



## **Strategic Renewal: Reframing our Priorities at the Midpoint of the *Strategic Plan***

### **The Strategic Action Agenda: 2010-2011<sup>1</sup>**

The 2009-10 academic year marked the midpoint of *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College 2005-2015*. A separate report, “*Engaged Liberal Learning: The First Five Years*,”<sup>2</sup> reviews our considerable *collective* successes in implementing the *Plan* to-date. The emphasis on “collective” cannot be overstated. It has taken the work of many hands across the entire Skidmore community to achieve the admirable – and in some cases, remarkable – progress we have achieved during this time. It also was the right moment to take stock of the challenges we continue to face, rededicate ourselves to our fundamental values, and identify the strategic investments that will make the greatest difference over the next five years. By the *Plan*’s conclusion in 2015, we will have achieved further substantial progress in advancing its four major Goals: *Student Engagement and Academic Achievement*; *Intercultural and Global Understanding*; *Informed, Responsible Citizenship*; and *Developing (and Stewarding) the Resources Necessary to Preserve our Independence of Choice*. None of these ambitious, open-ended objectives can ever be fully realized, but each step we take further enhances our ability to guide our students through a transformative educational experience – one that provides exceptional preparation for their continuing journey through life.

Throughout the 2009-10 academic year, we tested our understanding of our challenges, strengths, and opportunities through a series of on-campus<sup>3</sup> and off-campus<sup>4</sup> Town Hall Meetings (THMs) entitled “Your Voice - Our Future.” While the framework for the on- and off-campus THMs differed somewhat, their overall purpose was the same: to engage the larger Skidmore community in reflecting upon the core values articulated in our “Mission Statement” and *Strategic Plan* and to ask what we could do to further enhance the already considerable value (across all the many dimensions of that term) of a Skidmore degree for all of our graduates. Together, the on- and off-campus THMs yielded a rich collection of ideas that reinforced our fundamental values and helped to clarify and sharpen our strategic focus.

---

<sup>1</sup>The preamble to this year’s “Action Agenda” is a slightly edited version of a text that was issued in Spring 2010. The original version, which includes several appendices that are not reprinted here, may be found at the web site of the Office of the President under the link:

<http://cms.skidmore.edu/planning/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&pageID=684657>.

<sup>2</sup>This document is available on the web site of the Office of the President under the “Strategic Plan” link: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/planning/>. Annual “Strategic Action Agendas” have outlined the projects to which we have assigned highest priority in advancing the Priority Initiatives falling under each of four major Goals. Those documents also are available on the web site of the Office of the President at the same location.

<sup>3</sup>Seven on-campus meetings were held in November and December 2009. Six were open to the entire campus community (including students); the seventh was conducted for the members of the SGA Senate and “invited guests.” More than thirty faculty members, administrators, and other staff members served as table facilitators for these discussions; all together, over 200 persons participated. At its October 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees engaged in a similar exercise. For a summary of these meetings, see the “Synthesis Report,” issued by the IPPC that summarizes ideas arising from the on-campus THMs; the report is available to members of the Skidmore community at <http://cms.skidmore.edu/campusvoice/index.cfm>.

<sup>4</sup>Eight off-campus meetings were held in Boston, Hartford, Westchester County (NY), New York City, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Saratoga Springs (for alumni et al. in the Capital region). A ninth, abbreviated version was held in Vero Beach. Overall, nearly 500 persons participated in these events. See <http://cms.skidmore.edu/yourvoice/index.cfm>. For a brief press report, see *Currents* (journal of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education), April 2010, pp. 6-7.

Drawing upon all these conversations, this preamble also incorporates the thinking of the President's Cabinet, the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (the IPPC), Trustees, and others from campus and beyond. Its broader purpose is to reframe our approach to achieving our institutional goals during the *Strategic Plan's* final five years. In doing so, it reaffirms the basic elements of our mission as a student-centered liberal arts college. It draws our attention to those characteristics that differentiate us from competitor institutions. And most importantly, it provides a heuristic framework to guide our strategic choices going forward – the actions we will take to continue implementing the *Plan's* four strategic goals. Our success in attaining the increased levels of excellence we seek will be proportional to our capacity to focus our efforts and our resources on those actions that will make the greatest difference in the educational experience of our students, the continuing value we provide to our alumni, and our capacity to articulate the distinctive value of a Skidmore education to those beyond the College. The 2010-11 "Strategic Action Agenda" proper represents the initial implementation of these ideas.

### Context, Challenge, and Opportunity

Over the past two years, we weathered the worst economic recession since the great Depression. Beginning in fall 2008, this international crisis affected the College directly through endowment losses and reductions in giving (with evident consequences for the Annual Fund), and indirectly through economic disruptions experienced by families of current and potential students and alumni. In response, we identified our financial problems and faced them head-on. Our community demonstrated that by working together – by *combining creative thought with discipline* – we could lower expenses significantly, reducing current and future budget commitments by nearly \$12 million.<sup>5</sup> None of these efforts was easy, and we are still coming to terms with the full implications of some of the changes we have made. Throughout this process, we also continued to increase our community's *strategic literacy*: our shared understanding that every decision to deploy our precious resources – whether time, energy, or financial assets – represents a *strategic* investment and must be evaluated as such.

