

CREATING PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE: THE PLAN FOR SKIDMORE COLLEGE 2015–2025

Following broad consultations across the Skidmore community, we are proud to present the College's next *Strategic Plan*. As you will see, it begins by reaffirming our commitment to the distinctive vision of residential liberal education that has long animated teaching and learning at Skidmore – an educational vision that we believe offers our students the best opportunity to achieve excellence in their college careers and to embrace the opportunities to be found in their post-college lives. It also acknowledges that we are now operating in a more competitive environment, one in which only a small group of national liberal arts colleges will be able to attract the students, faculty and staff, and resources necessary to determine their future pathways. In order to achieve our aspirations, it is essential that we position Skidmore College to be counted among this group of schools, as an institution that is an acknowledged, distinguished, and distinctive leader in undergraduate liberal education.

Skidmore's assertion that *Creative Thought Matters* provides the lens through which we view our programs in seeking new levels of excellence – most especially for our students. Creativity is not sufficient for achievement, but it certainly is necessary. And we believe that the necessary condition for realizing our commitment to creative thought is to foster a diverse and fully inclusive community that affords all members the opportunity to make their special contributions. This commitment is encapsulated in the concept of *inclusive excellence*. Our objective throughout is to remain focused on our students:

We expect Skidmore graduates to be able to travel anywhere in the United States and the world, develop an understanding of the local culture, interact effectively with people across lines of difference, identify key issues, and draw upon their liberal education to develop creative solutions to address them. We further expect that when potential employers or admissions deans of graduate and professional schools see “Skidmore College” on a resume, they will think, “This is someone who will elevate our organization.”

To achieve this outcome, this *Plan* identifies the following four Goals:

- I. **Integrative Learning and Education—To Develop Students' Capacities to Create, Imagine, and Change the World, and to Enhance the Work of the Faculty as Teacher-Scholars:** *We will invest in pedagogical and scholarly programs and educational strategies that develop the capacities of students and faculty members to achieve, model, and demonstrate excellence as scholarly, creative, and integrative learners. In doing so we are committed to developing and implementing new and creative pedagogies and curricula that will support our transition to a technology-rich college.*
- II. **Access—To Ensure Access for All Our Students to an Extraordinary Educational Experience:** *Students will have full access to opportunities for educational excellence across all three phases of their Skidmore careers—at admission, as undergraduate learners, and in transition to their postcollege lives.*

- III. **Well-Being—To Strengthen the Inclusiveness, Health, and Well-Being of Our Community:** *We will create new opportunities for developing the skills that will make Skidmore a more healthful, inclusive, and creative community.*
- IV. **Sustainability—To Continue to Build a Sustainable Institutional Foundation for Excellence:** *Deploying the concept of sustainability, broadly understood, as an organizing principle, we will invest our time, energy, and funding in initiatives to ensure the College’s long-term viability and success.*

Guided by this *Strategic Plan*, the Skidmore community will strive to cultivate creativity in service of integrative learning, inclusive excellence, access, well-being, and sustainability. In pointing the way for the College to achieve these goals, this *Plan* represents the convergence of our aspirations and the imperative to push the boundaries of creativity and imagination. At the same time the College must be vigilant. We must align our investments of time, energy, and financial resources with our strategic priorities to an extent we have never before achieved.

These goals set out a 10-year vision for the College. During this time, additional action steps will be identified as part of our ongoing institutional strategic thinking—especially in the process of developing annual Action Agendas (a practice that was integral to the success of the previous *Plan*), as well as in a formal review at the five-year midpoint. But at the heart of this work stands our ongoing commitment to the values of liberal education that animate our mission, to the specific values of *creative thought* and *inclusive excellence*, and above all to the success of our students.