

## **Committee on Educational Policy and Planning Subcommittee on Skidmore College Master of Arts in Liberal Studies: Report, January 2015**

### **Executive Summary**

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) has been granting graduate degrees at Skidmore College since 1992. The purpose of MALS is to serve non-traditional students, at distance through independent studies, in-class courses at other colleges and universities, and supervised internships. Students pursue self-determined and self-paced programs under the guidance of Skidmore faculty and MALS advisors. As of 2014, 186 students have earned Skidmore MALS degrees.

The Skidmore College Committee on Educational Policy and Planning (CEPP) convened a subcommittee in response to questions raised by internal and external reviews with regard to the viability of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (CEPP minutes, 11/26/2013). The CEPP subcommittee on MALS (CSMP) served throughout 2014 reviewing, collecting and analyzing data on MALS.

Among the findings reviewed in this report, the current and previous directors of the MALS program described the strengths and challenges of the program, and most, reluctantly, concluded that given internal changes at Skidmore and in the external landscape of graduate studies, that MALS should be discontinued. The survey of faculty revealed that while many faculty find benefit in working with graduate students, many report that the work is neither sufficiently recognized nor supported by the College, which most faculty attribute to the College's need to focus on its primary role as a residential undergraduate institution. Graduates of MALS report high levels of personal satisfaction with the program, though less professional benefit from the degree. A review of enrollment and financial data reveal a program with declining applicants and net losses in revenue in recent years.

In the course of data gathering, it has become clear to CSMP that there are pockets of interest in graduate studies among the faculty, as well as areas of curricular and programmatic strength, that could support and link undergraduate and graduate work at the College.

After careful consideration of existing data, collection and analysis of new data, and committee deliberations, the CEPP subcommittee on MALS makes the following recommendations:

- The MALS program in its current form is no longer academically and financially viable and should be discontinued;
- The College should strongly consider the role of graduate studies in future strategic planning.

## **Introduction**

The Skidmore College Committee on Educational Policy and Planning (CEPP) convened a subcommittee in response to questions raised by internal and external reviews with regard to the viability of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program (CEPP minutes, 11/26/2013). CEPP drafted the charge to the subcommittee (CSMP) and determined the membership criteria in February 2014 and the subcommittee was fully staffed and began meeting in April 2014. CEPP charged the subcommittee with the following:

*CEPP's MALS subcommittee will make recommendations to CEPP regarding the future direction of MALS programming. The subcommittee will investigate the role of MALS at the College in response to the self-study and external review, and consider alternative models for the MALS' Program structure. Central questions to be addressed are: What are the parameters for academic and financial viability, for its role within the larger College mission, and its organization? What are the reasons for continuing or discontinuing MALS? If we recommend continuing MALS, what should be the expectations for the program's academic integrity and financial autonomy? What other contingencies might we include? The subcommittee will solicit broad student and faculty input. The subcommittee will conclude its work by the end of the fall 2014 term.*

In consultation with the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), CEPP defined the membership as follows:

*The Subcommittee will be composed of seven appointed members. One CEPP member will chair the subcommittee (Hope Casto); there will also be two faculty members with no MALS experience, two faculty from the MALS committee, one faculty member with MALS teaching experience not on the MALS committee, and the MALS Director (Jacqueline Scoones, non-voting).*

The committee included the following members:

- Hope Casto, Assistant Professor (Education Studies), *Subcommittee Chair*
- Luciane Beduschi, Assistant Professor (Music), *no MALS experience*
- Ruth Copans, College Librarian, *MALS committee (Fall)*
- David Howson, Visiting Associate Professor & Arthur Zankel Director (Arts Administration), *MALS committee*
- Christine Kopec, Visiting Assistant Professor (Management & Business), *no MALS experience*
- Beth Ruane, Reference & Emerging Technologies Librarian, *MALS committee (Spring)*
- Jacqueline Scoones, *Director of MALS* and Lecturer in English
- Jeffrey Segrave, Professor (Health & Exercise Sciences), *MALS teaching experience*

The subcommittee met a total of 18 times; of those meetings, five were deliberative sessions which, the non-voting committee member did not attend.

### **History of Program and Program Study**

In the 1980s, there were informal conversations at the College about the potential benefit of a master's program based on the University Without Walls (UWW) program at Skidmore. In 1989, the Report of the Commission on the 90s, appointed by President David Porter, recommended the creation of a Master of Arts program in Liberal Studies based on the successful model of the undergraduate UWW program.

The purpose of the MALS program was to serve non-traditional students, using distance learning, guiding independent studies, and granting credit for life and professional experiences. Students would pursue self-determined and self-paced programs under the guidance of Skidmore faculty and MALS advisors. As in the UWW model, faculty were paid and their participation in the program was not included in work load formulas; as the MALS Self-Study (2012) report states, even when the program was first approved, "the College did not at the same time provide faculty with incentives to participate" (Appendix A, Academic Administration, p. 6). However, participation in MALS was considered valuable community service and a worthy allocation of time and expertise in a noble educational endeavor of benefit to the community and of value to the reputation of the College.

In 1989, the faculty approved the CEPP proposal for a MALS program based on a design created by a task force of faculty and administrators. Over the course of the next two years, the proposal was submitted to the Board of Trustees, the New York State Education Department, and a team of outside assessors for consideration. In 1992, the MALS program was launched under the directorship of Lawrence Reis and housed, like UWW, within the Office of the Dean of Special Programs. The first seminar was held in the summer of 1993. In 1995, the MALS program was reviewed by and gained full membership in the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (AGLSP) in the same year. In 2009-2010, UWW, the educational and institutional model on which MALS was, in part, based, was discontinued following a faculty vote.

The MALS program was studied and reviewed, including as part of the Middle States reviews, in 2000, 2001, and 2005. The program conducted a self-study under the directorship of Michael Mudrovic in 2012 and in the same year an External Review was conducted.

As of 2014, 186 students have earned Skidmore MALS degrees. As the MALS student handbook acknowledges, the flexible structure of MALS enables students to pursue rigorous, individualized, interdisciplinary courses of study based on a wide variety of pedagogies and educational experiences at the same time as they continue their personal and professional endeavors (January 2014, p. 3).

The work of CSMP is a response, in part, to the 2012 External Review Team Report that acknowledges that “Skidmore’s MALS program is at a crossroads due to significant institutional and program changes” (p. 1), especially given recent administrative changes, turn-over, reorganization, and centralization, as well as a significant decline in the applicant pool (pp. 1-2). Furthermore, as the Report states, “the structure of the MALS program...is labor-intensive and possibly impractical and unsustainable” (p. 4).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

CSMP consulted numerous existing data sources, as well as collecting information based on the charge from CEPP. In this section of the report, we describe each of these sources, as well as our methods of analysis. In the following section, we report summarized findings from each source. In the appendices, we offer a distilled version of the data sources and we can provide the raw data of every source we collected in a separate document.

CSMP consulted the reports from the self-study and external review of MALS conducted in 2012. CSMP also consulted the two documents that were created in response to the external review recommendations, namely, the MALS faculty committee actions and the MALS director’s response (See Appendix A). We also reviewed enrollment and financial data (See Appendices F and G). In order to understand the national context of the MALS program, we consulted surveys and reports from the national Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (AGLSP), as well as other reports on the future of graduate education. A 2014 Skidmore graduate worked with MALS staff June 2014 to compile comparative data on the Skidmore MALS program and other programs across the United States. These data proved difficult to interpret, with the financial data particularly incomparable across programs. We recognize how useful these data could be; however, the nuances of Skidmore’s MALS program (e.g., separate tuition and course charges, frequent use of independent studies, and lack of online classes) make a one-to-one comparison with other programs challenging. As a result, we have not included these data in this report.

CSMP began data collection by interviewing past and current directors of MALS, the Dean of Special Programs and the Associate Director of MALS, who has been with the program since 1995 (n=7). These interviews included questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, the financial and enrollment viability of the program, and the future of the program. These interviews were coded and the resulting data were summarized thematically (See Appendix B).

Current Skidmore faculty were consulted via an online survey designed by CSMP with the following questions: (1) What is the role of graduate studies at Skidmore College?; (2) In what ways has or could a graduate program at Skidmore, such as the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program, enhance(d) your professional life?; and (3) What possibilities do you see for a re-envisioned Master of Arts of Liberal

Studies program at Skidmore? This survey was emailed to the faculty-list (N=398) and there were 71 responses for an 18% response rate. These open-ended answers were coded and are reported thematically (See Appendix C).