Even while dealing with the immediate effects of the recession, however, we remained focused upon our highest institutional priorities. We continued to enroll strong entering classes (further increasing both the diversity and academic preparedness of our student body), completed faculty searches, helped to initiate the New York Six Consortium,<sup>6</sup> advanced our assessment efforts, increased the number and size of external grants,<sup>7</sup> developed our web-based resources (including launching a new version of the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum web site with funding from the Getty Foundation), and successfully completed the \$200 million *Creative Thought - Bold Promise Campaign*, which ultimately achieved a total of \$216.5 million. We also continued to implement the *Campus Plan*<sup>8</sup>: renovating Kimball Hall, finalizing a design for the long-needed replacement of Scribner Village, and making other smaller but nonetheless important improvements to our physical space. We hired the Arthur Zankel Director of Arts Administration to complete planning for and implement the new Arts Management program that will make

---

<sup>5</sup>Specifically, we reduced actual and projected expenditures in current and future annual budgets by nearly \$12 million. There was no general salary adjustment (GSA) in FY 2010 and none was originally projected for FY 2011. Because of effective work by the campus community in containing costs and a very successful admissions cycle, however, we were able to include a 2% GSA in the 2010-11 budget. We have eliminated the equivalent of approximately 55 positions through a strategic hiring freeze and a successful voluntary early retirement incentive program. These efforts significantly reduced ongoing expenses for compensation – the largest component of our budget. We also made many other reductions in services and supplies and realized significant savings in energy costs. For additional information, see "Skidmore College Financial Update – February 1, 2010," <http://cmsauthor.skidmore.edu/president/statements/upload/Skidmore-College-Financial-Update.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup>In addition to Skidmore, this consortium includes Colgate University, Hamilton College, Hobart -William Smith Colleges, St. Lawrence University, and Union College.

<sup>7</sup>In just the period extending from June 2009 through January 2010, the College received a total of \$3,116,712 in new foundation support. More recently, we have received nearly \$800,000 in additional federal funding for research in Exercise Science and a private grant of \$1.2 million to complete the Mellon challenge grant for the Tang.

<sup>8</sup>*The 2007 Campus Plan: A Vision for the Future*. <http://cms.skidmore.edu/campusplan/index.cfm>.

curricular connections between business and the arts and reach out into the world as well. Lastly, we opened the splendid new Arthur Zankel Music Center, which exemplifies Skidmore's continuing commitment to excellence in the arts.

We celebrate these specific accomplishments. But more generally, all of us at the College are fortunate to be associated with an institution that truly is driven by its educational mission. At its center, our "Mission Statement" expresses our commitment

*to prepare liberally educated graduates to continue their quest for knowledge and to make the choices required of informed, responsible citizens.* Skidmore faculty and staff create a challenging yet supportive environment that *cultivates students' intellectual and personal excellence, encouraging them to expand their expectations of themselves while they enrich their academic understanding.* [Emphasis mine.]

Building upon this foundation, the *Strategic Plan* affirmed a new "overarching objective," a bold promise to our students

*to become a College that fully realizes the promise of our Mission: one that inspires, challenges, and supports the highest levels of excellence for all our students, not just for some or even many of them – as evidenced by their achievements in realizing the values of engaged liberal learning while at Skidmore and expressing them throughout their lives. The Skidmore we envision expects that an intellectually rigorous, transformative educational experience will lead to graduates whose achievements at Skidmore will launch them into the next phase of their lives, who are prepared to function effectively in the complex and increasingly diverse world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and who understand and embrace the responsibilities of living as informed, responsible citizens. Moreover, we expect our alumni to remain deeply connected to one another and to Skidmore as a continuing source of inspiration and support.*<sup>9</sup>

In fall 2009, following very good work by a subcommittee of the Committee for Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) and our Director of Assessment, the faculty approved the "Skidmore College Goals for Student Learning and Development."<sup>10</sup> Reflecting our heritage and values, this statement further articulates the commitments of our "Mission Statement" and *Strategic Plan* by naming specific expectations for student achievement that span the many dimensions of the intellectual and personal development students experience during their time at the College.

Uniting these expressions of educational value is the realization that *our first and highest responsibility is always to the intellectual and personal development of our students*, a theme that also echoed throughout the Town Hall Meetings – and one that has continuing implications as we make strategic decisions going forward. ***At our core and above all else, we are and will remain a student-centered institution.*** We take justifiable pride in the educational value we provide to our current students and alumni. We remain committed both to fulfilling the promise of our mission even more effectively in the future and to increasing our capacity to provide persuasive evidence of that value through assessment.

This unity of purpose and the advances we have made in recent years now present us with significant opportunities that we must embrace. The first three Goals of the *Plan* continue to reflect our ambitions for our students, and we can build upon the progress of the last five years to realize those ambitions more fully. The more recent statement of "Goals for Student Learning and Development" provides additional direction for curricular development. It also positions us

<sup>9</sup>*Engaged Liberal Learning*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>The faculty unanimously approved the "Skidmore College Goals for Student Learning and Development" on 6 November 2009. This statement is available on the College's web site: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/assessment/goals-for-student-learning.cfm>.

to demonstrate in new ways the value of a Skidmore education through effective assessment that will encompass not only the undergraduate years but also the lives of our alumni. Taken as a whole, the College offers to prospective students a noteworthy combination of distinguishing attributes (see below). To the extent that we can further strengthen these attributes, we will improve our standing in the competition to attract successive generations of new students.

In order to seize the opportunities before us, we need to continue to be very smart institutionally – to make the best strategic decisions regarding what we will do and what we will not do. We cannot assume that the economic recovery will progress without further setbacks. But even assuming that it does continue, we still will confront many serious and ongoing challenges: persistent public concern about the price and value of expensive liberal arts colleges, reduced numbers of high school graduates within the geographical regions from which we historically have drawn the largest proportion of new students (most notably, the Northeast), and increasing skepticism among the U.S. population at large about the value of liberal education itself. These factors portend an increasingly competitive context for admissions recruitment.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, some have questioned the continuing economic viability of expensive liberal arts colleges in general, and especially those – such as Skidmore – that remain undercapitalized relative to their quality and ambitions.

