



Skin In The Game

The Strategic Action Agenda: 2012-2013

This year's "Strategic Action Agenda" (SAA) calls for us to build upon the good work of the past and continue to enhance the value we offer to our students and alumni – value that is substantial, unique, and important to the world today. Over the past seven years, we have made considerable progress toward achieving our strategic goals by focusing on them consistently and with determination, even as we have faced both external and internal challenges. This year we will remain focused on maintaining our existing areas of curricular and programmatic excellence and supporting our efforts to help our students attain the key learning outcomes of a Skidmore education, even as we seek to increase our strength in selected areas as described throughout this document. Specifically, we will continue our emphasis from last year on the following strategic priorities:

1. diversity and inclusion;
2. science planning and the more thorough integration of science throughout the Skidmore curriculum; and
3. engaged liberal learning – preparing our students to be articulate exponents of their liberal education and affording them the experiences they need to help make the transition from college to the next phase of their lives.

Overall, as a context to the specific work referenced here, we will place renewed energy behind increasing both the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations and attending to our national reputation. These themes, too, are familiar ones, but in the changing landscape of higher education we need to embrace them with an increased sense of urgency.

All of us connected with Skidmore – and in fact, all of us who care about this College – have *skin in this game*.¹ That is to say, *all* of us who work at the College, who are alumni, parents, or current students are personally invested in Skidmore's success; we participate in both the risks and rewards associated with that success (or lack of it). Those of us who work here, especially, need to feel a sense of deep personal investment in this institution. All of us make day-to-day decisions both about how we spend our time and allocate the financial resources for which we are responsible; some of us make longer-term decisions as well. But each one of us needs to do so with the understanding that those decisions ultimately affect Skidmore's short- and long-term prospects for continuing to be the institution we cherish. We need to ensure that we are investing our precious resources in those areas of greatest strategic importance. There are operational

¹Referencing the extent to which investment managers invest their own funds in their portfolios and so share their clients' risk, the financier Warren Buffett introduced this phrase to the investment world some years back. His assumption was that directors with a personal stake in a firm are more likely to guide it with attention and care, and the entity is more likely to do well for its clients. When the members of the Skidmore Investment Committee consider placing a portion of our endowment with an investment manager, they, too, frequently ask: "What is this manager's stake in the success of this enterprise? Does he or she have skin in the game?"

implications of this principle, and we will be emphasizing them throughout the coming year. This year's SAA focuses on those areas where our actions can make such a difference.

Two Opposed Ideas

As we enter the eighth year under the guidance of our current *Strategic Plan*, we confront a situation that calls for the kind of intellectual agility we expect our students to develop – the capacity to hold in mind two ideas that coexist in some tension. On the one hand, Skidmore has never been better positioned than it is today – as witnessed by the strength of our faculty and staff, our stable financial situation (including an endowment that today stands just over \$280 M), and our recruitment of yet another strong and increasingly diverse entering class. And at the same time, we face the same headwinds currently buffeting American higher education, in general, and high-cost liberal arts colleges, in particular.

An analogous situation confronts our students. While we continue to believe firmly that a liberal education provides the best possible preparation for a productive and fulfilling life – especially in a professional world marked by the enormous changes facing our graduates – we also need to acknowledge the reality that our students are entering one of the worst job markets in living memory. A recent *Newsweek* article describes the situation this way:

No generation has suffered more from the Great Recession than the young. Median net worth of people under 30, according to the U.S. Census, fell 37 percent between 2005 and 2010; those over 65 took only a 13 percent hit.

...

Since 2008 the percentage of the workforce under 25 has dropped 13.2 percent, ... while that of people over 55 has risen by 7.6 percent.

...

More maddening still, the payback for [graduates'] expensive education appears to be a chimera. Over 43 percent of recent graduates now working, according to a recent report by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, are at jobs that don't require a college education. Some 16 percent of bartenders and almost the same percentage of parking attendants, notes Ohio State economics professor Richard Vedder, earned a bachelor's degree or higher.²

While the employment experience of our own recent graduates is more encouraging than these national figures would imply,³ we must continue to improve the competitiveness of our students, whether they plan to enter the workforce directly following graduation or move on to pursue post-graduate education.

We also must continue to improve Skidmore's competitive position as we seek qualified applicants for each new entering class – especially those potential students who have the broadest range of choices among institutions: those who evidence the greatest academic potential and who can contribute to the diversity of our student body. We also need to acknowledge that we currently depend upon approximately 58% of each entering class to attend without receiving institutional financial aid. Although strong financial discipline over the past two years has dropped us from among the fifteen most expensive schools to a position among the seventy most costly institutions, we remain concerned that fewer and fewer families can afford or are willing to finance a four-year financial commitment that already exceeds \$220,000. In the just-completed

²“Generation Screwed,” by Joel Kotin, *Newsweek* (July 23 & 30, 2012), pp. 40-45, p. 42.

