

DOMESTIC EXCHANGE INITIATIVE
NATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE
Spring 2007

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) has approved the establishment of a pilot program with National Student Exchange (NSE). A relationship with NSE would allow for the addition of domestic exchange to Skidmore's off-campus options and would serve as a first step in developing a portfolio of domestic opportunities for off-campus study. This pilot program would allow Skidmore to maintain a three-year relationship with NSE while we determine the long-term viability and desirability of an official affiliation with this group. At the end of three years if the partnership has been successful, OIP would submit a proposal to CEPP to formalize the affiliation with NSE.

RATIONALE

A domestic exchange program offers a different opportunity from international exchange, and an affiliation with NSE would allow students to select the academic program and exchange experience that would suit their disciplinary and educational preference. Domestic exchange through NSE would offer our students a variety of unique and challenging possibilities and the chance to access courses with a different perspective, explore new areas of study or a subfield within a chosen major, experience a different academic environment, or investigate graduate or professional school opportunities. The option to study at a Historically Black college or university, a Hispanic-serving college or university, an urban university or a large research university would afford our students the same opportunities we promote through international study: the ability to participate in classes and academic programs that complement and enhance the course offerings at Skidmore; access to unique research facilities and technologies; opportunities for internships and field experiences that are not available in this region of the United States; and, most important to Strategic Goal II, exposure to different regions, peoples, and cultures.

There are also benefits to the College as a whole. NSE offers a true exchange in that we would actively host students on the Skidmore campus. These students would come from schools that have a very different educational framework than Skidmore and would bring with them diverse backgrounds and points of view, thus contributing to our on-campus goals regarding diversity.

A pilot program will allow us to determine exactly what the student and faculty interest in this opportunity will be. Without a clear understanding of the enrollment potential, it is impossible to say what impact the program will have on the disciplines that choose to support the program and on Skidmore's administrative offices. Additionally, it is unknown which disciplines at Skidmore will be most likely to use the exchange and which schools they will choose to use until we have some experience working with departments and programs and their students. Finally, it will take some time to fully understand the financial implications of participating in the program. Based on information from NSE, the financial impact should be minimal; however, we would do well to evaluate the overall resource implications at the end of the three years. For all of these reasons, OIP would like to take three years to collect data regarding enrollment trends and thus be able to more clearly outline the expected results of formalizing the program before moving forward with a formal, long-term affiliation.

WHAT IS NATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE (NSE)?

National Student Exchange (NSE), established in 1967, is a not-for-profit consortium of colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada that offers university-level domestic exchange opportunities. The 190 member institutions share their resources to expand academic programs and to provide diverse, multicultural, and meaningful educational experiences for their students. Member institutions include schools from 48 states, the District of Columbia, 3 U.S. territories (including Puerto Rico), and 5 Canadian provinces. Members also include Historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving colleges and universities, independent/private colleges and universities, land-grant universities, public liberal arts colleges, sea-grant universities, space-grant universities, and urban universities. While the majority of the consortium members are state-supported, NSE now includes several private colleges.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
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Where will this new initiative "live" and how will we support it? Domestic exchange will be viewed as an extension of the current international programs and, as such, will be housed in the Office of International Programs. One of the OIP program coordinators will serve as the NSE coordinator and will work with faculty, NSE, and outgoing and incoming students. The minimal expenses associated with the program will be absorbed by OIP.

How will courses and credits work? As with international approved programs, students will have access to all courses at the host institutions for which they meet pre-requisites; Skidmore's academic departments/programs will be able to determine which campuses our students will attend; faculty advisors and chairs/directors will preapprove courses and students will need approval in order for courses to count toward the major, minor or foreign language requirements. Credits will come in as transfer credit; grades will appear on the transcript but will not count toward the GPA; and all 300-level work will count toward the general maturity-level requirement.

Who can participate? As with international study away, domestic exchange will be open to sophomore, juniors and seniors with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. This requirement pertains to outgoing Skidmore students and incoming exchange students. Some disciplines may require a higher cumulative GPA or a higher GPA in the major. Although we will consider applications for either semester and for the full year, OIP will strongly encourage our own students to study away in the fall and will give preference to incoming students wanting to study at Skidmore in the spring. This structure will allow us to utilize returning Skidmore students to support the incoming spring students. It will also help with the institutional goal of balancing off-campus study enrollments across the semesters.

Do our peer schools participate in domestic exchange and NSE? Several of our peer and aspirant institutions (Vassar College, Bates College, Kenyon College, Sarah Lawrence College) have developed individual agreements with minority serving institutions. At this time, these institutions have not chosen to utilize NSE. However, we feel it is the most effective and risk-free way to enter into domestic exchange. It allows us to get an idea of how domestic exchange will fit into our current portfolio of off-campus programs before we enter into a long-term commitment with any one institution.

How will the finances work for students? Students pay tuition and mandatory fees to their home institutions and pay room and board and additional course fees to their host institutions. Therefore, Skidmore students participating on the NSE exchange program will be charged Skidmore tuition and mandatory fees. Incoming exchange students will pay similar fees on their home campus to support an exchange student there. All students will then pay the fees for room, board and any additional course fees directly to the host campus. All financial aid is transferable to all program costs - even room and board.

What are the advantages to using this exchange instead of taking a leave of absence and attending one of these institutions? There are several advantages to participating in the exchange. First, OIP and NSE facilitate the application, acceptance, course registration, housing selection, and credit transfer processes, all of which can be very challenging for students who apply independently. Second, there are a variety of support services that are not available to a traditional visiting student at many of the partner institutions. Third, all aid will transfer, which is a great benefit to many of our students. Finally, the difference between Skidmore tuition and out-of-state tuition may not be as large as students expect; therefore, the true financial benefit is not as great as sometimes perceived.

Will this have an impact on our international programs? While we cannot know for sure, we suspect this will not affect our international enrollments. From what we have heard from NSE schools, there is a different cohort that tends to take advantage of the domestic programs.

How can I find out more? Visit the NSE web site at <http://www.nse.org/> or contact Marie Alice Arnold in the Office of International Programs at x. 5355.