To move forward, we must resist any temptation to regard our recent experience as a one-time event now receding into the past. Through the efforts and sacrifices of the entire campus community, we have taken important *initial* steps toward re-establishing our budget on a sustainable footing – so that it again can include appropriate investments in personnel, programs, and our physical plant, as well as in financial aid. But even so, the second five years of the *Strategic Plan* – and in all likelihood, the life of the College for many years beyond – will be shaped, in part, by significantly more constrained resources than were available either at the time of the *Plan*'s development or during the early years of its implementation. In short, we simply do not have the option of reverting to a “business-as-usual” mindset, returning to an approach to our work that was more tenable prior to the economic downturn. Skidmore's future will depend upon our ability to internalize this new reality – to continue combining creative thought with discipline. It also will depend upon our ability to add significantly to our endowment and further enhance our fundraising, especially, to defray the cost of financial aid that inevitably will rise over time. Most of all, it will depend upon our continuing ability to add to the educational value our students and alumni receive from the College.

### **Skidmore's Most Valued and Differentiating Attributes**

In order to attract successive generations of students who can take full advantage of what we offer, in an increasingly competitive admissions environment, ***it is crucial that we understand, build upon, and emphasize those differentiating attributes that, when taken together, set us apart from competitor institutions and make the most compelling case for a prospective student to select Skidmore from among his or her options.*** Accordingly, we framed two questions at the off-campus Town Hall Meetings and in several additional meetings with students on campus: “What characteristics of a Skidmore education do you see as most distinctive?” and “What characteristics of a Skidmore education do you see as most important?”

From these and many other conversations, we can reaffirm that students, alumni, and parents value Skidmore, first of all, because we embody the iconic values of a classic liberal arts education, as offered in every selective liberal arts college. These include close interactions between students and our highly accomplished faculty of teacher-scholars, opportunities for

---

<sup>11</sup>For further comment on our challenges relating to student recruitment, see “Urgency and Focus: The Strategic Action Agenda 2009-10,” September 2009, which is available at <http://cms.skidmore.edu/planning/>.

students to pursue independent research or creative work, the high value placed on academic achievement and personal development, and the opportunity for students to develop meaningful, lifelong friendships with both classmates and teachers. More broadly, we offer an education that prepares our graduates for continued learning, gives them the ability to master change in an increasingly complex world, and points them toward a life of purpose, achievement, and meaning. As one of the nation's premier liberal arts colleges, Skidmore will continue to uphold and promote these and related elements of student-centered liberal arts education at its best.

Other familiar characteristics of a Skidmore education, which also are highly prized by students, parents, and alumni, do more to differentiate us from other small liberal arts colleges. These *differentiating attributes* reflect the particular dimensions of our heritage and values:

- **Our welcoming campus community that stresses collaboration as fundamental to achievement and the value of the individual student.** This attribute is manifested in the “non-proprietary” attitude of our faculty that encourages our students to develop their own eclectic interests. This attitude that shapes the approach by our faculty to mentoring also points to the special nature of the student-faculty relationship that is central to a Skidmore education.
- **Our historical and continuing strength in the visual and performing arts,** including the truly unique resources represented by the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, the Office of the Dean of Special Programs, and, most recently, the Arthur Zankel Music Center.
- **Our assertion that “Creative Thought Matters” in every field of human endeavor.** This commitment reflects not only Skidmore's heritage in the arts – where creativity has long been celebrated – but also our fundamental realization that *every* great human achievement in *any* field required an act of imagination. It also incorporates our historical commitment to educating both “mind and hand,” a connection that reaches back to the vision of our founder, Lucy Skidmore Scribner. This linkage of between “mind and hand” is also reflected in our emphasis upon service throughout our students' college years and beyond.<sup>12</sup>
- **Our extraordinary curricular breadth** that includes the traditional liberal arts and sciences as well as pre-professional programs (Management and Business, Exercise Science, Social Work, and Education, along with our B.S. programs in the arts), which are quite atypical of selective liberal arts colleges. The extent of our curricular offerings affords our students an exceptional range of choices, both initially and over time: a student can change his or her mind about a major and not have to change colleges.
- **The interdisciplinary spirit that pervades our faculty** – reflected, among other ways, in our requirement that all Scribner Seminars include an interdisciplinary dimension, in our faculty members' teaching and scholarship, in the central mission of the Tang as a laboratory for interdisciplinary exploration and experiment, and in the individualized curriculum of the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS). Moreover, our faculty members know the interests of their colleagues, and they actively support and encourage our students to make connections across disciplines and programs.

---

<sup>12</sup>Skidmore has been named to the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, which recognizes selected colleges and universities for exemplary, innovative, and effective community service programs.

- **Our commitment to intercultural and global understanding** illustrated, in part, by the fact that, on average, nearly 60% of each graduating class will have studied abroad.<sup>13</sup>
- **Our lively summer campus** that uniquely combines high caliber programs in humanities and sciences with those in studio and performing arts, renowned public events, and revenue-generating activities. Recently, the Office of the Dean of Special Programs has developed new ways to draw upon resources developed during the summer to support residential college faculty work and student learning throughout the year.
- **And last but not least, our setting in the vibrant small city of Saratoga Springs** with its distinctive cultural life as manifested in its numerous museums, arts organizations, performance venues, equestrian heritage, and many fine restaurants. More broadly, we are advantaged by our location – in upstate New York in proximity to the 6,000,000-acre Adirondack Park and the Capital Region, within a three-hour drive of Boston, Montreal, and New York City – which offers students a host of opportunities.

*Together, these eight differentiating attributes define an undergraduate experience that is quite specific to Skidmore. Over the coming years, we need to take account of and, where possible, strengthen these distinctive features. In addition, we must become even more accomplished in referencing this constellation of attributes as we make the case for Skidmore to prospective students and donors.*

### Strategic Themes

The central objective of the mid-term review of the *Strategic Plan* was to articulate a set of strategic themes that stand conceptually between the *Plan's* relatively more abstract Goals and the specific action items we will identify over the coming five years. The three themes discussed below emerged in the context of this year's discussions. They resonate with the core values and distinguishing attributes referenced above, as well as with the objectives of the *Plan* itself. At the same time, they offer a new perspective on the *Plan* and, as such, will help to focus our interpretation of the Goals and sharpen our selection of specific action items in the coming years.