CSMP were able to review the experiences of graduates of the MALS program in two ways. First, exit interviews were conducted by the MALS program until 2007. And second, at the request of CSMP, the MALS staff distributed a survey to the 77 students who have graduated since 2007. Of the 77 students surveyed, 32 responded for a response rate of 42%. (See Appendix D)

Undergraduate students were surveyed and these findings were used for a discussion with the Academic Council. The undergraduate students were surveyed using a paper and pencil instrument at the front door of the library on a Monday evening. They were asked about their interest in graduate studies in the future, if they would be interested in a Masters program at Skidmore, and if they would want it to be high or low residency. There were 198 responses. To follow up on these data, three CSMP members attended an Academic Council meeting. (See Appendix E)

### **Findings**

External Review Report: The External Review Report succinctly describes the unique Skidmore's MALS degree program as follows: "This model of a graduate degree is not duplicated in the member programs of the AGLSP, and offers a remarkably flexible opportunity for some students to earn an interdisciplinary Master's degree tailored to personal or professional interests" (p. 1). In addition, the Report notes that the success of the program is "incontrovertible" (p. 1); nonetheless, the Report also acknowledges that "the time is ripe for a productive conversation about the MALS program at the College" (p. 2). The central recommendation of the external review was to form a working committee to revise the Skidmore MALS program. This recommendation resulted in the formation of the CSMP which was tasked to consider the academic and financial viability of the current program and make recommendations on future structures. In addition, the Report highlighted three areas (i.e., academics, administration, and marketing and recruiting) with specific recommendations under each. For example, within academics, the Report identifies the following areas: admissions, program structure and degree requirements. And within administration, the Report offers recommendations concerning the current administration and administrative structure, the reporting structure, and the administrative integration within the College.

According to a document prepared by the MALS Program Director, Jacqueline Scoones (See Appendix A), the MALS staff and the MALS faculty committee have considered these recommendations and taken the following actions: (1) In regard to admissions procedures (i.e., dates, decisions, and interview), materials have been revised, the interview always includes a faculty member, applicants now have the option to interview via Skype, and students are not admitted without an advisor

having been identified, with the remaining recommendations being left for a restructuring conversation; (2) in terms of program structure, a new course titled “Introduction to Graduate Research and Writing” was offered to students prior to the July 2014 seminar, two days of instruction in graduate research, methods, and writing were added to the Introductory Seminar, credit for Life Experience is no longer granted, leaving further consideration of number of independent study and transfer credits and the final project planning and defense for a restructuring discussion; (3) in connection to administrative structure, the Director’s workload was increased and the integration of the program into administrative systems would be part of a restructuring; and, (4) the use of the “Skidmore brand” has been discussed among the MALS staff and faculty committee and deemed to be an essential aspect of any future program.

Past and Present MALS Directors, Associate Director, and Dean of Special Programs: Conversation with those who have worked closely with MALS since its inception proved invaluable to the data gathering and analysis process. These seven respondents describe the primary strength of the program to be its uniqueness, including its flexibility, individualization, low-residency requirements, and interdisciplinarity (n=7). In addition, they view its primary contributions to the college to include the opportunities for faculty development (n=7), for faculty to work with graduate students (n=5), and the way in which the program enhances Skidmore’s reputation (n=3).

These respondents also acknowledge the weaknesses of the program and the significant challenges it faces. With regard to the faculty, all respondents noted the increasing demands placed on the faculty and the substantial change in the faculty culture over recent years. These changes have been compounded by compensation that was at one time seen as quite generous, but is now viewed as insufficient (n=6). The result is that the program has been forced to rely on a decreasing number of contributing faculty (n=4), a diminishing number of junior faculty, many of whom are counseled not to invest their time in MALS (n=3), and a lack of program visibility on campus (n=4). In terms of the program itself, these respondents felt that there are curricular and program design problems (n=6), including issues related to the length of the seminar, the residency requirement, and the final project. In addition, these respondents raised concerns about the ways in which faculty involvement with MALS students created varied experiences in program delivery (n=2) and advising (n=1).

Of these seven respondents, five recommended, sometimes reluctantly, that MALS be discontinued because, as was oft said, “that ship has sailed.” The other two respondents recommended that the program be continued, however in a radically restructured form. These participants acknowledged that, though the program was once unique, it has more recently faced increased external competition (n=4). In addition, it has become disconnected from the College’s mission and goals (n=4). Other comments about the lack of sustainability of the program focused on the need for faculty support (n=3), with the main suggestion being that MALS teaching be

factored into the faculty workload (n=6). Those who suggested retaining the program, albeit with significant changes, felt that MALS remains a “noble” enterprise and that the College should take the opportunity to look ahead at the changing markets and prospects for liberal arts education and “make no small plans” when considering the role of graduate studies at the College.

Skidmore College Faculty Survey Responses: Current Skidmore faculty shared their views through a short online survey on graduate education at Skidmore, the effect of MALS on their work (teaching and research), and potential visions for a restructured program. In response to the question on the role of graduate education at Skidmore, the comments coded as being positive revealed themes related to access for MALS students and faculty to varied teaching styles (n=3), models of integrative learning (n=5), interdisciplinary programs (n=3), and an extended version of liberal arts education (n=3). In addition, positive themes included comments about the opportunities that MALS affords students who are in need of a flexible program, as well as the importance of the program to those who participate in it. The comments coded as negative can be compiled under three main themes: First, that as an undergraduate institution (n=8), MALS is a diversion of time, energy and resources and that any graduate program should be narrowly focused on an extension of the work already being done by current undergraduate students; second, that MALS has insufficient resources and is not central to the mission of the college (n=11); and finally, that the program does not count toward faculty workload and, therefore, faculty cannot support it with their time and energy (n=5). (See Appendix C)

Responses to the survey question about how graduate studies has (or could) enhance their professional lives, faculty reported that it was a benefit to work with graduate students (n=13), that the work provided intellectual, and often, personal development (n=11), and that participation in MALS provided them with the opportunity to develop their pedagogy (n=6). However, faculty also reported that graduate studies could benefit them only if the program was rigorous and delivered well (n=4), and as long as their participation was included in their teaching load (n=3). Many faculty reported that participation in MALS offered no benefit (n=17) and a number of faculty specified that graduate studies are a distraction or burden, and irrelevant to the mission of the College as an undergraduate institution (n=10).

Faculty responses to the opportunity to re-envision MALS included descriptions of a program with more specialization (n=17), suggestions for a different degree (n=5), proposals for a more traditional campus-based program (n=5), and recommendations that link MALS to the undergraduate program (n=10). Faculty specified that a re-envisioned program would need to attend to the problems related to compensation (n=4) and workload for teaching and advising MALS students (n=5). Finally, many responses suggested that there was no need to reorganize the program because it should simply be discontinued (n=17).

Graduates of the MALS Program (2007-2014) Survey Responses: The Alumni Survey responses included descriptions of the program structure (i.e. the introductory seminar, the residency requirement, online coursework), the curriculum (i.e., advising, preparation for the final project, experience of the final project), and the degree itself (i.e., career advancement, salary, professional opportunities, and personal fulfillment). Graduates found all aspects of the introductory seminar to be "effective" or "very effective." Alumni reported that they would not have enrolled in the seminar if the residency requirements had been increased to a 10-week summer session (n=21), one semester (n=20), or one year (n=22). MALS graduates reported that their MALS advisor (n=28) and faculty advisor (n=23) was "effective" or "very effective." Respondents found the curriculum to be "effective" (n=10) or "very effective" (n=15) in preparing them for the final project, but fewer reported their research and methods class as "effective" (n=8) or "very effective" (n=6) in preparation for the final project. However, students reported that completing the final project contributed significantly to their intellectual development (n=28). The MALS degree was judged to be "important" or "very important" to career advancement (n=19), salary (n=11), professional opportunities (n=17), and personal fulfillment (n=27). Overall, alumni reported being "very" or "completely satisfied" (n=22) with the academic quality of the program and "very" or "completely satisfied" (n=26) with the program's administrative support. (See Appendix D)

Graduates were also asked to respond to open-ended questions about their experience in the MALS program. These questions were coded and are reported thematically. The most difficult reported aspects of the program were academic (n=5), a life/work/school balance (n=4), the flexibility (n=3), the isolation (n=5), and feeling unprepared (n=1). The most rewarding aspects were the connections developed with peers, faculty, and research participants (n=5), and personal fulfillment (n=7). The strength of the program was reported as the faculty (n=8) and the flexibility (n=8).

