the program will enhance the current Asian Studies and Chinese language enrollments at Skidmore.

The grant proposal locates the program in the context of Asian Studies and the college's plans:

Skidmore College began offering courses on China in 1950, making Asian Studies our first interdisciplinary program. In the half-century since then, we have worked to develop our identity as a college with a rigorous interdisciplinary approach to liberal arts education. We have also consistently strengthened our Asian Studies Program, our most recent achievement (2000) being the addition of a cultural anthropologist specializing in China who serves as the tenure-track Luce Assistant Professor of Asian Studies.

Our emerging strategic plan calls for the further internationalization of our curriculum and a stronger focus on campus diversity while encouraging new expressions of our traditional emphasis on the integration of theory

and practice. Building upon our existing strengths, focusing on new directions, and responding to the growing global significance of East Asia in general and China in particular, we plan to take Asian Studies at Skidmore to the next level of excellence and to extend its influence to broader constituencies of the College.

Skidmore's Asian Studies major, established in 1997, offers a concentration in either East Asia or South Asia. The Skidmore in Beijing Program will complement our program in India as an opportunity for our students to study abroad, and we will now have more balanced strengths in South Asian and East Asian studies. Asian Studies is inherently interdisciplinary, and current Asian Studies faculty come from nine different departments. Further, as we develop projected opportunities for faculty for reciprocal travel, it will provide a new arena for faculty outside of the Asian Studies program with interests in China to enrich their professional work and thereby also their curricular offerings at Skidmore. Faculty outside of Asian Studies who—before we have even publicized the Beijing program—have expressed interest in sending their students to study in China, or in extending their own professional work to China, include Michael Arnush (Classical Studies), Sue Bender (Anthropology), Roy Ginsberg (Government; International Affairs), Judy Halstead (Chemistry; Environmental Studies), Murray Levith (English), Mary C. Lynn (American Studies), Gary McClure (Management and Business; International Affairs), and Doretta Miller (Art). The program is not primarily for Asian Studies majors, and these and other faculty will assist Asian Studies faculty in recruiting Skidmore students from varied disciplines to study in Beijing. The program will thus provide an opportunity for qualified Skidmore students from several disciplines to go to Beijing and bring back to campus enlarged perspectives that will enrich a variety of disciplines.

Since we received the grant, we have established a Beijing Program Steering Committee to oversee the implementation process. First under the leadership of then Associate Dean Sue Bender, who was the guiding force in the original application, and then under the leadership of program director Mao Chen, the steering committee has been moving the process along steadily. Increasingly, Mao Chen has worked closely with Cori Filson, Director of International Programs, to ensure academic and administrative concerns are addressed as the program is developed.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Skidmore in Beijing Program will run from late August to mid-December and will include an intensive pre-departure orientation here at Skidmore. We will use the orientation model currently employed for the India Program. It will consist of two days on campus and will be mandatory for all participants. Materials will include a substantial orientation handbook (an example of which is included with this proposal) and a sourcebook of supplementary readings, both developed specifically for the program. Topics covered will focus on health and safety issues, academic expectations (including significant discussion regarding field work), cultural behaviors and expectations, and practical advice. The orientation will be organized and delivered by appropriate faculty members, administrators and the Resident Director for the Skidmore in Beijing Program.

Once in China, students will take a total of four courses at Peking University: *Language in China*, *Traces of History*, *Contemporary China*, and an *Independent Research Project*. The last three courses will have a significant field study component (approximately 30% of the course).

All but the language course will be offered in English; however, the field study component will require students to use their language skills outside of class. (Please see more detailed course descriptions included with this proposal.) In order to facilitate the field work, students will be assigned Chinese graduate students to serve as individual tutors.

Course instruction will be provided by Beida faculty and our own Resident Director, who will oversee the ongoing development and delivery of all four courses. Final instructor selection will be based on faculty availability at Beida and will be approved by our Resident Director. The courses are designed to be interdisciplinary and interactive; each course will provide the students ample opportunity not just to gather facts, but also to analyze and discuss the material covered. For example, the course *Traces of History* will include pre-modern topics and will relate those topics to significant historical sites in and around Beijing. It is those sites and activities in the field that have informed the course contents and the curriculum in general.