#### *Transition and Transformation*

We have always understood a liberal arts education as the best possible preparation for a life of personal, professional, and civic accomplishments. The increasing demands imposed upon our graduates in a world marked by an accelerating rate of change only serve to reinforce our commitment to this fundamental premise. We will continue to develop in our graduates the high level cognitive, social, and personal abilities that position them for the multiple careers they are likely to experience over their professional lives. This commitment, however, is fully compatible with the awareness that – especially in today's economy – we can do more to prepare our students for the *transition from college to the working world or to further studies*. Concern with this transition-point in our students' lives figured prominently throughout the off-campus and on-campus Town Hall Meetings, and it was already included as a Priority Initiative under the first Goal of the *Plan*.

We have long thought about the transitions related to our students' undergraduate years. Five years ago, we implemented the new First-Year Experience Program to facilitate a more successful entry for our students into college. Since then, we have been working to improve the sophomore year – a time of transition from new student to declared major. We also have implemented a number of programs such as "The Liberal Arts at Work," SkidBiz, The Alumni

---

<sup>13</sup>A recent national study, conducted by the Institute for International Education (IIE), ranked Skidmore fifth among all liberal arts colleges in the number of students who study abroad for one semester or longer.



Career Network, the web site “Creative Thought At Work” (prompted by discussions at the Council of 100), the Parents Council’s recent “Career Jam,” and others focused on the transition out of college. Various offices have been involved in helping students begin planning earlier and more effectively for graduate school and assisting them in applying for post-graduate fellowships. All of these efforts have yielded positive results.

*Over the next five years, however, we need to do better: We need to start more of these efforts to facilitate our students’ transition out of college within their very first year at Skidmore and then continue them across their undergraduate careers.* This new institutional commitment must leverage and integrate resources across academic departments and programs, faculty mentoring, Career Services, the Parents Council, and alumni career networks. Some years ago, before we initiated the First-Year Experience (FYE), data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicated that our newest students reported having fewer conversations with faculty members about their future plans than was the case at other comparable institutions. In response, we have placed greater emphasis upon mentoring within the FYE – encouraging students to begin actively thinking about their post-Skidmore lives from the beginning of their time at the College. Going forward, we will help students connect with alumni through career networks, internships, and other avenues – again, beginning in the first year. Because we are serious about preparing our students to move capably beyond their undergraduate years, we must become clearer about the knowledge, abilities, and skills they need to make this transition – and we can be more creative in developing opportunities for students to acquire them across their time at Skidmore. Departments and programs will be asked to continue efforts such as “The Liberal Arts At Work”; in support of this initiative, we need to develop more systematic ways to provide information about the post-Skidmore lives of our alumni to our faculty. Everyone who works at the College needs to internalize this objective so that we all can seize opportunities to help our students prepare for life after Skidmore. In the end, of course, our students must work out their future plans for themselves, but we can and must be more imaginative in providing them the resources they need to do so.

None of this should be read as calling for a Skidmore education to become more “vocational” or less focused on our historical core educational values. As emphasized above, the core elements of liberal education must remain at the center of our efforts – even within our pre-professional programs. In fact, we need to help our students understand and articulate more clearly these core elements – especially as articulated in the “Goals for Student Learning” – so they can be more intentional in continuing to develop and use those key capacities throughout their lives. They also must be accomplished in explaining those values to others, including prospective graduate and professional schools and potential employers. But even as we underscore the fact that “a liberal education provides the best possible preparation for a life of professional achievement,” we need to remind both our students and ourselves that

it also provides the foundation for a life of satisfaction in the deepest sense of that term – a life of human flourishing, Aristotle’s *eudaimonia*. Such a life certainly requires some measure of material success. But even more importantly it entails continuing intellectual and personal growth, the cultivation of mature friendships and loving family relationships, professional, civic, other forms of community involvement, attention to the arts and other sources of spiritual renewal, and a commitment to health and wellness.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, our new emphasis upon *transitions* should be set within a larger and more familiar conceptual framework relating to *transformation*. This concept has long played a prominent role in our discourse. It appears several times above in the discussion of our student-centered mission,

---

<sup>14</sup>Strategic Plan, §B. “Skidmore’s Distinctive Identity – the Values of Engaged Liberal Learning” p. 10.

and it is both a category heading and is referenced in the introduction to the “Goals for Student Learning”:

Our goals emerge in particular from our collective sense of a Skidmore education as a *transformative experience*. [Emphasis mine.] We want our students to acquire both knowledge and capacities that enable them to initiate and embrace change and apply their learning lifelong in new contexts. We believe that this learning takes place throughout our students’ experience, both inside the classroom and out, on campus and off.<sup>15</sup>

It is important that we regard this concept not just as an evocative metaphor but rather as a concrete expectation of a fundamental change in the nature of students’ lives that occurs as a consequence of their Skidmore educational experience. This transformation should manifest itself as a deep-seated and abiding alteration of who they are, how they view the world, and how they are prepared to interact with it. Moreover, the “scope” of this change should be proportional to their success in achieving the ensemble of objectives stated in the “Learning Goals.”

Understandably, we have tended to situate this transformation within the (typically) four years our students spend with us. *I now challenge us, however, to apply the concept of transformation even more broadly, to acknowledge that the undergraduate college experience represents just one moment – though certainly a crucial one – in a longer passage from late adolescence into early adulthood, a process that begins in high school and extends well beyond our students’ time at Skidmore, typically into their mid-30s.* How would our curricula, courses, and mentoring practices change if we were to regard them in the context of this larger developmental arc? What resources can we develop to help us answer this question? How would our relationship to our graduates change if we were to develop a more detailed sense of their needs, say, two years, five years, and ten years out from commencement? This relationship is expressed concretely in our Alumni Affairs programming (including Reunions), but the question extends beyond this one office. If we truly regard a Skidmore education as *transformative* in its core, then we should be able to use this insight in our decision-making regarding curricular and pedagogical development. (See below.) In further exploring the nature of this transformation, we also should take full advantage of expertise present within our faculty – e.g., in the areas of developmental psychology, sociology, and so on.