Skidmore College Undergraduate Student Survey Responses: The undergraduate survey responses found that 88.9% of students reported an interest in graduate studies in the future, 55.9% reported an interest in completing Masters-level work at Skidmore, and 66% expressed interest in a residential-based program. These responses were discussed further with Academic Council. Most of the students at Academic Council (approximately 20) reported plans to pursue graduate education but very few expressed interest in remaining at Skidmore. Nonetheless, there was some interest expressed in a graduate program that was combined with their undergraduate degree, in, for example, a 4+1 (or even a 3+1, as suggested by one student) program. (See Appendix E)

Enrollment and Financial Data: An analysis of enrollment data shows that the total new program enrollments in the Skidmore MALS program have decreased steadily since 2008 with 19 new enrollments in 2008 and 4 in 2014. The number of applicants has also declined over the same period of time, with 33 in 2008 and 13 in



2014, although there was a slight uptick in 2010 with 31 applicants. Finally, the number of accepted students has also decreased, with 20 in 2008 and 8 in 2014. Again, there was a corresponding uptick in 2010 with 25 accepted students. (See Appendix G)

An analysis of MALS revenue shows that the current state of the program is not revenue neutral and that the College has absorbed deficits in five of the past 10 fiscal years. The total accumulated net revenue (revenue less expenses) over the past 10 years was \$3,027 (or \$302.70 per year on average). For the past three fiscal years (FY12-FY14), the MALS program has run a deficit (\$-7,326 in FY12, \$-52,938 in FY13, and \$-101,690 in FY14). (See Appendices F and G)

An analysis of the cost of a MALS education indicates that the average cost of a MALS degree for a non-employee student is \$26,497 (based on an average tuition from 2007-2014). The average cost of education (COE) has remained consistent since 2007. (See Appendix G)

### **Recommendations**

After careful consideration of the existing and collected data, as well as more than a semester of subcommittee meetings and deliberation, it is the recommendation of this subcommittee that the MALS program be discontinued. We find that the drop in applicants, accepted students, and new enrollments, paired with the losses in net revenue over the past three fiscal years, leaves the current MALS program as neither academically or financially viable. The combined effects of the reorganization of ODSP, the increased demands on faculty time, the evolving priorities of the College, the disbanding of UWW, as well as the shifting external landscape of graduate studies broadly, have left MALS isolated and without the institutional support needed to deliver the program effectively. From the External Review Report to each on-campus data source collected by the subcommittee, a similar set of themes have emerged. The strengths of this program are echoed among all data sources. The benefits have been significant, even transformative, to those who have participated in the program, both educators and students alike. Nonetheless, without the resources and the requisite institutional support, MALS has been unable to weather the external shifts in graduate studies and the internal shifts noted above.

In the course of data gathering, it has become clear to CSMP that there are pockets of interest in graduate studies among the faculty, as well as areas of curricular and programmatic strength, that could support and link undergraduate and graduate work at the College (See Appendix H). For this reason, we strongly encourage a timely college-wide conversation about the role of graduate studies as part of the strategic planning process at Skidmore.

## **CEPP Subcommittee on MALS Report: Appendices**

Appendix A: Materials related to External Review

Appendix B: MALS Staff

Appendix C: Skidmore College Faculty

Appendix D: Graduates of Skidmore College's MALS Program

Appendix E: Skidmore College Undergraduate Students

Appendix F: MALS Program Net Revenue and Expenses

Appendix G: Enrollment and Financial Analyses

Appendix H: Areas to Consider for Graduate Studies at Skidmore College

Appendix A: Materials related to External Review

1. MALS Director's Response to the External Review
2. MALS Faculty Committee Actions, External Review Recommendations

12 September 2013

**TO:** MALS Committee 2013-2014  
**FROM:** Jacqueline E. Scoones, Ph.D.  
Director, Skidmore MALS Program

**Re: Response to the External Review Report on the Skidmore MALS Program**

**A. Narrative Overview**

The External Review Report on the Skidmore MALS Program submitted 28 October 2012 provides close, methodical consideration of the MALS program by the Directors of graduate liberal studies degree programs at Duke, Stanford, and Wesleyan. The report reflects the institutional perspectives of this team -- their knowledge and understanding of the possible role and structure of a graduate studies program within specific organizational frames. The team acknowledges the Skidmore MALS Program's unique approach to distance learning and its past success before concluding that the Skidmore MALS Program "does not meet current needs in Master's education that applicants seem to be seeking" (External Review Report, Program Structure 2, page 14). The significant decline in our enrollment during the past five years seems to substantiate that claim.

The report's overarching recommendations are that the Skidmore MALS Program be revised in order to:

- 1) Increase its connections with and make direct contributions to the college;
- 2) maintain or increase academic rigor;
- 3) continue to be financially responsible;
- 4) integrate its administrative processes with those of the college;
- 5) gain the respect and recognition of Skidmore faculty.

(External Review Report, page 2)

Many of the report's recommendations will provide the basis for substantive discussions by the MALS Committee about the operations of the Skidmore MALS Program as it is currently constituted. It is important to note, however, that the External Review team responded to questions and considerations that directed their focus towards the current structure of Skidmore MALS and its relationship with Skidmore College. Although the report briefly acknowledges current shifts in distance education and the impact of "on-line" learning opportunities on GLS programs (Recommendation 8. IV.2, page 10), there is little discussion of how Skidmore MALS is situated in the broader, rapidly changing, increasingly competitive field of graduate education and distance learning. This is understandable, since the team was not charged with that task. The ramifications of that gap, however, are significant. To explore the recommendations made in the External Review Report without also simultaneously considering tremendous opportunities and challenges posed by current trends external to Skidmore College is to: 1) miss opportunities for program revision and development that far exceed the perspective of the External Review team, and 2) potentially cause Skidmore MALS to stagnate and thus fail. We must look beyond the frame of the External Review Report in order to create and implement a MALS program that is as innovative and successful as the program conceived in 1988.

The External Review Report correctly notes that the Skidmore MALS Program lacks broad faculty participation. However, the report seems to assume that the college as a whole believes a MALS program is advantageous to the College mission and that the program's restructuring will be supported. That

assumption may not be accurate, and it is vital to address that issue in initial discussions about the program's future. As the college begins to map its next Strategic Plan and to consider educational planning for the next decade, it is important to acknowledge that the Skidmore MALS Program potentially provides a unique portal to a range of possibilities for Skidmore faculty and undergraduates, and for graduate education in general. What possibilities become available for faculty and undergraduate students if Skidmore offers a restructured program in graduate studies?

The report's primary recommendation calls for the restructuring process to occur through a "working committee tasked with revising the Skidmore MALS program" (External Review Report, page 2). While that approach is most efficient, many Skidmore faculty expect opportunity to participate in conversations about the College's educational planning and policies, so discussions would best unfold within the existing MALS Committee and, simultaneously, on a broad and inclusive scale before narrowing to more focused conversations among keenly interested participants. Ideally, that group (a committee or task force) will work closely with CEPP as the College develops its long-range educational plans.

In the meanwhile, the report's recommendations regarding admissions, advising, standards, assessment, and preparing students for graduate studies are well worth immediate consideration. The challenge for the MALS Committee is to strengthen the existing program as part of and parallel to a larger restructuring process, creating a Skidmore MALS program that will flourish within the evolving landscape of higher education.

The following pages include short, specific comments regarding each of the report's concluding recommendations (B), and a list of changes already implemented or underway (C).

## **B. Response to Recommendations (See External Review Report pages 16-18)**

### **I. Primary Recommendation**

**Formation of a Working Committee:** Discussions about initial changes to the MALS Program will take place during Fall 2013 in the MALS Committee. At the same time, through campus-wide conversations with faculty, staff, and administrators, we are creating a network of people interested in contributing to discussions about graduate studies at the college and the possible long-term evolution of MALS. The objective is to establish a Faculty Interest Group whose discussions will complement the more focused conversations of the MALS Committee before narrowing participation to a group (committee or task force) specifically charged with developing the restructuring plan for the Skidmore MALS Program.

### **II. Specific Individual Recommendations**

1. (IV.1) **Application deadlines and procedures** are best discussed after specific, future MALS programs of study and their structures are defined. For example, while it might make sense for application deadlines to correspond with the Undergraduate academic calendar for a MALS program designed on the 4+1 structure, other program structures might be better served by other, more flexible timelines. The cost savings in overhead will need to be weighed against program flexibility (a key element in marketing), targeted enrollment, and other factors. At present, given low enrollment, the Program Assistant and Associate Director are able to manage these administrative processes.
2. (IV.1) **Admissions Process and Decisions:** We agree that significantly increasing faculty involvement in admissions decisions is vital to the long-term success of the program, and

will be a crucial part of discussions regarding the program's future structure. A draft of proposed interim changes to admissions procedures will be discussed with the MALS Committee in September 2013. That proposal will include recommendations about the nature and degree of faculty participation in admissions decisions during the next 12-18 months, while the program undergoes revision.

3. (IV.1) As part of the discussion regarding the interim Admissions Process (see IV.1 above), the quality and purpose of **applicant interviews** will be discussed with the MALS Committee during Fall 2013. We are currently considering staff preparation for the interview, the content of the interview (including attention to how we will consistently conduct interviews that require applicants to engage in substantive intellectual conversation), the degree of faculty participation in the interview process, the interview setting, and the subsequent evaluation of the candidate.
4. (IV.2) The purpose, timing, and number of **Independent Study** courses included in the program will obviously be dictated by the future objectives and structure of the program, as will the focus, content, and timing of the **Methods and Research course** and its relation to the **Final Project**.
5. (IV.2) How best to introduce students to graduate study will be a critical aspect of discussions about the future structure of Skidmore MALS. In the meantime, how to attend immediately to the preparation of matriculating graduate students, in terms of expectations and fundamental skills, is an issue we began addressing in June 2013, when we focused on how we might situate the **Introductory Seminar** within the existing context of the MALS program, including its relationship to the **Methods and Research Course**. This summer we added several hours of instruction in basic skills and methods to the July seminar, and those additional modules of instruction, considered "exploratory" at the time, will be strengthened and expanded during the January 2014 seminar.