³Data from a recent survey indicate that 80% of the class of 2011 is employed, with an additional 19% pursuing post-graduate study (17% are pursuing J.D., M.D., or Ph.D. degrees). What our data do not show is the percentage of graduates who are employed who hold jobs that represent a direct connection to their long-term career aspirations. The fact that 75% of the graduates participated gives us a good level of confidence that the indicated results reflect the experience of the class as a whole.

admissions cycle, we saw a *decrease* in the percentage of families in our applicant pool not requesting aid, while the number of applicants seeking financial assistance remained constant relative to last year. An unprecedented financial aid budget of nearly \$36.7 M, representing a 13.7% increase over FY '12, enabled us to operate as though we were essentially “need-blind” for 75% of this admissions process. (And it is very important to emphasize that we meet the “full demonstrated need” of admitted students eligible for financial aid.) But with financial aid status becoming a factor in the remaining 25% of decisions, we were forced to move over 250 highly desirable admissions candidates from the admitted pool to the wait list, all because we had exhausted our financial aid capacity.⁴ Moreover, a 13+% rate of increase in our financial aid budget is simply not sustainable, absent a sudden and substantial increase in our endowment. In addition, though we have consistently resisted external pressures to increase our “merit aid” as a strategy for attracting desirable students, we are increasingly feeling disadvantaged in our competition with other institutions that do so.⁵ Concerns relating to these issues are further exacerbated by the continuing softness in the economy and, especially, the continuing erosion of the economic position of the U.S. middle class – which together indicate that the overall number of potential full-pay students (at least from within the U.S.) is likely either to stay flat or continue to diminish over the coming years.

The complexities of financial aid represent just one dimension of the overall situation confronting expensive liberal arts colleges. Writing in the *New Yorker*, Nicholas Lemann observes that, from a market perspective, “top-tier schools” are “actually underpriced”:

That may sound offensive, but price is determined by what people are willing to pay, and the top twenty-five or so schools in the country could charge even more than they do. The number of applications to those schools continues to grow faster than their cost. ... That’s because the perceived value of their degrees continues to rise.⁶

He concludes that

higher education is becoming more like other areas of American life, with the fortunate few institutions distancing themselves ever further from the many. All those things which commencement speakers talk about – personal growth, critical-thinking skills, intellectual exploration, breadth of learning – will survive at the top institutions, but other colleges will come under increased pressure to adopt the model of trade schools.⁷

I believe that the contrast between emerging tiers of institutions is more nuanced than the one Lemann draws here. Moreover, he fails to acknowledge a crucial factor in the increasing attractiveness of these “top twenty-five or so schools”: their capacity to offer need-based financial

⁴The Board legitimately has expressed concerns about our “discount rate” of 36.5% (representing the percentage of financial aid against tuition revenue), although this figure still remains much lower at Skidmore than at many other colleges. For example, the discount rate at Grinnell College is over 70% – reflecting, in this case, the amount of endowment funds available to support financial aid. The fact that a number of better resourced and highly prestigious colleges have higher discount rates than does Skidmore highlights the fact that this one number – taken out of context – is not particularly informative. We need to develop a more sophisticated presentation of the institutional parameters reflecting our financial aid situation, and we will do so this year.

⁵I continue to believe that merit aid has become a significant issue in American higher education – increasingly diverting resources from need-based aid required to support families otherwise without the means to send a child to college at all, to the process of affecting the choices of families who, in principle, could afford the cost of the colleges they are considering. At a recent meeting of the Annapolis Group, a number of presidents gathered to explore ways to wean their institutions off high levels of merit aid, but this is not an easy problem to solve. Acknowledging that challenge, however, does not minimize the challenge represented to Skidmore in an admissions environment where merit aid is becoming a greater factor in affecting student choice.

⁶“The Cost of College,” by Nicholas Lemann, *The New Yorker* (May 28, 2012), pp. 23-24, p. 24. Lemann is Dean and Henry R. Luce Professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

⁷Lemann, p. 24.

aid to a growing range of the families that send them their children. Nevertheless, I do believe that his primary contention about the “perceived value” of the education offered among different classes of schools is likely to prove valid, at least to a first approximation. Specifically, those institutions with the highest perceived value will continue to attract the mix of students they need to fulfill the highest expectations of their missions; those who cannot adequately demonstrate the distinctiveness and value of what they offer are likely to experience a diminishing range of institutional choices. The only question is whether the effects of such changes will continue to be felt gradually across the broader higher education “market place,” or whether the rate of change will become more precipitous. Either way, the question facing us becomes, “Where will Skidmore stand in the perceived hierarchy of colleges and universities in the United States?” To the extent that we are perceived as offering unique and valuable educational opportunities to our students, we will continue to attract the applicants, faculty, staff, and financial support required to fulfill our mission; to the extent that we are not perceived as doing so, our capacity to meet our institutional goals will surely diminish.⁸

Again, this issue is not a new one; I have raised it in several previous “Strategic Action Agendas.” But the price-point we have reached today in the context of an economy that continues to stagnate and amidst continuing public skepticism regarding the value of liberal education (exacerbated by the increasing concern about the capacity of college graduates to find gainful employment referenced above) highlight the question of whether Skidmore will continue to be perceived as one of the nation’s premier undergraduate institutions. This question pertains to both the reality of the value we offer our students (and the continuing value we offer our alumni) and the external perception of that reality – our reputation. To the extent that we continue to increase the value we offer – and provide persuasive evidence regarding that value – and continue to improve our reputation, we will remain in control of our institutional destiny. That means we will continue to attract the high-potential students we need, benefit from the support of donors and foundations, and attract the high-quality faculty and staff members we need to fulfill the promise of our mission. To the extent that we become complacent about either our distinctive “value-proposition” or our reputation, we will lessen our ability to determine our future. This is the stark reality we are facing, and we need to address it now, with a new – and newly shared – sense of urgency.