### ***Continuing Curricular Development***

Many comments regarding our curriculum occurred throughout the on-campus Town Hall Meetings – some indicating where we should place additional emphasis (e.g., science), others suggesting that we need to be more intentional in identifying areas where student demand does not match the allocated resources. Let me affirm that the curriculum remains first of all an expression of the academic values and vision of our faculty, and the faculty appropriately retains a primary role in determining its content and shape – in the design of individual courses, within departments and programs, and through governance committees such as Curriculum and CEPP.<sup>16</sup> At the same time and especially in dealing with the reality of constrained resources, it is the joint responsibility of Academic Affairs and the faculty to place curricular development within the context of the *Strategic Plan*.

Over the past five years, the *Plan* has both reflected and guided such curricular development – in the First-Year Experience, in the area of intercultural literacy, in relation to the goal of responsible citizenship, in science planning, in assessment, and elsewhere. As we look to the future, the *Plan* identifies areas of ongoing curricular work:

<sup>15</sup>See <http://cms.skidmore.edu/assessment/goals-for-student-learning.cfm>.

<sup>16</sup>A recent commentary in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (28 March 2010) addresses the faculty’s role in disciplining the growth of the curriculum. See “The Elephant in the Room: Curricular Glut,” by Michael Bugeja: <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Elephant-in-the-Room-/64835/?key=QGx0d1kyNyldbHoxfSUXcyIGYSB8KR19biNGZSAaYF5d>



- Goal I – *Student Academic Engagement*: Fostering innovative curricular and pedagogical thinking and new opportunities for students (e.g., for collaborative research) – especially as they relate to the “Goals for Student Learning and Development.” We will continue our science planning, with special emphasis on enhancing the *scientific literacy* of all Skidmore students. And it is time for us to become more intentional in further developing our capacity to make good on our claim that “Creative Thought Matters” by attending more intentionally to this value in our curricula and individual courses.
- Goal II – *Intercultural and Global Understanding*: Continuing to develop the Skidmore curriculum, the pedagogical skills of our faculty, and the inclusiveness of our campus community to enable our students to achieve the knowledge and skills relating to *intercultural and global understanding* that are so crucial to achieving success in today’s world. We also need to identify specific learning goals relating to these issues and build upon the good work that already has been done, for example, by faculty members and students through the Inter-Group Relations (IGR) program.
- Goal III – *Responsible Citizenship*: Continuing to develop both the Skidmore curriculum and social milieu to enable our students to achieve the knowledge and skills relating to *responsible citizenship*, a value that has long been part of Skidmore’s mission. Here too, we need to identify specific learning goals and decide which investments of time, energy, and financial resources will yield the greatest strategic advances. One question that has emerged through our work on responsible citizenship is the question of how we can articulate the “public value” of individual majors or programs.

As we determine how best to undertake this work, we also will look to the specific markers of student achievement provided by the “Goals for Student Learning and Development” and to the themes of *transition* and *transformation*.

### ***Sustainability and Leverage***

The concept of *sustainability* emerged as another point of emphasis in the on-campus Town Hall Meetings. This notion has become a familiar feature of our discourse, applying first of all to the responsible use of resources. And we certainly will continue our efforts to develop sustainable uses of electricity, water, etc., and to reduce waste and energy inefficiency. Our College-wide commitment to *sustainability*, however, extends beyond “green” environmental systems to include sustainable human-resource and financial practices – for example, our commitment to maintaining appropriate and competitive salary levels for all our employees. The *Plan* furthermore extends the concept of *sustainability* to include our educational aspirations for our students, to help them develop the capacities, skills, and habits necessary to leading a sustainable life over the course of professional and personal involvement.<sup>17</sup> Above all, our institutional commitment to *sustainability* requires the ability to make the necessary strategic choices that direct our time, energy, and financial resources efficiently to areas of highest strategic priority. One significant way to increase efficiency is to ***leverage*** resources that are already in place, though perhaps in apparently unconnected areas of the College. Accordingly, we will look for initiatives that reach across disciplinary or departmental boundaries or otherwise create opportunities to multiply and concentrate existing resources to achieve strategic ends.

### ***Stewardship***

The theme of *stewardship* also emerged as a priority in the on-campus Town Hall Meetings, and it underpins Goal IV of the *Strategic Plan*. This Goal emphasizes that we must

---

<sup>17</sup>See the *Strategic Plan*, §B. “Skidmore’s Distinctive Identity – the Values of Engaged Liberal Learning” (p. 10), and Goal III (pp. 25-28).

manage our resources effectively if we are to retain our independence – our capacity to determine for ourselves how best to teach our students and otherwise manage our affairs. Over the coming years, to further develop our *stewardship* of all our resources, we will undertake a number of systematic reviews of business practices and policies across the College. These reviews will build upon past efforts to ensure that we are receiving maximum value added for our investments of time, effort, and financial resources. Our Assessment effort too can be understood as another crucial dimension of stewardship: affirming and increasing the integrity of our educational processes, and enhancing our capacity to describe our student learning outcomes to those outside the College. More broadly, we must expect all members of the Skidmore community to become engaged and effective stewards, through our actions on a daily basis, to help preserve and protect the well being of the College.

In addition, we must continue to be vigilant not only in stewarding our financial resources but also in protecting and adding to the integrity of our institutional reputation – our “brand” – that is so important to our success in admissions, in faculty and staff recruitment, and in generating external support from alumni, parents, friends, and foundations. Furthermore, we must continue to strengthen our capacity to nourish life-long relationships between our students and the College. Indeed, Skidmore becomes part of the “personal brand” of each of our graduates, and we must continue to enhance the value of this relationship to them over time.