Early in Fall 2013 we will discuss with the MALS Committee plans for the July 2014 seminar, which we hope will be held in conjunction with a significantly revised introductory Methods and Research Course, including the possibility of shifting the course to the beginning of the student's course of study and offering some portion of that course through video-conferencing and on-line instruction. In addition to the pedagogical aspects of the seminar, there are issues to address regarding the role of the seminar in marketing and admissions, as well as the seminar's potential role in the MALS student community.

6. (IV.2) Last year a decision was made to no longer accept "Life Experience" for credit in Skidmore MALS.
7. (IV.2) Certainly any discussion of changes in the structure of MALS will necessarily engage with questions about how many **transfer courses** – if any – students might take at other institutions. Discussions of blended learning opportunities are relevant here, as are discussions of summer sessions and other possible residency requirements, depending on the future structure of the program.
8. (IV.2) The current emphasis on admitting students who have a clear sense of purpose and a concept for the final **thesis** is in keeping with the overarching mission of the program to provide students an opportunity to craft their own course of study. Depending on how the program evolves, this expectation may be revised. The current "problem" is perhaps in part

one of language and degree; substituting the word "focus" for the word "thesis" resolves some of the tension associated with this concern. Graduate students are expected to have a "focus" before beginning their coursework in MALS, not a "thesis," and students are encouraged to engage in intellectual exploration. We will review and revise MALS documents accordingly, and will work with the MALS Committee, staff, and advisors to ensure there is agreement about use of the term.

9. (IV.2) We agree that requiring a **Capstone** activity, such as an exit interview or defense, in addition to the final project is in the best pedagogical interest of the students. We are currently exploring how electronic portfolios might become part of the capstone experience, and how we might use other technologies to facilitate other activities (presentations, interviews, etc.). These ideas will be discussed with the MALS Committee during Fall 2013, in conjunction with discussions of other curriculum development and assessment activities.
10. (IV.2) The question about how many courses may be taken away from Skidmore is a fundamental aspect of determining the future structure of the program. The question about **Distance Learning** is also integral to questions about Skidmore's perspective on **E-learning**. As the program's future is discussed, we will be sharing as much information as possible about blended learning, flipped courses, small, focused on-line independent study modules, video-conferencing technology, and other means of connecting students and faculty so that new on-line learning methods can be considered as we think about the graduate student experience. In the short term, we intend to take to the MALS Committee a proposal outlining an introductory Research and Methods Course that would be delivered in part through on-line instruction.
11. (V) **Administrative systems** should serve programs, not dictate them; discussion of how best to integrate MALS operations with the College should take place within the context of overarching discussions about the program itself. Those discussions will stem from pedagogical concerns, and the development of timeframes and deadlines for graduate study will certainly be addressed as part of that conversation.
12. (V) The **Director's workload** has been shifted to a 60% load as recommended in the report. The structure of the position and the Director's responsibilities will be discussed in correlation with the evolution of the program, and in conjunction with a review of the Associate Director's job description.
13. (VI) Using the **Skidmore "brand"** as the basis for marketing the MALS program makes good sense when promoting regionally to those who can be expected to have familiarity with Skidmore College. Our questions about marketing range far beyond the recommendations of the report. It makes sense to utilize the report's recommendation to capitalize on Skidmore's brand -- to the degree that seems useful. As MALS is newly defined, we plan to explore how other graduate liberal studies programs are marketed, to survey alumni and undergraduate students, and to "consult" with those experienced in marketing educational programs. In the meantime, we're focusing our efforts on using web-based marketing and social media.

**C. Summary of Activities To Date Pertinent to the External Review Report  
(1 June - 31 August, 2013)**

*The list includes only those activities completed or initiated June - August 2013; it does not include references to future plans.*

**1. Connecting MALS to the College**

a. A formal timeline of activities designed in part to engage the campus community in conversations about the evolution of the Skidmore MALS program will be delivered to the ODSP Dean on 27 August, 2013. That plan aims to promote widespread visibility, participation, and, most importantly, substantive discussions of the current status of MALS and its potential restructuring throughout the college. Faculty, administrators, staff, and undergraduates will be asked to share their perceptions, ideas, and suggestions regarding the program's future.

b. The MALS Director developed a list of approximately 75 members of the faculty, staff, and administration with whom she would like to discuss the MALS program individually. She has met to date with over 30 of those people and hopes to complete these individual meetings by 1 December, 2013.

c. The MALS Director will request monthly meetings with the Associate Dean of the Faculty (Academic Planning and Advising) beginning September, 2013.

**2. Reviewing Admissions Process, Procedures, and Participants**

Developing draft proposal for the MALS Committee (for discussion September 2013).

**3. Reconceiving the Methods and Research Course**

Developed and implemented small units of instruction in skills and methods in conjunction with the July 2103 Introductory Seminar. Now developing draft proposal for the MALS Committee regarding significant expansion of those efforts in preparation for the January and July 2014 seminars (for discussion September 2013).

**4. Reconceiving the Structure and Potential Outcomes of the Introductory Seminars**

Developing a draft proposal regarding the July 2014 seminar for the MALS Committee (for discussion October 2013). Also researching "best practices" of other MALS Programs in preparation for discussions regarding the Skidmore program's future content and structure. Since the concept of the "Introductory Seminars" may be significantly revised, we will suggest that the MALS Committee focus only the July 2014 seminar at this time.

**5. Reviewing the relationship between the Initial Advising Report, Academic Plan, and Final Project**

We are researching the "best practices" of other MALS Programs regarding final projects, as well as considering how **portfolio/project review** and other **capstone** activities might be incorporated as an element of the current program. A draft proposal will be given to the MALS Committee in October 2013.

**6. Marketing**

a. Conducted a pilot research program on the use of social media by other colleges and universities to promote their graduate degree programs.

b. Posted internship opportunity for a graduate student in communications or public relations to help develop and implement social media strategy for the Skidmore MALS program.



Marketing, continued

- c. Planning electronic mailing pieces and strategy for Fall 2013.
- d. Developing new list of targeted mailing addresses (electronic and print) and posted position for a Work Study student to assist in that project.
- e. Met with MALS Alumni Advisory group to discuss marketing challenges and to brainstorm new approaches.
- f. Developing a plan to promote Skidmore MALS to graduating seniors.
- g. Reviewed marketing history to date and slightly revised some ongoing efforts.
- h. Holding on-going conversations with ODSP staff about marketing initiatives, ideas, etc.

7. **Additional Activity Specific to the External Review:**

- a. We are exploring a wide range of possibilities in **e-learning** (on-line instruction, blended learning, flip instruction, video conferencing, etc.) as a partial response to the report's recommendations, as well as vital preparation for a possible evolutionary trajectory of the Skidmore MALS Program.
- b. We are studying other graduate programs in liberal studies in preparation for developing sample structures and prototypes to serve as talking points in discussions regarding a future Skidmore MALS program.
- c. We have developed two timelines mapping two potential methods and schedules for the creation and implementation of a plan for restructuring the Skidmore MALS Program, and will share those drafts with the Dean of ODSP, the VPAA, and (pending their approval) with the Chairs of CEPP and FEC.

*END*

**February 20, 2014**

**Summary Recommendations (13), MALS External Review, October 2012  
MALSC Responses, September 2013 - January 2014**

1. Application deadlines and procedures should conform to the timeframe and deadlines of college applications:  
[This recommendation will be addressed through restructuring.](#)  
Discussed by MALSC; modest interim changes have been implemented to strengthen the admissions process as it is currently structured.
2. Admissions materials, participants, decisions:  
Discussed by MALSC and interim changes implemented.
3. The Admissions Interview:  
Discussed by MALSC and interim changes implemented.
4. [Reduce Independent Study hours](#)  
[Not yet addressed.](#)  
[This recommendation will be addressed through restructuring](#)
5. Introductory Seminar and its relationship to the Research and Methods course  
Aspects of the seminar are an ongoing topic of discussion by MALSC; modest interim changes have been implemented.  
[Research and Methods course addressed only partially](#)  
[This recommendation will be addressed through restructuring](#)
6. Life Experience credit  
No longer applicable: Deleted from the program prior to Fall 2013
7. [Total Transfer Credit permitted](#)  
[Not yet addressed](#)  
[This recommendation will be addressed through restructuring](#)
8. Presumption of Thesis upon Admission  
Not Applicable
9. Capstone Activity  
[Initial discussion; no recommendation yet](#)
10. [Reduction in courses taken off-campus](#)  
[This recommendation will be addressed through restructuring](#)
11. Integrating Administrative Procedures with the College (exploration of possibilities)  
MALS staff has explored possibilities; no changes have been made.  
[This recommendation will be addressed through restructuring](#)
12. Director's Workload  
No longer applicable: Director's workload increased June 2013
13. Promote Skidmore "Brand" in marketing  
MALS staff highlighted Skidmore's brand in the design of some marketing materials