Let me now comment on the broad themes identified above that shape the individual action items included below.

1. Enhancing the Value We Offer to Our Students and Alumni

Let me reiterate clearly the central point that **the primary value we offer to our current students and the continuing value we represent to our alumni center on the intellectual skills that derive from our liberal arts curriculum, our excellent faculty of teacher-scholar-citizens, and our small classes, as well as the personal development students experience through both their studies and the unique co-curricular experiences that mark their time on our residential campus.** At the same time, as an institution that was founded on a commitment to educating both “mind and hand,” we have long expected our students to understand the relationship between the education they realize at Skidmore and the professional lives they pursue following graduation. This dual commitment to liberal education as a good in itself and as a preparation for a life of professional achievement, civic engagement, and personal satisfaction is not an “either-or” but rather a “both-and” proposition. Just as we have developed new pedagogies over the past thirty years to make us more effective in supporting the learning of our

⁸Despite our legitimate skepticism regarding college “rankings,” we can take some pleasure in *Newsweek’s* recent determination that Skidmore ranks 9th nationally (and third among liberal arts colleges) among schools with the “happiest” students – i.e., students who are satisfied with their choice of institution and who would make the same choice again. But it remains to be seen whether this ranking will have a positive effect on our admissions work.

students, so too have we more recently come to realize the vital role that can be played by study abroad, independent or collaborative research, community-based research, service-learning, internships, and co-curricular leadership experiences in providing valuable experiences that help students to translate the core values of their undergraduate liberal education to their post-graduate education and employment. Similarly, as we have come to appreciate the central role of assessment in our ongoing efforts to enhance our students' learning, we also need to appreciate the value of assessment and other forms of empirical data-gathering (e.g., the success of recent graduates in obtaining employment, their level of engagement in the civic life of their communities, etc.) in making the case for Skidmore to an increasingly skeptical world.

This year we will continue to direct our focus on the following areas:

Diversity and Inclusion

In order to build the kind of inclusive academic community we seek to be – one that supports the success of *each* of our students – and to provide the best possible preparation for our students as they enter the increasingly diverse professional and personal world of the 21st Century, we need to continue our commitment to this work. Building upon the progress of the past year, Cabinet members are developing plans to advance the cause of diversity and inclusion within their divisions; those plans are referenced below in the SAA and will be compiled into a separate document. We also have an obligation, as a leading national liberal arts college, to help our students learn how to have constructive conversations with others across significant social, cultural, religious, and other dimensions of difference. This ability is crucial to the flourishing of effective political dialog in our heterogeneous democracy – something that seems increasingly in short supply today.

Science Initiative

In past years we have made the case that today's graduates cannot function as informed, responsible citizens without a basic understanding of science and the connections between developments in science and technology and issues in public policy. Planning continues for a new physical and life science facility (renovation of existing space and new space) that will

- enable us to co-locate all departments in the physical and life sciences, creating strategically meaningful adjacencies to foster new synergies for students and faculty members;
- provide the spaces necessary to support our science curriculum; and
- express the centrality of the claim that “Creative Thought Matters” throughout the sciences.

Our goal is to complete preliminary programming and possible site location and present this work, for comments and advice, to the IPPC this fall and the Board of Trustees at the Board's October meeting. We expect to complete the Schematic Design Phase by February 2013. This year we also will continue seeking ways to infuse scientific themes throughout the curriculum through

- work in CEPP to revise the science general education requirement;
- incorporation of science literacy issues relating to the theme of “Apocalypse” into the curriculum this year.

Finally, we will continue to develop stronger connections between the physical and life sciences and the arts.

Engaged Liberal Learning

We will continue to develop the Transition and Transformation initiative to ensure that all students have access to the full range of engaged liberal learning practices, both inside and outside of the classroom, that are needed to prepare them for success in their post-Skidmore lives. We also will expand our alumni and parent networking programs to provide more measurable benefits to our current students and our graduates as they make their way in their post-Skidmore lives.

Creative Thought Matters

As we look to our immediate work and begin to think forward to the next *Strategic Plan*, we need to ensure that

- our students experience our commitment to developing their imaginative capacities consistently across the curriculum,
- that it is reflected in both our new buildings and across our existing campus spaces,
- and that we develop new ways to celebrate creativity across the campus in the work of our students, faculty, and alumni.

As we begin the process of developing our next strategic plan, we need to consider the claim that Creative Thought Matters as a potential organizing principle of that next document.

2. *Increasing Operational Strength, Efficiency, and Effectiveness*

The project of operating more intentionally, efficiently, and effectively certainly begins with a renewed commitment to efficiency and cost-containment across all our operations. There are three different aspects to this work, and different people will connect with it in different ways, depending upon their positions and responsibilities within the College. Here, too, we must be sure to bring creative thinking to the conversation.

- a. At the **operational or management** level, virtually everyone who works at the College is responsible for some day-to-day execution and management of existing budgets. The ways in which we all manage previously allocated resources (beginning with the ways we use our own time) determine how efficiently and effectively those resources are expended. Budget managers (e.g., division heads, academic department chairs) have special responsibility for such work within their areas of operation.
- b. Some of our efforts will be focused on **cost-reduction** – finding ways to reduce budget allocations in selected areas from year-to-year, without adversely affecting the value we provide to our students. The most value from these efforts will be realized if we can reduce the size of selected larger institutional budgets, but this is obviously a difficult process. The Cabinet has identified several areas for study during the coming year.
- c. Finally, we must concentrate on limiting the growth of future budgets – **cost-containment**. The Cabinet, in collaboration with the IPPC, the Board, and others will work this year to set guidelines to limit future costs, especially with regard to our comprehensive fee.