Credits and grades from the Skidmore in Beijing Program will work as they do for other Skidmore programs: students will receive Skidmore credits, and grades received will count toward their Skidmore GPA.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES: PEKING UNIVERSITY

The original proposal to the Freeman Foundation called for a program located at Central University for Nationalities (CUN). In July of 2002, Skidmore sent a delegation of three, Mao Chen, Jack Ling, and Sarah Goodwin, to Beijing to visit potential sites (including CUN) and investigate program and curricular possibilities. Once it became clear that Beida was the best choice based on our program needs, we shifted our attention to that institution. Cori Filson recently went to Beijing with Birgit Linder, the Freeman Teaching Fellow, to meet further with representatives from the sites that were our top choices. As a result of that trip, we settled on Beida as our preferred site. We found there are several advantages to working with Beida:

- Beida is China's most comprehensive and prestigious university. It has received the most consistent financial support and has retained its stature through many changes in Chinese academic culture. The history of the university reflects the development of modern China in general, and current university activities show an increased movement toward new pedagogical approaches, economic development, cosmopolitanism, and internationalization.
- The school has 6 colleges and 29 departments that span the natural and social sciences and the humanities. In addition, Beida has 45 research institutes, 52 research centers, and 15 national laboratories.
- At present, Beida's faculty numbers 2,100. The faculty are a rich resource whom we can draw upon to ensure the academic strength of the program. Our program requires faculty who can teach content courses in English for our students. This will require not only language proficiency but also some basic familiarity with how American college professors run a classroom, interact with students, and generally run a course. Faculty at Beida have typically had more access to travel abroad and thus more opportunities to strengthen their English than those at other campuses.
- Beida enrolls over 21,000 students. There are roughly 2,700 foreign students (mainly Asians) there, but of these, approximately 100 are from the United States. This ratio allows our students a small peer group of Americans with which

to connect, but also forces our students to meet Asian students, either Chinese nationals or other study abroad students.

- Beida's graduate students are an important resource for the field studies program. The emphasis on work outside of the classroom for students who are still learning Chinese means that each student will need a tutor to work with directly in the field. Because Beida's graduate students are among the country's academic elite, we anticipate no difficulty in hiring tutors with sufficient English skills to support the students in the program. The student/tutor relationship will also enhance personal contact between our students and Chinese students.
- The campus itself has a great deal to offer. Beida offers students extensive library facilities and other academic resources. And, as Birgit Linder has attested to us, the Beida campus is known for its co-curricular life: films, lectures, concerts and similar events are common, and the campus is alive outside of class. When we visited, we were struck by the campus' beauty and cohesiveness; of the four sites we visited, the Beida campus truly stood out. Although very much an urban campus, it is also a little world unto itself, inviting and bustling with activity.

Beida's qualities make it the natural choice for our program. Not only are we persuaded this is the right campus because of its resources, we know that its reputation will enable us to recruit students effectively from other institutions, which will help ensure the long-term viability of this program.

CO-CURRICULAR RESOURCES

Students participating in the Skidmore in Beijing Program will be able to continue studies in Chinese language and culture through both classroom learning and an opportunity to integrate into life in Beijing. This will be accomplished through a combination of the field work component of the curriculum and the students' involvement in the daily life of the Beida campus. As mentioned, the Beida campus has much to offer our students. It has all of the amenities of an urban campus, yet has the cohesive feel of a smaller, more traditional campus. The co-curricular opportunities offered by Beida will be supplemented by additional excursions, both within and outside of Beijing, as organized by our on-site staff. Students will have a choice between residence halls and family stays, based on availability. In residence halls, students would be housed in doubles with other American students from the Skidmore program. Students living on campus will have access to university dining halls for meals. In this way, we hope to further the opportunities for involvement with the Beida community.

ADMINISTRATION

The Skidmore in Beijing Program will be developed and administered by the Beijing Steering Committee for the term of the Freeman grant. The Steering Committee is comprised of a Director (Mao Chen), faculty members with interests in Asia and China (Joel Smith and Adam Chau, with initial participation from Gordon Thompson), the Director of Diversity and Affirmative Action (Jack Ling), the Associate Dean of Faculty (Sarah Goodwin), and the Director of International Programs (Cori Filson). In addition, the Freeman Teaching Fellow (Birgit Linder) and the Beijing Program Coordinator (Yang Yu) participate in the Steering Committee meetings. The Steering Committee is charged with developing the academic and administrative structure of the program, both here and

in China, including planning to ensure the long-term financial viability of this program once the Freeman grant expires in 2006.

The program in Beijing will be administered by an on-site Resident Director (a full-time, 10-month position), with additional assistance provided by a Field Activities Coordinator (a full-time, 12-month position). The program will have an office, on campus, large enough to accommodate our staff. This office also will be used as a small resource center and will house computers with Internet access for our students' use. The Resident Director will be responsible for managing the students' academic and personal logistics during the fall semester when they are in Beijing. This includes working closely with Skidmore's Office of International Programs in Saratoga Springs and Beida's Office of International Relations in Beijing to ensure a strong program for our students and a strong relationship between our institutions. During the spring semester, the Resident Director will teach a course at Beida for Chinese students and, possibly, faculty. The details will be determined based on the Resident Director's expertise and Beida's needs. The Resident Director will also use the spring term to prepare for the fall semester, including working with Beida faculty and administrators regarding program quality and traveling to Skidmore and other schools in the States to recruit students.

As occurs with other Skidmore programs abroad, the Office of International Programs will manage the application process. The members of the Committee will review applications and make admissions decisions based on program-specific requirements and on selection criteria currently in place for Skidmore programs. These requirements include a GPA of 3.0 or higher, strong faculty recommendations, and a minimum of one year of college-level Mandarin or the equivalent. Any applications not meeting these requirements will be brought before the Committee on Academic Standing for review.