Appendix B: MALS Staff

1. Main Themes from Interviews of Current and Former MALS Directors, Dean of Special Programs, and Associate Director of MALS

## **MALS Staff: Main Themes**

### **I. Strengths of MALS:**

- Uniqueness (flexibility, individualization, low residency, interdisciplinarity) (7)
- Faculty development (pedagogy, scholarship, curriculum) (7)
- Opportunity to work with graduate students (5)
- Enhance Skidmore's reputation (3)
- Enhance diversity/service to the community (2)
- Support LA goals of Skidmore (lifelong learning, T & T) (3)

### **II. Weaknesses of MALS:**

#### **A. Faculty Variables:**

- Increasing demands on faculty/change in faculty culture (7)
- Little faculty reward (workload, compensation, service recognition) (6)
- Reliance of decreasing number of faculty (waning enthusiasm) (4)
- Lack of program visibility/marginalization (4)
- Loss of junior faculty (3)
- Access/relationships with students (2)

#### **B. Program Variables:**

- Curricular problems (seminar length, residency requirement, final project) (6)
- Recruitment issues (decision based on economics, lack of) (3)
- Variability in delivery (advising, curriculum, duration of enrollment) (2)
- Variation in faculty advising (1)
- Reorganization of ODSP (1)

### **III. Viability:**

- Professionalization and specialization in degree demands (6)
- Increased competition (4)
- Lack of institutional support/leadership/energy (4)
- Marketing problems (loss of uniqueness, expense) (4)
- Alignment between graduate and undergraduate programs (3)
- Economic downturn (2)
- Programmatic expense (2)
- Predicated on faculty support/enthusiasm (3)
- Cost neutrality (2)

### **IV. Future:**

- Targeted programs (MFA, MBA, AA, Doc Studies, 4+ 1) (5)
- Hire FT Director/Recruiter (4)
- Non-degree program options (certificates, other residential programs) (3)
- Initiate strategic conversations about value of graduate education (2)
- Targeted markets (undergraduates, alums) (2)
- Interface with other institutions/organizations (2)
- Embrace new technologies (1)
- Relocate to DOF/VPAA (1)

### **V. Recommendation:**

- Disband/ship sailed/not as is (5)
- Continue but restructure (2)

Appendix C: Skidmore College Faculty

1. Faculty Survey Data, Thematic Reports for Questions 1-3

## **CSMP Faculty Survey Thematic Reporting of Question 1**

What is the role of graduate studies at Skidmore College?

### **Positive view of the role of graduate studies:**

- Models the best of integrative learning for the faculty and our residential students (5)
- Offers diversity by providing different type of teaching/different type of student (3)
- Extends college mission of liberal arts education into the graduate realm (3)
- Bridges disciplines, is pragmatic with much less emphasis on disciplinary focus (3)
- Fosters connections between the college and community members or alums (2)
- Gives folks in the workforce an opportunity to complete graduate education (2)
- Allows faculty to earn extra money while interacting with mature students (1)
- Is a “boutique program” valuable to those involved, but with a minor role on campus (1)

### **Tentatively positive view of the role of graduate studies:**

- Sustainable only if faculty participation counts toward teaching load (5)
- May be providing high value education experience to an underserved population (3)
- Sustainable only if financially viable on its own (3)
- Viable only if it fosters connections with community/alums who may be donors (2)
- MALS has a long history and may work if re-imagined (2)
- Small program but intellectually adventurous; large impact on those it serves (1)
- Could permit undergrads to interact with grad students in a fruitful way with more resources (1)

### **Negative view of the role of graduate studies:**

- We are an undergraduate institution; not part of our mission; diverts resources (11)
- Top flight liberal arts schools must focus on undergraduate education (8)
- Depends on “volunteer” faculty who already have too many demands on their time (3)
- Any graduate program should be an extension of work done by our undergraduates (3)
- Waste of time, energy, resources; diverts faculty from supervising undergraduate research (1)
- Providing undergraduate opportunities to students who have not been able to follow a traditional path is more beneficially than providing graduate education (a pity UWW was terminated) (1)

## **CSMP Faculty Survey**

### **Thematic Reporting of Question 2**

In what ways has or could a graduate program at Skidmore, such as the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program, enhance(d) your professional life?

#### **Benefits:**

- **Opportunity to work with graduate students (13)**
- **Intellectual development (11)**
- **Pedagogical development (6)**
- Curricular development (3)
- Raise intellectual bar on campus (2)
- Enhance scholarship (2)
- Raise personal status on campus (1)
- Value to the discipline (1)
- Presentation of student accomplishment (1)

#### **Benefits - Maybe:**

- **Only if program rigorous/done properly (4)**
- **Only if included in teaching load (3)**
- Graduate students as teachers (2)
- Potential scholarly collaboration (2)
- Graduate students as graduate assistants (1)
- Has potential (1)

#### **Benefits - No:**

- **No benefit (17)**
- **Distraction/burden/detrimental re. undergraduate mission (10)**
- MALS degree of no career benefit (3)
- Program lacks rigor (3)
- Graduates as research assistants of no value (2)
- Unprepared/unsuccessful students (3)
- Not relevant to academic discipline (1)
- Problems with access/relationship with students (1)
- Seminar too short (1)

## **CSMP Faculty Survey**

### **Thematic Reporting of Question 3**

What possibilities do you see for a re-envisioned Master of Arts of Liberal Studies program at Skidmore?

#### **Specialty (17)**

- More specialized than a MALS degree
- More clearly designed but still maintaining a liberal arts flavor
- More directly tied to students' career advancement
- More focused curriculum
- Program with a few well-chosen disciplines
  - Areas cited for specialization include: media studies, sciences, humanities, public humanities, museum studies, microscopy, health professions post-bac, Moore documentary studies, arts administration

#### **Faculty (13)**

- Careful look at compensation for faculty (4)
- MALS teaching and advising count in teaching load (5)
- Connecting MALS students with Skidmore faculty with shared research interest
- Intellectual stimulation

#### **Link to undergraduates (11)**

- Graduate students could elevate the level of discourse within the classroom at the institution, as somewhat older and more experienced students. (10)
- Opportunities for undergraduates, graduate experience to enhance graduation school/job prospects. (2)

#### **Degree offered (6)**

- Areas cited include: MA in Arts Management, Master's of Education, MBA program. (5)
- Create certificate and other programs where we have particular strength.

#### **Residency requirement (10)**

- A more traditional, campus-based program (5)
- Low residency (1)
- Include travel component (1)

#### **Quality of the program (8)**

- Upholding the academic standards should be the priority if the program is to continue. (4)

#### **Financial matters (3)**

- Self-sufficient (2)

**No need for reorganization because the program should be discontinued. (17)**



## Appendix D: Graduates of Skidmore College's MALS Program

### 1. MALS Alumni Survey Data

**Skidmore College  
Committee on Educational Policies and Planning [CEPP]  
Subcommittee on the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program**

**MALS Alumni Questionnaire  
August 2014**

**Please return the survey to the M.A. in Liberal Studies Program Office in the envelope provided  
no later than September 30, 2014.**

**Total Number Surveyed: 77  
Total Number Returned: 32**

**A. STRUCTURE**

- 1). How effectively did the MALS **Introductory Seminar** prepare you for graduate level work in subsequent courses?

Circle one response for each skill using this scale:

**1: Very Ineffective          2: Ineffective          3: Somewhat Effective          4: Effective          5: Very Effective**

- |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Reading and responding to materials     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|    | 1 = 0   2 = 0   3 = 5   4 = 15   5 = 10 |   |   |   |   |   |
| b. | Interdisciplinary thinking              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|    | 1 = 0   2 = 0   3 = 6   4 = 8   5 = 16  |   |   |   |   |   |
| c. | Study skills                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|    | 1 = 2   2 = 6   3 = 7   4 = 10   5 = 5  |   |   |   |   |   |
| d. | Research Methods                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|    | 1 = 3   2 = 4   3 = 5   4 = 12   5 = 6  |   |   |   |   |   |
| e. | Writing the long paper                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|    | 1 = 2   2 = 3   3 = 6   4 = 8   5 = 11  |   |   |   |   |   |

- 2). If the MALS program increased the content and thus the residential requirement for the **Introductory Seminar** how many weeks AT MOST would you have been willing to spend on campus? (circle one)

**1 Week          2 Weeks          3 Weeks          4 Weeks          5 Weeks          More than 5 Weeks**

1 Week = 12 | 2 Weeks = 10<sup>1</sup> | 3 weeks<sup>2</sup> = 2 | 4 weeks<sup>3</sup> | 5 weeks = 0 | 5+ weeks = 2

- 3). Would you have enrolled in the program if the **RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT**:

- |    |                                    |     |    |       |
|----|------------------------------------|-----|----|-------|
| a. | included a 5 week summer session?  | YES | NO | MAYBE |
|    | YES = 9   NO = 13   MAYBE = 9      |     |    |       |
| b. | included a 10 week summer session? | YES | NO | MAYBE |

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<sup>1 2 3</sup> Some participants circled more than one l answer.