Each of the preceding initiatives is important, though obviously the scale of resources involved differs in each. Cabinet members are developing plans for initiatives within each division of the College, and again all of us need to recognize that we have skin in this game.

Funds realized through this effort will be allocated to support the College's highest strategic priorities.

This commitment to increase our efficiency and effectiveness extends beyond managing our finances to a number of other areas of operation:

Shared Governance

- Administrators and faculty and student leaders will continue to work together to clarify and streamline decision-making on campus.
- The Board of Trustees will explore new ways to work effectively both within the Board, with the administration, and as appropriate in collaboration with campus constituencies to increase efficiency and effectiveness of Board decision-making.

Admissions

- Working with an external consultant, we are reviewing all operations within Admissions, with a special focus on removing any remaining barriers to prospective students considering whether to submit an application.
- Work will continue on planning a new Admissions-Financial Aid building to be located on campus – a building that will be more efficient in supporting the functions of these two offices and that will better reflect our commitment to the proposition that Creative Thought Matters. The Admissions Office is, quite literally, the gateway to the College for new students and their families. The physical structure of that office needs to “evince” our mission and celebrate our distinctiveness.

New York Six Consortium

Our association with the other New York Six schools⁹ offers new possibilities for increasing the value we offer to our students and operating more efficiently.

- Several projects are ongoing in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and other areas to leverage the resources of this consortium to improve the effectiveness of our operations and, where possible, reduce costs.
- We will continue efforts to identify potential savings through consortial collaboration on “back-office” and administrative support operations. We have made some gains already and believe that more are possible in the future.

Possible Alternative Revenues

As we continue our efforts to improve our efficiency and ensure that our institutional “business model” is sustainable into the future, we need to explore ways to create new revenues to support our essential functions. Any projects we undertake must neither conflict with our Mission nor compromise our tax-exempt status. We are just at the beginning stages of the process of identifying such possibilities, but several projects are currently under way. For example, the Office of the Dean of Special Programs is working to develop plans that will generate additional funds to contribute to the College budget. The objective is to keep the College's resources (primarily, the physical plant) as busy as possible every day of the year – with special emphasis on Zankel's Ladd Concert Hall, the newly renovated Filene

⁹Colgate, Hamilton, Hobart-William Smith, St. Lawrence, and Union.

Hall, and all other performance and exhibition spaces on campus. Our new residence facilities, which will be completed over the next two years, should further enhance our ability to attract new summer programs. We also have constituted a working group (comprising faculty members, administrators, trustees, and alumni) to explore the possibility of developing a Skidmore “Creative Capital Fund” to support investment in business ideas developed by students and, potentially, by others over time. Unfortunately, neither of these options can reasonably be expected to generate substantial new revenues in the near term, so we will need to continue our search for additional possibilities.

3. Reputation

As noted above, it is necessary to concentrate our efforts on providing the benefits to our students that directly express the values of our Mission, and we need to become even more efficient and effective in doing so. But succeeding at these two tasks will matter little if we are not able to convey a compelling message about the College to potential students and their families – and, indeed, to the broader world beyond Skidmore in general. Telling our institutional story effectively is the essence of stewarding – and improving – our reputation.

- Building upon our past success, we have been working with an external consulting firm to develop new ways to “own” and enhance the “Creative Thought Matters” brand nationally.
- We will pay increased attention to the ways in which the media represent the College statistically to ensure that we accurately portray our institutional strengths.
- We are working to develop new ways to engage alumni in giving and enhance the ways they can represent the College externally. In recent years, our annual giving participation rate has been moving in the wrong direction. We need to reverse that trend.
- Finally, we must continue to marshal our resources to better and more effectively manage our institutional “brand,” an asset that is arguably even more valuable than our endowment but also more difficult to steward and track.

In Conclusion

Skidmore College provides its students with a distinctive constellation of opportunities reflecting our educational values and commitment to excellence that can be found in no other institution. At a moment when the world at large certainly could use an infusion of creative, rigorous thought, what we do takes on increasing importance. Our ability to continue offering these educational opportunities depends, quite concretely, on the ways in which each of us does our work, and on the ways in which we each contribute to making Skidmore even better tomorrow than it is today – improving our ability to fulfill our mission and tell our story to the world. I ask that all of us recognize that we have skin in this game and redouble our efforts to achieve our vital institutional objectives.

Philip A. Glotzbach
3 October 2012

Engaged Liberal Learning

The Plan for Skidmore College 2005-2015

Goals and Priority Initiatives

Goal I – Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

We will challenge every Skidmore student to achieve academic excellence through full engagement with our rich and rigorous educational experience.

Priority Initiatives

- Increase student academic engagement in the first year.
- Increase support for research and creative activity throughout faculty careers.
- Enhance intellectual life for the faculty, students, and others who comprise the extended Skidmore community.
- Strengthen information resources across the College.
- Strengthen the natural sciences to increase the number of science majors and enhance the science literacy of all Skidmore students.
- Increase our effectiveness in helping our graduates plan and prepare for their post-Skidmore lives.
- Take better advantage of the resources and capacity for innovation in the Office of the Dean of Special Programs (ODSP) to support the relevant initiatives identified under this Goal (and others, as appropriate).

