

FACULTY MEETING

October 9, 2026

MOTION

CEPP proposes that Skidmore College terminate the London First-Year Experience program, effective Fall 2027.

Rationale

FYE and OCSE approached CEPP in Spring 2026 to propose the closure of the London program and the development of a replacement program modeled on the Travel Seminars. CEPP deliberated on this proposal and debated the pros and cons of a potential replacement program. FYE and OCSE resolved to continue refinement of the proposal. In the meantime, in April 2026 the CEPP and the DoF announced that the London FYE program would be on a pause for academic year 2027–2028. FYE and OCSE returned to CEPP in Fall 2026 with a final proposal for the closure of London FYE.

CEPP discussed in detail the proposal for closing London FYE, consistent with CEPP's charge for long-range educational planning and evaluation of our educational practices. ***CEPP was unanimous in agreement that the London FYE program should be terminated.*** We found the FYE/OCSE proposal compelling, for the following reasons:

- An important original goal for London FYE was to help the College manage over-enrollment of the first-year class. At this juncture managing first-year over-enrollment is no longer an issue for the College.
- London has always been an expensive city, and our operating costs in London have been growing very quickly indeed. The rate of increase in operating costs in London is not sustainable.
- The overall budget savings to Academic Affairs for closing London FYE are significant. Relative to the current fiscal year, the recommended termination of the London FYE will represent a permanent annual reduction of \$690k in budgeted funds for Academic Affairs beginning in FY28. Given our ongoing need for cost reductions in Academic Affairs, CEPP sees the budgetary savings as a compelling argument for closure of London and in keeping with Foundation 6 of the College's Strategic Plan. FYE and OCSE proposed that \$125k of this savings be set aside for implementation of a FYE travel seminar program, and CEPP agrees with this recommendation. If \$125k is allocated to

a first-year travel seminar program, the net savings to the College would still be \$565k, the equivalent of approximately four faculty FTEs.

- First-year students increasingly need a broad range of support services to succeed, and serving students in London has become a significant strain on London FYE faculty, London staff partners at CEA CAPA, and OCSE and FYE staff. Increasing needs have resulted in an increased demand for resources. In the past low-level incidents may have been handled by students on their own or resolved quickly by staff without requiring formal reporting. As student support needs and reporting practices have evolved, more of these interactions now require staff involvement and documentation. The number of reported incidents for London FYE students has increased markedly in recent years. In light of this evidence, CEPP members agreed that having first-years on campus in the Fall and linking them up with Skidmore's network of support services, as facilitated by Skidmore's FYE, is more important than ever for student success.
- An FYE travel seminar offers the possibility of expanding global education for first-years. It could serve more students than London FYE, and involve more faculty and more locations around the globe, and would allow first-years to acclimate to Skidmore in their Fall semester. In CEPP's view, such a program has the potential to yield a wider range of experiences for our students at a much lower cost.

Next steps

CEPP has constituted a subcommittee to work on a detailed plan for FYE travel seminars. The subcommittee's charge is to present CEPP with a framework for the seminars, with the aim of launching the first FYE travel seminars in January 2029.

Even as we make the difficult decision to recommend closure to the Faculty, CEPP would like to reflect on the great success and legacy of the London FYE. To quote from the OCSE/FYE proposal:

"The London First-Year Experience has served as an extremely successful signature program for Skidmore for 25 years with an immeasurable academic and reputational impact: engaging over 35 faculty from 20+ different departments and nearly 800 first-year students; signaling our commitment to global education to prospective students, parents and faculty; differentiating us from our peers as the first college to launch such a bold program back in 2001; enhancing Skidmore's national and global reputation for our dedication to high quality, high impact practices."

CEPP believes that the spirit of the London FYE will live on in a new FYE travel seminar experience for first-years, and we look forward to engaging faculty in this important work.