1 = 1.5 – 2 weeks

2 = 2 or 3 weeks

1 = with a range of 3-4 weeks

	YES = 3	NO = 21	MAYBE = 7			
c.	included 1 Fall OR 1 Spring semester?			YES	NO	MAYBE
	YES = 6	NO = 20	MAYBE = 5			
d.	included 1 Year (Fall AND Spring Semesters)?			YES	NO	MAYBE
	YES = 6	NO = 22	MAYBE = 2			
e.	were eliminated?			YES	NO	MAYBE
	YES = 13	NO = 11	MAYBE = 6			

4). If MALS had offered on-line courses pertinent to your area of concentration through live discussion, video, and other platforms, would you have enrolled? (circle one)

	YES	NO	MAYBE
	YES = 21	NO = 0	MAYBE = 9

Why or why not? – See Appendix A

Any additional comments regarding the MALS Program structure? – See Appendix A

**B. CURRICULUM**

Respond to questions 5 - 8 using this scale:

1: Very Ineffective      2: Ineffective      3: Somewhat Effective      4: Effective      5: Very Effective

5). How effective were your Academic Advisors in terms of availability, academic planning, administrative guidance, and other advising services pertinent to your needs? (circle one)

a.	MALS Advisor:	1 = 1   2 = 0   3 = 2   4 = 11   5 = 17	1 2 3 4 5
b.	Faculty Advisor:	1 = 2   2 = 2   3 = 5   4 = 9   5 = 14	1 2 3 4 5

6). How well did your **curriculum** prepare you for completing the Final Project?:  
1 = 0 | 2 = 1 | 3 = 5 | 4 = 10 | 5 = 15

7). How well did the "**Research and Methods**" course specifically prepare you for completing the final project?  
1 = 3 | 2 = 6 | 3 = 5 | 4 = 8 | 5 = 6

8). To what degree did completing the **Final Project** contribute to your overall intellectual development?  
1 = 0 | 2 = 0 | 3 = 3 | 4 = 9 | 5 = 19

9). What modes of study did you most prefer, and why? (MALS Seminar, Independent Study with Skidmore Faculty, Independent Study with Faculty at other Institutions, In-class courses at other institutions, Internship) - See Appendix B

10). What modes of study did you least prefer, and why? (MALS Seminar, Independent Study with Skidmore Faculty, Independent Study with Faculty at other Institutions, In-class courses at other institutions, Internship) – See Appendix B

Any additional comments on the MALS curriculum? – See Appendix B

**C. MALS DEGREE**

Use the following scale to answer questions 11 - 14.

1. Not Important      2. Little Importance      3. Moderately Important      4. Important      5. Very Important

To what extent has your MALS degree **been an advantage to you** in terms of:

- 11). Career Advancement      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 4 | 2 = 4 | 3 = 3 | 4 = 9 | 5 = 10
- 12). Salary      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 7 | 2 = 5 | 3 = 7 | 4 = 9 | 5 = 2
- 13). New Professional Opportunities      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 4 | 2 = 4 | 3 = 6 | 4 = 8 | 5 = 9
- 14). Personal Fulfillment      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 0 | 2 = 0 | 3 = 5 | 4 = 3 | 5 = 24

Use the following scale to answer questions 15 - 20.

1. Very Unsatisfied    2. Somewhat Unsatisfied    3. Moderately Satisfied    4. Very Satisfied    5. Completely Satisfied

- 15). How **satisfied** were you with the academic quality of the program?      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 1 | 2 = 2 | 3 = 4 | 4 = 14 | 5 = 8
- 16). How **satisfied** were you with the program's administrative support?      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 0 | 2 = 2 | 3 = 1 | 4 = 10 | 5 = 16

How **satisfied** are you with your MALS degree in terms of:

- 17). Career Advancement      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 4 | 2 = 3 | 3 = 4 | 4 = 6 | 5 = 9
- 18). Salary      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 5 | 2 = 5 | 3 = 5 | 4 = 7 | 5 = 4
- 19). New Professional Opportunities      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 4 | 2 = 1 | 3 = 9 | 4 = 4 | 5 = 9
- 20). Personal Fulfillment      1 2 3 4 5  
1 = 1 | 2 = 0 | 3 = 1 | 4 = 4 | 5 = 23

Any additional comments on the value of the MALS Degree? – See Appendix C

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 21). What was the most difficult aspect of the program? Why? – See Appendix D
- 22). What was the most rewarding aspect of the program? Why? – See Appendix D
- 23). What are the primary strengths of the MALS program? – See Appendix D
- 24). What changes in the program would have improved your experience? – See Appendix D

25). Overall, how satisfied are you with the Skidmore MALS Program? (circle one)

1. Very Unsatisfied   2. Somewhat Unsatisfied   3. Moderately Satisfied   4. Very Satisfied   5. Completely Satisfied

1 = 0 | 2 = 3 | 3 = 2 | 4<sup>4</sup> = 12 | 5 = 13

26). Any additional comments and/or suggestions regarding the Skidmore MALS Program? – See Appendix

MALS Program Start Date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

MALS Program Graduation Date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return the survey to the M.A. in Liberal Studies Program Office in the envelope provided  
no later than September 30, 2014.**

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<sup>4</sup> One response: 4-5

## Appendix E: Skidmore College Undergraduate Students

1. Undergraduate Student Survey Data
2. Academic Council Summary

CSMP STUDENT SURVEY

RANDOM SAMPLE - ALL CLASSES, ALL MAJORS

Department	Year	Future Grad Education		Masters at Skidmore		Residential	Low-Res
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
American Studies	2016	2	0	1	1	1	0
Dept Total		2	0	1	1	1	0
Anthropology	2017	4	0	1	3	0	1
Anthropology	2018	1	0	0	1		
Dept Total		5	0	1	4	0	1
Art History	2017	3	0	2	1	1	
Art History	2018	2	0	0	2		
Dept Total		5	0	2	3	1	0
Asian Studies	2018	1	0	1	0		
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	0	0
Biochemistry	2018	1	0	1	0	1	
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	1	0
Biology	2016	1	0	0	1		
Biology	2017	7	0	4	3	2	
Biology	2018	5	0	3	2	2	1
Dept Total		13	0	7	6	4	1
Business	2015	3	0	2	1	0	1
Business	2016	4	1	4	1	3	1
Business	2017	9	0	5	4	3	2
Business	2018	5	0	3	2	2	1
Dept Total		21	1	14	8	8	5
Chemistry	2015	2	0	1	1	0	1
Chemistry	2016	2	0	0	2		
Chemistry	2017	1	1	1	1		
Chemistry	2018	3	0	2	0	1	1
Dept Total		8	1	4	4	1	2

CSMP STUDENT SURVEY  
RANDOM SAMPLE - ALL CLASSES, ALL MAJORS

Classics	2015	1	0	1	0	1	
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	1	0

Computer Science	2018	0	1	1	0	1	
Dept Total		0	1	1	0	1	0

Dance	2015	2	0	1	1	1	0
Dance	2016	3	0	1	2	1	0
Dance	2017	1	1	1	1	1	0
Dept Total		6	1	3	4	3	0

Economics	2015	3	3	2	4	2	
Economics	2016	1	1	1	1	1	
Economics	2018	4	0	3	1	2	1
Dept Total		8	4	6	6	5	1

Education	2017	2	0	2	0	0	2
Education	2018	1	0	1	0	1	
Dept Total		3	0	3	0	1	

English	2015	4	0	2	2	2	0
English	2016	1	0	0	1		
English	2017	4	0	2	1	3	1
English	2018	1	1	1	1	0	1
Dept Total		10	1	5	5	5	2

Environmental Studies	2015	2	0	0	2		
Environmental Studies	2016	1	0	0	1		
Environmental Studies	2017	3	0	2	1	0	2
Environmental Studies	2018	2	1	3	0	2	1
Dept Total		8	1	5	4	2	3

Exercise Science	2015	3	0	3	0	2	1
Exercise Science	2016	1	0	0	1		
Exercise Science	2017	5	0	2	3	1	1
Exercise Science	2018	2	0	2	0	1	1



CSMP STUDENT SURVEY

RANDOM SAMPLE - ALL CLASSES, ALL MAJORS

Dept Total		11	0	7	4	4	3
Finance	2018	1	0	1	0	1	
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	1	0
French	2017	1	0	0	1		
Dept Total		1	0	0	1	0	0
Geoscience	2018	1	0	1	0	1	
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	1	0
German	2015	2	0	2	0	2	
Dept Total		2	0	2	0	2	0
Government	2015	3	1	2	2	1	1
Government	2016	4	0	1	3	1	1
Government	2017	3	1	0	4	0	0
Government	2018	2	0	0	2		
Dept Total		12	2	3	11	2	2
History	2015	3	2	0	3		
History	2018	2	0	1		1	1
Dept Total		5	2	1	3	1	1
International Affairs	2015	1	0	1	0	1	
International Affairs	2017	1	1	2	0	1	1
International Affairs	2018	2	1	2	1	1	1
Dept Total		4	2	5	1	3	2
Mathematics	2015	1	0	1	0	1	
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	1	0
Music	2015	1	0	0	1		
Music	2016	0	1	0	1		
Music	2018	2	0	2	0	1	1
Dept Total		3	1	2	2	1	1