### **Going Forward – What Are We Prepared To Do?**

As I have emphasized throughout this document, the four major Goals of the *Strategic Plan* will continue to provide our primary strategic focus. During the next five years, we will continue to advance key Priority Initiatives already in process, while others that were not emphasized during the preceding five years will be given greater prominence or developed anew. A major test of the effectiveness of our strategic decision-making will be the extent to which we continue to attract and retain the students we most want to attend Skidmore, at a financial aid cost that allows the College to continue to develop sustainable budgets.

The strategic themes identified above represent a heuristic framework for making the strategic choices before us in a time of limited resources. Specifically, they provide a set of questions to ask as we evaluate each potential initiative:

- Does it enhance our focus as a student-centered institution and help to foster the transformative experience we wish for all our students?
- Does it support our faculty in their central role in accomplishing the College’s mission?
- Does it advance our knowledge of the transformative process in which our students are engaged – and, more importantly, does it help us facilitate that process?
- Will it enhance our students’ ability to manage their transition from college to their post-college lives?
- Does it contribute to the stewardship of our resources or our reputation?
- Does it leverage existing resources or combine resources across boundaries within the institution?
- Will it contribute to the sustainability of the College – does it enhance environmental responsibility, does it create more sustainable lives for our employees, or does it help our students and alumni lead more sustainable lives?
- Does it strengthen one or more of our distinguishing attributes?

It is unlikely that any single initiative could address all of these issues. But answering these questions will give us clear reasons to select some options over others. As we deliberate regarding possible strategic action items over the coming years, we also will be intentional in articulating expected outcomes, determining the resources (time, energy, funding) required to complete them, and identifying where those resources are to be found.

I have directed various Cabinet members to undertake immediately a number of administrative initiatives aimed at addressing issues we have identified over the preceding months as having special urgency – issues reflected in the preceding discussion. For example, we have begun a comprehensive project relating to our students' transition from college to the working world, led by an administrative working group. I also have directed the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid to undertake, in collaboration with other offices, a thorough review of promotional materials, financial aid packaging practices, and other procedures relating to the admissions cycle – all to enhance our capacity to make the case for Skidmore even more effectively in the future than we do at present. Furthermore, I have directed the Office of Business and Finance to identify areas in which we will evaluate the efficiency of our business practices.

Let me identify one final strategic opportunity relating to the curriculum: I challenge academic administration and the faculty to collaborate in developing a new “space” within the College’s academic structures for curricular and pedagogical exploration – a “space” where faculty members can explore new and perhaps even “disruptive” ideas that can help us shape the Skidmore of the future. For example, that future clearly calls for higher levels of collaboration across institutions (e.g., within the New York Six Consortium), more integral uses of technology (e.g., Internet2), and new models of instruction in which a professor, a program, and perhaps even the College as a whole functions more as an academic “hub” from which we send students out into the world (either physically or electronically) to access resources and explore opportunities that Skidmore cannot provide on its own.

Over the past two years, virtually every college and university has confronted difficulties similar to ours. Although we could not control the developments occurring in the external environment, we can take pride in the way our community rallied to respond to them. As we look to the future, we must reaffirm both our sense of opportunity and our determination to meet the challenges remaining before us. We will continue to call upon the substantial resources within the Skidmore community. The professionalism and commitment of our faculty and staff, the vitality of our students, the strength and support of our extended Skidmore community, our historical willingness to embrace risk, and our record of accomplishment in the face of constrained resources all encourage us to retain full faith in the College that is yet to be. If we continue to unite creative thought with discipline and pursue our highest strategic priorities with purpose and vigor, we will emerge even better positioned among the nation’s highly selective liberal arts colleges and better able to fulfill Skidmore’s bold promise. Significant challenges still remain. But as we have demonstrated in the past, working together we are up to the task.

Philip A. Glotzbach

## **Engaged Liberal Learning**

### **The Plan for Skidmore College 2005-2015**

#### ***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*

- Enhance institutional structure to support academic excellence. [SAA 06-07]
- Increase student academic engagement in the first year.
- Increase support for research and creative activity throughout faculty careers.
- Strengthen system of shared governance and capacity for developing leadership throughout the College. [SAA 06-07]
- 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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***

- Continue to develop institutional capacity for effective planning and proactive internal communication. [SAA 05-06]
- 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.
- Cultivate a broader positive awareness of Skidmore within local, regional, and national populations. [SAA 05-06]

# Strategic Action Agenda Items 2010-11

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, the expected date of completion for each of the following projects is June 1, 2011.

## *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. Develop and implement plan to provide leadership for registrarial and institutional research functions.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

- 2. Continue to implement reorganization of the Office of the Dean of Special Programs.**

- Finalize organizational structure, position descriptions, and personnel assignments.
- Finalize mission statement.
- Determine principles for ODSP budget.
- Complete the phase-out of UWW.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

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

- Create group to develop campus information plan.
- Develop plans for integration of IT into Library space.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

- 4. Develop activities to realize the potential value of consortial relationships. (See additional NY6 item under Goal IV below.)**

- Mellon New York Six: Connect NY and MediaShare.
- Faculty leadership activities and Faculty Interest Groups.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

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

- Recruit 8-10 tenure-track lines.
- Develop plans to address contingent faculty concerns (e.g., possible conversion(s) to tenure-track line(s), compensation adjustments, etc.).
- Restructure administrative support of departments and programs.
- Design and implement paperless advising.



Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

**6. Develop plan to complete “Optimization” study (aligning size of faculty and student body for optimal educational experience).**

Administrative Responsibility: Acting President (spring 2011).

**7. Develop plan to institutionalize support for digital resources position at the Tang.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**8. Curricular and program development.**

- Arts Administration – implement foundation courses.
- Intercultural literacy – present audit of intercultural courses to CEPP and revise criteria for CR courses; develop assessment rubrics for intercultural literacies, study abroad, and domestic diversity; develop institutional support for IGR.
- Develop mechanism for review and assessment of breadth requirements; pilot e-portfolios.
- Develop plan for learning goal of effective communication in multiple modes and media.
- Determine support requirements for departments/programs in transition (Neuroscience and Education Studies).
- Develop MALS program (enhance promotional and application materials, develop plan for combined BA/BA/MALS degree program).
- Continue to establish Zankel Program (operations and protocols, programming, etc.)