Goal II – Intercultural and Global Understanding

We will challenge every Skidmore student to develop the intercultural understanding and global awareness necessary to thrive in the complex and increasingly interconnected world of the 21st Century.

Priority Initiatives

- Increase global awareness across the community in order to sensitize all Skidmore students to a complex, diverse, and interdependent world.
- Renew the conversation about diversity both within the Skidmore faculty and broadly across the campus community; building upon the work of the Middle States review and other past efforts, establish clear educational objectives relating to this Goal and develop shared expertise in achieving them.
- Enhance the diversity of our student population while providing the resources necessary to support all of our students in meeting our educational objectives.
- Enhance the diversity of our faculty and other employee populations and enhance their skills that relate to achieving this Goal.

Goal III – Informed, Responsible Citizenship

We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world.

Priority Initiatives

- Foster pedagogical innovation relating to responsible citizenship; support campus initiatives that teach and exemplify this value.
- Enhance residential learning.
- Enhance the campus residential environment, with special attention to common spaces.
- Increase support for athletics, fitness, and wellness.
- Develop, broaden, and deepen the College's connections to the local community; enhance our ability to function as a socially and environmentally responsible corporate citizen.

Goal IV – Independence and Resources

We will preserve Skidmore's independence by developing the resources required to realize our aspirations.

Priority Initiatives

- Develop and enhance our key financial resources and our capacity to manage them.
- Achieve and maintain competitive compensation for Skidmore faculty, staff, and administrators; enhance our ability to support their professional development.
- Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.
- Develop and enhance those relationships essential to the Skidmore community.
- Develop and enhance the "equity" in the Skidmore name.

Strategic Action Agenda Items 2012-13

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the expected date of completion for each of the following projects is June 1, 2013.

Goal I – Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

We will challenge every Skidmore student to achieve academic excellence through full engagement with our rich and rigorous educational experience.

Projects/Action Steps

➤ *Enhance institutional structure to support academic excellence.*

1. **Complete search for the Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs (DOF/VPAA), with appointee named by December 31, 2012.**

Administrative Responsibility: President.

2. **Complete and consolidate reorganization of Academic Affairs under the Office of the DOF-VPAA.**

- Review the job responsibilities of the three ADOFs, including their participation in shared governance, and determine if some reallocation of tasks and committee assignments is necessary.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

3. **Enhance collaboration between IT and Library.**

- Complete the integration of IT into Library space.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

4. **Develop activities to realize the potential value of consortial relationships.**

- Complete plans for Connect NY and MediaShare.
- Apply for the Teagle Grant on Faculty Workload as part of the New York Six Consortium.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

5. **Enhance faculty resources to deliver the academic program.**

- Recruit 10 or 11 tenure-track faculty.
- Seek to convert 2-3 contingent faculty positions into tenure-track.
- Address contingent faculty concerns through greater mentoring, Chairs' training, and support from the DOF office.
- Refine Student Records & Advising Portal to accommodate the new Banner environment.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

6. Identify financial support for digital resources position at the Tang.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

7. Enhance Skidmore's capacity for academic assessment.

- Re-launch the Assessment Steering Committee by December 31, 2012; establish membership and agenda.
- Continue to develop stronger, more effective assessments in all departments and programs. Make model assessments more available for departments to replicate by December 31, 2012.
- Continue to develop, implement and use assessments of the Goals for Student Learning and Development, including the goals for effective communication (written and visual) and the goals related to learning about diversity, social identities, and intercultural communication.
- Complete pilot assessment of visual communication.
- Collaborate with CEPP in evaluating the possibility of piloting e-portfolios and launch a pilot if appropriate.
- Identify faculty leader(s) for upcoming Middle States report by February 28, 2013.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

8. Curricular and program development.

- Complete the MALS academic program review and develop a plan to implement changes.
- Implement Zankel new initiative to schedule and present 3 events at Ladd Hall independent of any individual department and open to entire College community, which also strengthen the College's core brand.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim Dean of Special Programs.

➤ ***Increase support for research and creative activity across the faculty career.***

9. Coordinate support of faculty development.

- Complete the job description for Director of Faculty Development.
- Assess impact of Faculty Network Facilitator, Faculty Interest Groups, and Faculty Writing Groups.
- Continue to integrate/acclerate a new generation of faculty into habits of collaboration with the Tang.
 - Continue implementing Mellon grant.
 - Develop goals for pre-tenure and tenured faculty and strategies for faculty development.
- Establish a program for Chairs' Training.
- Establish a program of support for mid-career faculty.
- Support faculty retirees through the ACE/Sloan grant.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

➤ ***Strengthen our system of shared governance and our capacity for developing leadership throughout the College.***

10. Continue a community conversation about our goals for shared governance and the effectiveness of our current structures and procedures.

- Cultivate leadership skills and provide leadership development opportunities (trainings, workshops, etc.) for academic leaders, including department chairs, program directors, and other academic professionals.
- Address revisions to *Faculty Handbook*.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

➤ ***Enhance intellectual life for the faculty, students, and others who comprise the extended Skidmore community.***

11. Develop a plan for the College calendar, and establish a centralized system for scheduling College events other than regular classes.