CSMP STUDENT SURVEY  
RANDOM SAMPLE - ALL CLASSES, ALL MAJORS

Neuroscience	2018	1	1	1	1	1	
Dept Total		1	1	1	1	1	0
Physics	2015	1	0	0	1		
Physics	2016	1	0	0	1		
Physics	2018	1					
Dept Total		3	0	0	2	0	0
Psychology	2015	2	0	2	1	1	2
Psychology	2016	2	1	2	1	2	
Psychology	2017	7	0	6	1	4	1
Psychology	2018	3	0	3	0	2	1
Dept Total		14	1	13	3	9	4
Social Work	2016	1	0	1	0	1	
Social Work	2017	1	0	0	1		
Dept Total		2	0	1	1	1	0
Sociology	2016	2	1	1	2	1	
Sociology	2017	1	1	0	2		
Sociology	2018	2	0	1	1	1	
Dept Total		5	2	2	5	2	0
Spanish	2015	1	0	1	0		1
Spanish	2017	2	0	1	1		1
Dept Total		3	0	2	1	0	2
Studio Art	2015	1	0	1	1		1
Studio Art	2016	1	0	0	1		
Studio Art	2017	2	0	1	1	1	
Dept Total		4	0	2	3	1	1
Sustainability	2018	1	0	1	0		1
Dept Total		1	0	1	0	0	1

CSMP STUDENT SURVEY

RANDOM SAMPLE - ALL CLASSES, ALL MAJORS

Theater	2015	1	0	1	0	1	
Theater	2018	1	0	1	0		1
Dept Total		2	0	2	0	1	1

Undeclared	2017	3	1	2	2	2	
Undeclared	2018	10	1	9	3	6	2
Dept Total		13	2	11	5	8	2

	Year Interest	Future Grad Education		Masters at Skidmore		Residential	Low-Res
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
Seniors	2015	37	6	23	20	15	8
Juniors	2016	27	5	12	20	11	2
Sophomores	2017	60	6	34	31	19	12
First-Year	2018	52	5	40	15	25	14
TOTAL NUM		176	22	109	86	70	36
%		88.9%	11.1%	55.9%	44.1%	66.0%	34.0%

## CSMP Meeting Notes

Academic Council (11/13/14)

David Howson, Jeff Segrave, Chris Kopec

- Nearly all of them (app. 20 students attended) plan to go to graduate school to get a degree for a career. When asked if they were going for professional reasons most said yes. But, when asked if they were going for personal intellectual fulfillment, most said yes, and then stated that for them the professional and the personal are intertwined.
- Most (app.75%) want to get their degree finished quickly; they are not interested in a part-time program.
- Related to that, just about all said that financial aid was crucial to their decision about where and when to go to graduate school.
- About 90% were not interested in staying at Skidmore for graduate studies as they wanted to “move on” and explore other places, although there was some interest in a possible 4+1 (and one student suggested a 3+1 where you could take a lot of undergrad credits in 3 years, apply some to the graduate degree and take the last year, and maybe a summer or two, to get your graduate credits).
- The 4+1 was of interest more for financial reasons than any other. These students seemed eager for a traditional graduate program, although they are a self-selected group of student leaders who may not be representative of our larger student population
- Most had never heard of MALS before they got to Skidmore (it is not mentioned on admission tours) but about 40% had heard of it before they came to the meeting (from graduate schools fairs on campus, graduation, other meetings).
- They are not sure if a graduate program would enhance their experience, or their degrees, from Skidmore.
- Finally, one student commented that MALS offered a great opportunity to an underserved population.

Prepared by: Chris Kopec

Appendix F: MALS Program Net Revenue and Expenses

1. MALS Program Net Revenue and Expenses (FY10-FY14)

Skidmore College						
MALS Activity						
FY10-FY14						
						*
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY14 Revised
<b>Revenue</b>	\$ 334,205	\$ 304,351	\$ 252,470	\$ 193,854	\$ 181,298	\$ 181,298
<b>Expenses:</b>						
Compensation:						
Faculty	\$ 35,200	\$ 37,550	\$ 39,000	\$ 30,074	\$ 66,275	\$ 27,475
Staff	\$ 150,612	\$ 109,492	\$ 149,657	\$ 150,665	\$ 176,113	\$ 176,113
Benefits	\$ 43,523	\$ 29,839	\$ 37,860	\$ 38,197	\$ 57,612	\$ 57,612
<b>Subtotal Compensation</b>	\$ 229,335	\$ 176,881	\$ 226,517	\$ 218,936	\$ 300,000	\$ 261,200
Services & Supplies	\$ 40,773	\$ 39,585	\$ 33,279	\$ 27,856	\$ 21,788	\$ 21,788
<b>Subtotal Expenses</b>	\$ 270,108	\$ 216,466	\$ 259,796	\$ 246,792	\$ 321,788	\$ 282,988
<b>Net Revenue (Expense)</b>	\$ 64,097	\$ 87,885	\$ (7,326)	\$ (52,938)	\$ (140,490)	\$ (101,690)
* Faculty compensation adjusted for FY14 - director salary charged to MALS in error (should have been charged against director's home department)						

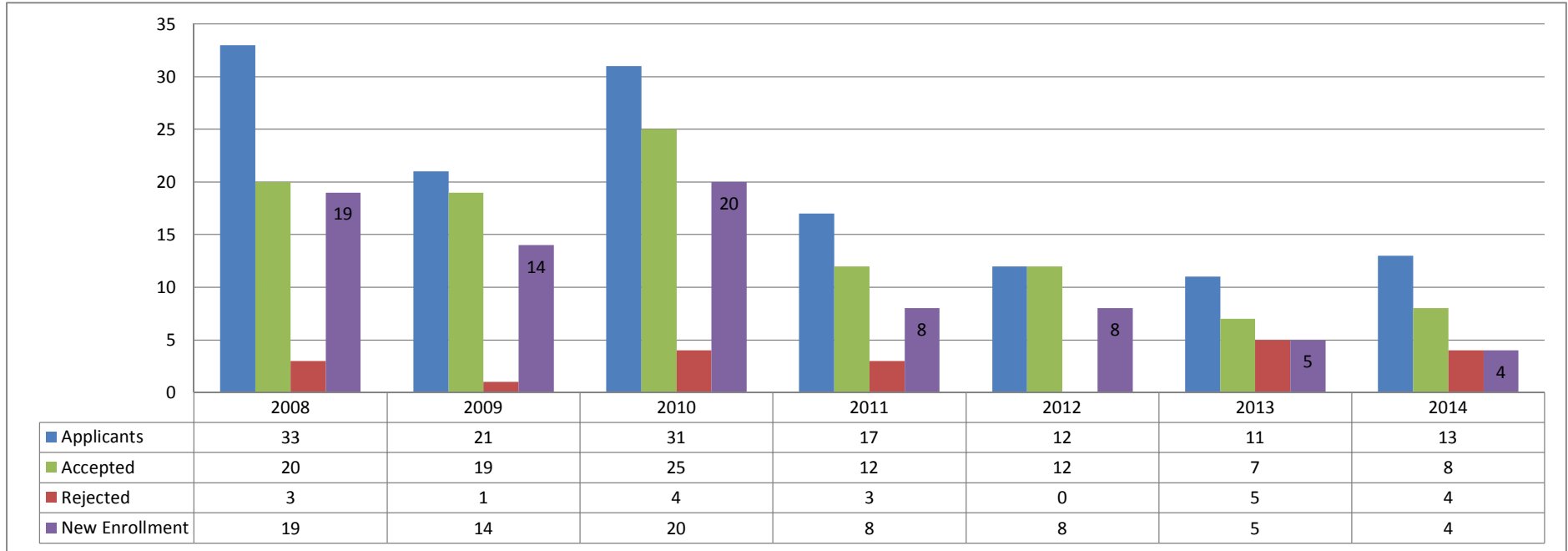
Appendix G: Enrollment and Financial Analyses

1. New Enrollment by Entry Cohort (2008-2014)
2. Cost of Education by Graduating Cohort (2007-2014)
3. MALS Revenue Analysis (FY05-FY14)

CSMP

New Enrollment Comparison by Entry Cohort (2008-2014)

Entry Cohort	Applicants	Accepted	Rejected	New Enrollment
2008	33	20	3	19
2009	21	19	1	14
2010	31	25	4	20
2011	17	12	3	8
2012	12	12	0	8
2013	11	7	5	5
2014	13	8	4	4