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty, and Dean of Special Programs.

**9. Enhance Skidmore’s capacity for academic assessment.**

- Middle States Accreditation – complete Periodic Review.
- Develop assessment rubrics for intercultural literacies, study abroad, and domestic diversity.
- Develop mechanism for review and assessment of breadth requirements; pilot e-portfolios.
- Develop plan for learning goal of effective communication in multiple modes and media.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

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

**10. Coordinate support of faculty development (recruit Network Facilitator and implement Faculty Interest Groups, including renovation of space in Library; coordinate opportunities offered by Tang, Library, Special Programs, academic**

**technologies, etc.; enhance Faculty Development Committee support for scholarship and curricular development).**

- Develop Mentoring and Support Programs for new Faculty.
  - Expand New Faculty Learning Community programs beyond first year to include both pedagogy and research support.
- 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.
  - Recruit Mellon curator.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

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

**11. Renew the liberal arts conversation – talk about, across, and between the disciplines.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**12. Develop a plan for the College calendar.**

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

**13. Develop “new ideas” discussion as regular component of Faculty Meetings.**

Administrative Responsibility: President and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

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

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

- Complete planning and initiate implementation for first phase of the new administrative student information system, including review of processes seeking efficiencies where possible.
- Design systems approach towards improved integrated informational retrieval systems for the new student information system and existing administrative systems.
- Improve access of mobile devices to current key web systems as well as new student information system.
- See budget support to hire two additional report writer consultants for departmental assistance.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for

Advancement, and 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.*

**15. Begin implementation of Science Plan.**

- Continue to educate community about and seek input on the Science Plan.
- Develop science literacy course criteria.
- Draft evaluation plan of existing science facilities.
- Develop new infrastructure plan for science facilities based on evaluation of existing science facilities and program planning for new facilities.
- Develop fundraising plan for science initiatives.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Advancement.

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

**16. Constitute and charge working group to develop plan for comprehensive post-baccalaureate experience.**

- Faculty-student research opportunities.
- Develop plan for increasing the number and support for High Impact Experiences that enhance post-baccalaureate opportunities (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, etc.)
- Develop coordinated fundraising plan to established funded internships (Sophomore Experience).
- Enhance support for faculty advising regarding High Impact Experiences.
- Alumni networking.
- Support for national fellowship applicants.
- Develop programming options to support future increase in pre-orientation program participation.
- Establish restructured Center for Career Development; search for and hire new director.
- Seek expanded capacity to support pre-professional advising and advising regarding High Impact Experiences.
- By December 1, 2010, develop budget plan for new initiatives.
- Create coordinated fundraising plan to support the creation of High Impact Experiences for all students.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of the Faculty, Acting Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Student Affairs, Vice President for Advancement.

- *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).*

**17. Continue to enhance summer conference and institute operations.**

- Seek replacements for lost summer conferences.
- Generate ODSP print and web materials that complement “CTM 2.0” branding and marketing initiatives.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

**18. Continue to enhance summer academic programs.**

- Increase Skidmore and visiting faculty availability to teach in summer by 10%.
- Collaborate with Admissions, through College Relations, to promote summer academic programs to prospective and enrolled Skidmore students.
- Raise profile of and increase enrollment of the Summer Studio Art Program by 10%.
- Increase enrollment in Pre-College Program by 10%.
- Develop summer ESL program.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

**19. Continue to enhance residency programs.**

- Implement Carr “Careers That Matter” Residency.
- Develop a plan including funding to establish The Distinguished Scholar in the Sciences Residency Program.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Special Programs.

## ***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 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

### ***Projects/Action Steps***

- *Increase global awareness across the community in order to sensitize all Skidmore students to a complex, diverse, and interdependent world.*

**20. Appoint Campus Disabilities Advisory Committee.**

- Begin review of campus accessibility needs.
- Develop long-range plan.

Administrative responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

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

**21. Continue Admissions efforts to enroll classes with 23-25% students of color and 3-5% international students.**

- Increase travel to target schools and CBO's.
- Travel to Singapore, Hong Kong, India, and Beijing.
- Expand collaboration with faculty travelling internationally.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

**22. Develop long-term funding plan for HEOP programmatic needs.**

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

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

**23. Continue efforts to recruit, attract, and retain candidates for faculty and staff positions who enhance the diversity of the faculty and staff.**

- Establish accountability and review processes for recruitment of faculty and staff of color in search plans for faculty and staff.
- Support affinity groups (e.g., Black Faculty and Staff Group) through the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding as a means for supporting and retaining faculty and staff of color.

Administrative Responsibility: Cabinet.

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

- Initiate diversity and inclusion training for all members of the campus (beginning with Cabinet, then supervisors, and moving to selected staff across campus).

Administrative Responsibility: 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.*

**25. Through the Responsible Citizenship Task Force, engage chairs and program directors in discussion regarding the public value of their disciplines.**

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

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

**26. Advance the planning for Scribner Village replacement and seek Board approval to move to construction.**

- Complete the design phase planning for the replacement of Scribner Village.

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

- Develop funding plan for replacement of Scribner Village (target additional \$5-8 million from fundraising and other sources).

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

**27. Assess continuing residential facilities needs (maintenance, renovation, and infrastructure needs).**

- Create a plan for future sequencing for addressing residence hall facilities needs.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

**28. Continue work with Case Council, architect, and Space Planning Working Group to establish Case Center as a campus/student center.**

- Develop space program plan.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

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

**29. Seek permanent funding for the Health Promotions Office.**

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

**30. Strengthen prevention, education, and response related to issues of sexual misconduct and alcohol and other drugs.**

- Revise sexual misconduct policies; expand student dialogue on consensual sex and sexual misconduct.
- Evaluate new drug intervention program.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.