- Determine scheduling rules, guidelines, processes, and policies.
- Implement the Event Management System (EMS) as the primary and official scheduling system for all College functions.
- Develop a single time during the academic week when we can schedule all-campus events.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim Dean of Special Programs.

➤ ***Continue to strengthen information resources across the College.***

12. Recruit a Chief Technology Officer.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance & Administration and Interim DOF/VPAA.

13. Ensure through institutional planning that the College's technological infrastructure, resources, and services are appropriately aligned with institutional needs.

- Complete preparation for online paperless application review for the 2013-14 admissions cycle, including FY14 budgeting for hardware for readers and RFP for third-party vendor to design web-based process.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

➤ ***Strengthen the natural sciences to increase the number of science majors and enhance the science literacy of all Skidmore students.***

14. Continue implementation of Science Plan.

- Continue to develop new infrastructure plan for science facilities based on evaluation of existing science facilities and program planning for new facilities. Complete design phase.

- Develop fundraising plan for science initiatives.
- Complete implementation of pilot program related to Scientific Literacy.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Advancement.

➤ ***Increase our effectiveness in helping our graduates plan and prepare for their post-Skidmore lives.***

15. Enhance opportunities for students to apply or deepen their understanding of the discipline through summer study.

- Increase number of faculty-student summer research opportunities supported by the FDC.
- Institutionalize SEE-Beyond initiative and, should funding become available, increase number of awards from 20 to 40 (one for every major or minor).
- Continue to study and address issues of access/participation by students of color and those with high financial need.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA and Vice President for Advancement.

16. Refine recruiting and support structures for National Merit Scholarships and increase number and success of applicants over last year.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

17. Partner with Career Development Center (and new Associate Director of Pre-professional and Graduate Study) to support student preparation for graduate and professional school.

- Support Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC) in processing of medical school applications; develop local internships and job shadowing opportunities in the health professions.
- Support Pre-Law Advisor by tracking student interest and success at gaining entry to law school.
- Increase career-related programming in the health and legal professions and other areas according to student and faculty interest.
- Partner with the Writing Center to better support students as they prepare graduate and professional school applications.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA, Dean of Student Affairs, and Vice President for Advancement.

18. Pilot Sophomore Program.

- Introduce an opportunity to experience a non-credit version of the “Presenting a Brand Called Me” course.
- Use the final week in January to pilot a Sophomore “Re-Orientation” Program.

- Offer monthly programs focused on important decisions to make during the Sophomore year.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

19. Review Career Development Center assessments and implement appropriate programmatic enhancements.

- Pilot first year of peer Career Coach program in the Career Development Center. Coaches will deliver workshops in the residence halls, staff drop-in hours, and conduct resume reviews.
- Reduce student and alumni wait time for career counseling appointments.
- Collaborate with department chairs and faculty members to diversify career development program offerings across expanded group of industries, functions, and areas of interest.
- Grow Career Jam program to increase the number of volunteers and add multiple workshops to extend learning opportunities over a two-day period.
- Create Graduate School Expo to bring schools to campus for students to explore options in continuing their education after Skidmore.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

Goal II – Intercultural and Global Understanding

We will challenge every Skidmore student to develop the intercultural understanding and global awareness necessary to thrive in the complex and increasingly interconnected world of the 21st Century.

Projects/Action Steps

- ***Renew the conversation about diversity both within the Skidmore faculty and broadly across the campus community; building upon the work of the Middle States review and other past efforts, establish clear educational objectives relating to this Goal and develop shared expertise in achieving them.***

20. Charge an appropriate group to develop a proposal for a campus-wide diversity and inclusion program.

Administrative Responsibility: President.

21. Increase the cultural competency in all Student Affairs areas.

- Implement the use of a survey tool to establish baseline of current divisional awareness level.
- Conduct follow-up meeting with multicultural organizational development consultant to advance action plans.
- Use divisional meetings to achieve 100% participation in Ally and IGR training.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

22. Share the new climate data from the Health Promotion Student Survey, continue to address campus climate issues.

- Create a strategy for disseminating the survey results.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

23. Identify Office of the Dean of Special Programs programming where we can influence diversity of faculty and participants and determine appropriate methodology for collecting diversity data.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim Dean of Special Programs.

➤ ***Enhance the diversity of our student populations while providing the resources necessary to support all of our students in meeting our educational objectives.***

24. Enroll an incoming class that is 20-24% domestic students of color and 5-7% international students.

- Continue expanded travel to 100 additional target high schools and/or CBOs.
- Collaborate for recruitment activities with 1-2 faculty travelling internationally.
- Increase percentage of full-pay international students from 50 to 60%.
- Continue alumni programming in Hong Kong and London.
- Create an ad hoc group and develop a coordinated international development strategy targeting London and Hong Kong/China.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and Vice President for Advancement.

➤ ***Enhance the diversity of our faculty and other employee populations and enhance their skills that relate to achieving this Goal.***

25. Continue efforts to recruit, attract, and retain candidates for faculty and staff positions who enhance diversity profile.

- Connect searches to “in time” workshops facilitated by Romney Associates, Human Resources, and Academic Affairs for recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color.
- Implement program for faculty and staff training around the issues of intercultural literacy and teaching in the multicultural classroom.
- Include at least one candidate meeting definition of diversity for all Office of the Dean of Special Programs open positions.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA; Interim Dean of Special Programs.