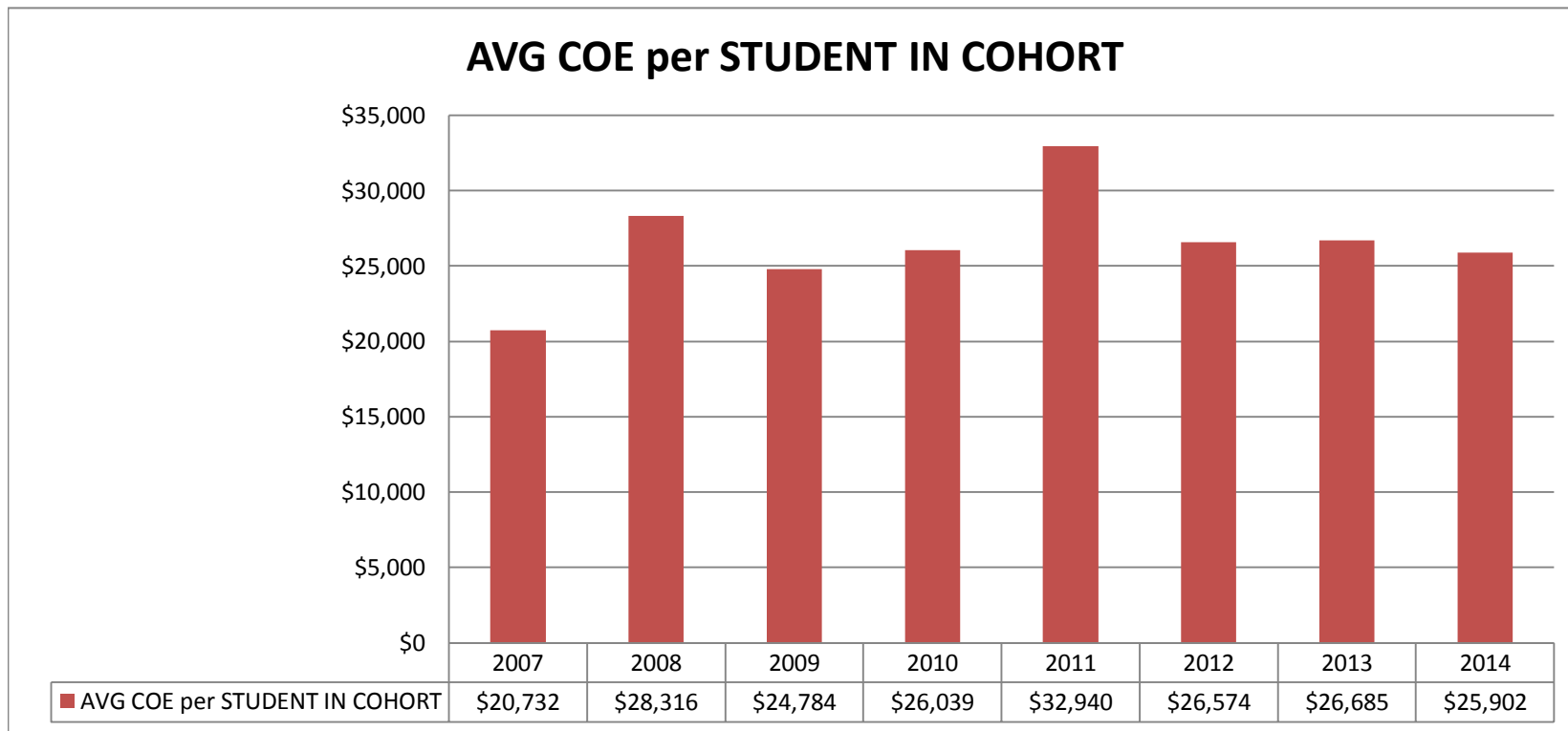


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Comparison of the total Cost of Education (COE) by graduating cohort of MALS students (2007-2014).

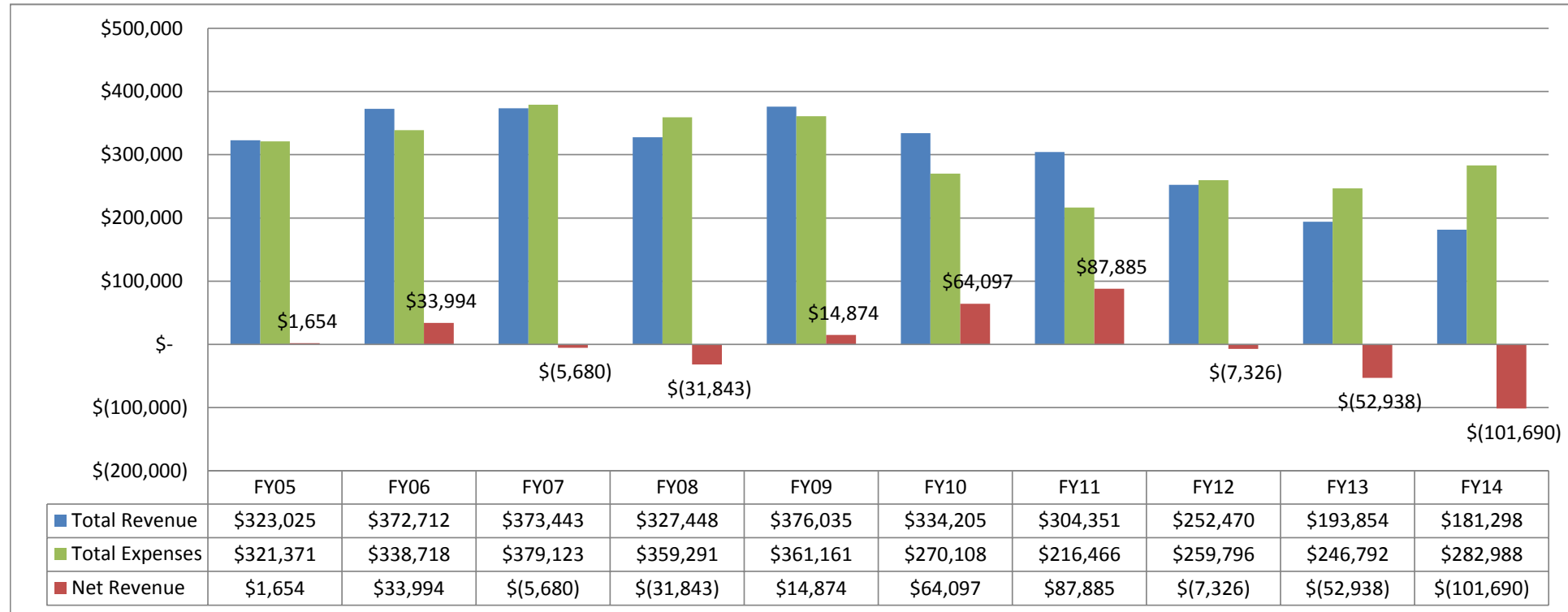
Four students charged at the employee rate were excluded.

Graduation Cohort	# Graduating	Total COE	AVG COE per STUDENT IN COHORT
2007	4	\$82,926	\$20,732
2008	14	\$396,422	\$28,316
2009	17	\$421,321	\$24,784
2010	7	\$182,276	\$26,039
2011	8	\$263,517	\$32,940
2012	9	\$239,170	\$26,574
2013	8	\$213,481	\$26,685
2014	3	\$77,707	\$25,902



CSMP  
 MALS Program Revenue Analysis (FY05-FY14)

Fiscal Year	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Net Revenue
FY05	\$ 323,025	\$ 321,371	\$ 1,654
FY06	\$ 372,712	\$ 338,718	\$ 33,994
FY07	\$ 373,443	\$ 379,123	\$ (5,680)
FY08	\$ 327,448	\$ 359,291	\$ (31,843)
FY09	\$ 376,035	\$ 361,161	\$ 14,874
FY10	\$ 334,205	\$ 270,108	\$ 64,097
FY11	\$ 304,351	\$ 216,466	\$ 87,885
FY12	\$ 252,470	\$ 259,796	\$ (7,326)
FY13	\$ 193,854	\$ 246,792	\$ (52,938)
FY14	\$ 181,298	\$ 282,988	\$ (101,690)



## Appendix H: Areas to Consider for Graduate Studies at Skidmore College

### 1. Areas to Consider for Graduate Studies at Skidmore College

## Potential Concepts for Graduate Studies at Skidmore College

- I. Flexible, low residency concentrations rooted in faculty interest and expertise and with viable market potential (see list of areas noted below).
- II. 4+1/1.5 programs in these concentrations and in additional programs through partnerships.
- III. Other graduate degrees: e.g., MFA, MAT, MA Documentary Studies, MS Exercise Science
- IV. Professional certificate and other non-credit bearing programs designed to meet a market need for continuing education and lifelong learning.

### Academic areas of study and programs to consider:

- Documentary Studies
- Narrative Media (Vis/Media Studies connecting to other disciplines)
- Oral History
- Arts Entrepreneurship
- International Theater Residency
- Becker Studies
- Marketing (regional—designed specifically to meet local needs)
- Sustainability (focused on specific areas relevant to the region, such as local farms, etc.)
- Social Justice/Leadership (Developing leadership for Student Opportunity Programs and community activism)