The Committee will also be charged with creating a framework for and making final decisions about the selection of candidates for the Skidmore delegations to Beida. Although the daily work will be managed by the staff of the Office of International Programs, the Director of the Beijing Program and the Resident Director in Beijing, the overall progress of the program will be the responsibility of the Steering Committee. Throughout the term of the grant, the Committee will assess program development and, as the term of the grant comes to a close, they will determine the future leadership and financial structures for the program.

STAFFING

The Steering Committee has hired initial personnel in positions funded by the grant, including the Freeman Teaching Fellow, Visiting Assistant Professor Birgit Linder, who teaches courses on campus and is helping to launch the process of recruiting students, and Yang Yu, Program Coordinator, who works in the Office of International Programs.

We are fortunate to have recently hired Xiaohong Shen, Ph.D., as our Resident Director for this program. Xiaohong has unique experience both here and in China that makes her particularly well-prepared to develop the field study component of the Skidmore in Beijing Program. She comes to us from Stanford University, where she administered the Center for East Asian Studies. Previous to that, Xiaohong worked with the Council on International Education and Exchange (CIEE) in China as the Resident Director for their program at Nanjing University. While with CIEE she established their program in

Shanghai, which included courses with a strong field work component. Xiaohong will begin working in Beijing for our program on July 1, 2003. This will give her more than one year to finalize the details of the program with Beida, including developing a strong relationship with the administration and faculty at Beida, confirming the curriculum, selecting faculty, settling housing and meal arrangements, confirming budgetary expectations, etc. During that year Xiaohong will also travel to Skidmore to learn more about Skidmore's culture, students and faculty and to assist in recruiting.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

While the safety and security of our students are always important considerations in the development and administration of a program overseas, the current global climate forces us to concentrate on this area with even greater intensity. A benefit of working with Beida is that they have a strong Office of International Relations with which our Resident Director can work during emergencies or times of crisis. In addition, we are fortunate to have found a Resident Director who combines the cultural foundation of a native Chinese citizen and a solid knowledge of American study abroad programs and students. Xiaohong Shen has experience directing a large American study abroad program in China and has dealt with a variety of safety questions, both small and large.

Once established in Beijing, our director will implement the kinds of safety precautions we use in our other sites abroad. Communication will be critical: with the Office of International Programs at Skidmore to ensure adequate preparation for and timely response to emergencies; with the American Embassy to register our students and to receive updates about local and global situations; with colleagues within the field of international education here and in China to stay informed about ongoing local and international concerns; with the students in Beijing to educate them regarding personal safety concerns; and with faculty and administrators at Beida to discuss our students' needs and concerns. As with our other programs, we will develop an emergency response and evacuation plan according to local resources. We will also provide extensive materials on personal safety and emergency response during our orientation.

PROGRAM FEE AND FINANCIAL AID

As with other Skidmore programs overseas, the students will be charged Skidmore's comprehensive fee for participating on the Skidmore in Beijing Program. This fee will apply to Skidmore and non-Skidmore participants. Skidmore students may use their entire financial aid package toward this program. Students will be billed directly by the Bursar's Office.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

For its first four years (calendar years 2002 through 2005), the Skidmore in Beijing Program will be funded by a grant from the Freeman Foundation and by revenues realized from the participant's program fees. This will cover the operational costs of setting up and running the program's academic, administrative and physical structure in Beijing. It also includes funding for the program staff that the Steering Committee has already hired and for the upcoming hire of the Field Activities Coordinator. In addition,

there are funds for program evaluation at the end of the fourth year (2005). Additional Freeman funds will be available during the fifth year (2006) due to changes in our implementation schedule that affected how we were able to use the funds during 2002 and 2003.

The Committee realizes that, as with other Skidmore programs, the Skidmore in Beijing Program must be self-sustaining in its fifth year of operation (2006), including the student, faculty and administrator exchange piece of the program. Initially, the exchange component will be funded by the Freeman grant; however, the ultimate goal is to continue these opportunities based on the revenue generated by students enrollments in the program.

The Committee has this financial goal in mind as we develop the program and finalize our negotiations with Beida and is considering enrollment, recruitment and potential growth opportunities as we work to launch the program. In addition to the Committee's ongoing attention to these financial considerations, there will be a formal evaluation of the program and its structures during the third year of the program (the fourth year of the grant – 2005). Using information gathered from this formal review and the experience of the Committee throughout the beginning years of the program, the Steering Committee will determine an ongoing financial structure that will address the long-term viability of the program. This discussion will include several options, including reworking the financial structure implemented under the grant (which would entail cutting certain areas that are crucial to the development stage of the program but not necessarily to the long-term sustainability of the program); considering a consortial agreement with "partner" schools (similar to the India Program model); or, as a last recourse, terminating the program.