26. Develop two on-campus workshops for faculty and staff in the area of stereotype threat, multicultural classrooms, and inclusive excellence.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA.

27. Enhance educational and peer mentoring programs regarding diversity for all employees.

- Initiate diversity and inclusion training for members of the campus working with Romney Associates. (Continuing work initiated by Cabinet in 2011-12, expand work in Spring 2013 to include a pilot program for faculty and staff participation in a combined, common program.)

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration, with support from Cabinet.

Goal III – Informed, Responsible Citizenship

We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world.

Projects/Action Steps

- *Foster pedagogical innovation relating to responsible citizenship; support campus initiatives that teach and exemplify this value.*

28. Partner with Arthur Vining Davis Civic Fellows on two programs: enhance visibility of civic engagement initiatives on campus and raise visibility of civic learning in the curriculum. Assess the progress of these two programs.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA and Dean of Student Affairs.

29. Hire two campus sustainability fellows, administer the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation grant, continue to infuse sustainability into the curriculum more broadly, and continue to bring attention to sustainability through co-curricular planning and our physical campus.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA and Dean of Student Affairs.

- *Continue to enhance the campus residential environment, with special attention to common spaces.*

30. Advance the Scribner Village Replacement Project.

- Complete the construction of Phase IB (Hillside Townhouses) by August 15, 2012.
- Make significant progress on Phase II (Townhouses) with scheduled completion by January 15, 2014, or sooner.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration and Dean of Student Affairs.

31. Investigate proposed “Commons” in new townhouse complex (former Scribner Village) and identify possible donor.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs and Vice President for Advancement.

32. Engage architectural support for Case Center review and complete long-range plan for Case Center space usage and improvement.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

➤ *Increase support for athletics, fitness, and wellness.*

33. Review the efficacy of our Alcohol and Other Drug policies, programs, and prevention strategies.

- The Alcohol Prevention Council will guide the Health Promotions staff through an extensive evaluation and analysis of campus data to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
- Create a comprehensive action plan (if needed) for changes in programming, policies, and evaluation process.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

➤ *Develop, broaden, and deepen the College’s connections to the local community; enhance our ability to function as a socially and environmentally responsible corporate citizen.*

34. Advance the work of the Community Dialogues project.

- Participate in planning for and assessment of two pilot conversations to be held in late fall 2012.
- Participate in planning for and assessment of additional community dialogues to be held in spring 2013.

Administrative Responsibility: President, with support from Cabinet.

Goal IV – Independence and Resources

We will preserve Skidmore’s independence by developing the resources required to realize our aspirations.

Projects/Action Steps

➤ *Continue to develop institutional capacity for effective planning and proactive internal communication.*

35. Develop a “roadmap” for concluding the current Strategic Plan.

- Identify key action items that will advance the highest priority strategic initiatives between now and May 31, 2015.
- In collaboration with key governance committees, articulate the process for developing the College's next strategic plan.

Administrative Responsibility: President, with support from Cabinet.

36. Continue participation in the New York Six Consortium, supported by the Mellon Foundation, to explore partnerships and collaborations with Colgate, Hamilton, Hobart and William Smith, St. Lawrence, and Union.

- Areas of potential collaboration to be worked include information technology, acquisition of goods and services, sustainability, student engagement, faculty and staff development, intercultural literacy, health and wellness programs, and study abroad.

Administrative Responsibility: President with support from Cabinet.

➤ ***Develop and enhance both our key financial resources and our capacity to manage them.***

37. Continue to review and enhance Admissions and Financial Aid policies and practices in support of enrollment goals (including academic excellence, with diversity a component of excellence) and within targeted budgetary guidelines.

- Increase applicant pool to over 6,000 applications.
- Launch initiative (Skidmore Scholars) to increase enrollment of 10 AQR admits through offer of guaranteed engaged liberal learning experience(s), collaborating with Advancement and Academic Affairs for fundraising support and faculty involvement.
- Establish and lead campus Enrollment Management Committee to explore, analyze, and propose strategic solutions to address admissions, retention, and enrollment profiles.
- Examine roles of IPPC Subcommittee on Admissions and Financial Aid and newly formed Enrollment Management Committee with consideration of whether to eliminate one of them by end of 2012-13 academic year.
- Review current standardized testing policy for admission and reaffirm or revise it for applicants applying during the 2013 -14 admissions cycle and beyond.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

38. Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of our institutional work/study program.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

39. Identify areas for potential cost containment within each division and develop plan for implementation.

Administrative Responsibility: Cabinet.

40. Write a 3-year business plan for Summer Programs (all of them combined) that will show a sustainable improvement in the bottom line by \$200,000 annually from its 2011 level.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim Dean of Special Programs.

41. Continue implementation of Banner Student Records system.

- Utilize BRM for campus visit pre-registration and post-contact communication with prospective students.
- Implement Skidmore mobile applications and improve access for mobile devices to current key web systems, including a mobile Skidmore application for the 2013-14 admissions cycle.
- Complete preparation for online paperless application review for the 2013-14 admissions cycle, including FY14 budgeting for hardware for readers and RFP for third-party vendor to design web-based process.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

42. Prepare for Campaign.

- Review and restructure office as needed.
- Build and refine campaign pyramid.
- Constitute campaign working group.
- Complete overhaul of all gift officer portfolios and leverage Reeher data-mining system to make more effective use of gift officer time and focus.
- Complete gift officer training.
- Develop marketing materials for science, engaged liberal learning opportunities, financial aid, unrestricted support.
- Recruit science advisory committee.
- Secure initial commitments of \$10-30M.
- Rebrand Annual Fund.
- Revamp marketing to improve donor retention and donor acquisition with emphasis on younger classes.
- Increase staff travel to exceed 1,500 individual visits.
- Identify potential volunteer leaders from among alumni, parents, and friends.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement, with support from Cabinet.

43. Raise \$7M+ for the Annual Fund.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

44. Raise \$15-18M for all purposes.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

➤ *Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.*

45. Continue implementation of the Science Plan.

- Develop initial Program, Concept, Schematic Design, and Phasing Plan.
- Launch fundraising program of \$40-60 million with goal to complete by 2016.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Finance and Administration, with support from President, Cabinet, and others.

46. Saisselin Art Building renovation.

- Complete phased construction renovation of Saisselin Art Building.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

47. Scribner Library renovation, Hoge Library, and Information Technology facilities integration.

- Make significant progress on Scribner Library, Hoge Library, and Information Technology facilities integration, with scheduled completion date of May 31, 2013.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

48. Continue to address facilities planning for academic space.

- Plan for classroom, research, and office space for next three to five years. (Interim DOF/VPAA)

Administrative Responsibility: Interim DOF/VPAA and Vice President for Finance and Administration (as above).

49. Address Admissions facilities needs.

- Continue to develop plans for re-location of Admissions and Financial Aid offices to new facility on the west side of North Broadway with presentation to the Board of Trustees in October 2012.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Cabinet.

50. Complete fundraising for new boathouse and complete permit process.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs and Vice President for Advancement.

51. Develop fundraising plan for Phase I of Athletic Facilities plan.

- Develop preliminary timeline for Comprehensive Athletics Facilities Plan.
- Continue to work on comprehensive facilities needs plan.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs and Vice President for Advancement.

➤ ***Develop and enhance relationships essential to the Skidmore community.***

52. Continue market research of and targeted outreach to prospective students.

- Implement recommendations of enrollment consultant to follow up with Student Search Service non-responders with two additional e-mail contacts and send postcard encouraging early decision to all inquiries.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

53. Develop comprehensive social media plan.

- Develop a plan for use of social media in Admissions.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and Vice President for Advancement.

54. Expand activities of the Multicultural Alumni Network.

- Identify programming that will increase alumni of color participation as participants/volunteers/donors by 10-20%.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

55. Complete roll over of all major web pages to new format.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

56. Review and, as appropriate, re-envision all major alumni gatherings including reunions.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

57. Expand career activities in conjunction with the Career Development Center.

- Hire Associate Director for Alumni Career Development to report to the Director of the Career Development Center with a dotted line to the Director of Alumni Affairs and College Events.
- Expand networking opportunities for alumni.
 - Continue “An Evening of Career Transition & Transformation” in New York City and add Boston.
 - Grow online networking databases.
- Publicize Career Development Center service offerings for alumni via SCOPE magazine.

- Bring alumni to campus to provide networking opportunities for students across industries, functions, and areas of interest.
- Design and deliver remote career development programming for alumni via webinars.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement and Dean of Student Affairs.

58. Expand use of video on web.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

59. Complete development and implementation of new admissions recruiting materials.

- Develop online Admissions experience.
- Develop new viewbook and related materials.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and Vice President for Advancement.

60. Work with SaratogaArtsFest Board of Directors to create a new and revised strategic plan.

Administrative Responsibility: Interim Dean of Special Programs.

61. Explore possibility of expanding opportunities to engage extended community in key campus events.

- Beatlemore Skidmania.
- Frierich Competition.
- Summer Research/SEE-Beyond programs.
- Academic Festival.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

62. Explore possibility to create new major campus events celebrating/highlighting core attributes and values.

- Potential TedX-type event.
- Potential major speaker series pairing alumni/parents and outside speakers that emphasize key attributes of Skidmore “brand.”

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

63. Implement and oversee new policy regarding political activity.

- Create opportunities to appropriately maximize use of the campus in the political process.
- Ensure that all campus members are aware of new policies and procedures.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

➤ *Develop and enhance the “equity” in the Skidmore name.*

64. Identify opportunities on the campus to develop institutional pride and strengthen “brand.”

- Explore alumni counterpart to brick ceremony.
- Identify new location for donor recognition and expand to include alumni leaders and notables.
- Identify locations for videoboards that emphasize institutional priorities and brand.
- Reinstall photography in Murray-Aikins Dining Hall.
- Review and revise departmental and other signage with eye toward better branding and way-finding.
- Develop plan for semi-annual brand audit.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

65. Develop higher national profile for President.

- Explore blogging opportunity for *Huffington Post*.
- Promote and make use of President’s leadership of the Annapolis Group.
- Identify key issues to push with regional and national press.
- Create presidential messaging platform.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

66. Develop mechanisms for managing the College's brand.

- Conduct a "Brand Audit" and develop metrics for measuring performance.
- Create a permanent sub-group of the Advancement Committee to oversee management of the brand and draw upon expertise from within the broader community as needed.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.