**31. Address athletic facilities needs.**

- Complete comprehensive athletic facilities plan and develop timeline.
- Continue work to design and fundraise for new boathouse.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Student Affairs.



- Fundraise to complete the next phase of boathouse renovation and expansion.
- Identify and begin early gift conversations with potential donors for new facilities for tennis and riding.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

**32. Reassess space needs for Health and Counseling Centers.**

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.*

**33. Recruit new Sustainability Coordinator and develop funding plan to sustain the position.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Finance and Administration.

**34. Complete greenhouse gas inventory and initiate planning for reductions, focusing initially on energy-related projects.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

## ***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. Lead development and execution of strategic planning to advance major goals and priority initiatives of the *Strategic Plan*.**

- Develop and execute annual Strategic Action Agenda.
- Oversee creation of divisional five-year strategic plans.

Administrative Responsibility: President and Acting President.

**36. Conduct planning and implement measure to ensure the College's immediate and long-term financial sustainability in light of ongoing economic challenges.**

- Continue to look for opportunities to collaborate across divisions, departments, and offices to leverage our resources and further enhance our interdisciplinary approach to learning.
- Communicate clearly at each stage of the budget process, providing

information as necessary to enhance the community's collective strategic and financial literacy.

- Be attentive to community morale and include community-building initiatives during difficult budgetary times.

Administrative Responsibility: Cabinet.

**37. Identify target areas to evaluate the efficiency of business practices.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

**38. Continue to lead Skidmore's participation in the Mellon New York Six Consortium.**

- Advocate for consensus on desired outcomes.
- Explore potential collaborations in areas of information technology, acquisition of goods and services, sustainability, student engagement, faculty and staff development, and intercultural literacy.

Administrative Responsibility: President and Acting President in collaboration with Cabinet.

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

**39. 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.**

- Continue to award need-based aid based on individual circumstances; continue Joint Appeals Committee (admissions and financial aid) to review requests for re-evaluation; institute appropriate measures for returning students late in submitting financial aid applications; etc.
- Analyze enrollment and financial aid trends for 2009-10 applications in comparison to prior years.
- Review Porter Program and adjust program as appropriate.
- Continue to facilitate and incentivize campus visits for top admitted students.
- Lead review of possible move to standardized-testing-optional policy.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

**40. Achieve fundraising targets to support strategic initiatives.**

- Secure funding for and launch a second \$1 Million challenge to reach 12,500 overall donors.
- Increase prospect pool by 10% (consider electronic screening, focus gift officers on visits).
- Increase FOPs by 10% (focus on mid-level donors and launch young FOP initiative).
- Stabilize current annual gift level at \$18-20 Million (plan for key post-campaign fundraising opportunities).

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

**41. Initiate inter-campaign fundraising efforts and future campaign planning.**

- Draft and launch three-year plan to end prior to launch of new campaign; grow number of Legacy Society members by 5%.
- Draft inter-campaign fundraising plans to support sciences, athletics, financial aid, health and wellness, and post-baccalaureate initiatives.
- Review all core fundraising systems and protocols.
- Enhance Volunteer Network (add 75 new volunteers, establish Annual Fund Committee, develop overall volunteer management plan).

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

➤ ***Achieve and maintain competitive compensation for Skidmore faculty, staff, and administrators; enhance our ability to support their professional development.***

**42. Continue to implement the Total Comprehensive Compensation Framework.**

- As we continue to move forward with the Total Comprehensive Compensation Framework goal of bringing both salaries and benefits of all Skidmore employees to the median of our peers (or better), give special attention to areas where current salary levels impede our ability to hire our first-choice candidates.
- Continue to monitor progress toward meeting targets in relation to appropriate external comparison groups.
- Initiate planning for comprehensive market salary survey for staff to be completed in academic year 2011-12, in conjunction with an overall study and benefits survey with emphasis on health care and the impact of scheduled federal mandated changes.
- Seek ways to create long-term funding for salary competitiveness including fundraising, and new initiatives.

Administrative Responsibility: Cabinet.

**43. Enhance educational and peer mentoring programs for all employees.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

➤ ***Develop and enhance our capacity to manage our physical resources.***<sup>18</sup>

**44. Complete review of Campus Plan and determine long-term priorities for campus construction, renovation, and maintenance.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration and Cabinet.

---

<sup>18</sup> See also items 3, 10, 14, 15, 20, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, and 34.

**45. Filene Hall renovation.**

- Complete plans for and commence construction to renovate Filene Hall for Special Programs.
- Determine other related moves to Filene and areas affected by other moves.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration, Dean of Special Programs, Dean of the Faculty, and Cabinet.

**46. Saisselin Art Building renovation.**

- Complete plans for and commence construction to renovate Saisselin Art Building.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

**47. Address Admissions facilities needs.**

- Continue refurbishment of Eissner Admissions Cottage and grounds.
- Develop plans for re-location of Admissions and Financial Aid offices to location on the west side of North Broadway.

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

**48. Continue to address facilities planning for academic space.**

- Plan for classroom and office space for next three to five years. (DOF)
- Coordinate Campus Plan with Academic Plan. (VPAA/VPFA)

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty, and Vice President for Finance and Administration (as above).

**49. Continue to address deferred maintenance.**

- Update list of deferred maintenance projects and prioritize items to be recommended in the annual budget process.

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Finance and Administration.

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

**50. With the Board of Trustees' Trusteeship Committee, identify and cultivate relationships with individuals having potential to serve on and lead the Board.**

Administrative Responsibility: President.

**51. Continue market research of and targeted outreach to prospective students.**

- Conduct Admitted Students Questionnaire; select marketing firm to conduct research.
- Subscribe to targeted services.
- Study qualifying inquiries for enhanced communication.

Administrative Responsibility: Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

**52. Develop long-term longitudinal survey of alumni to support assessment of learning outcomes.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Advancement.

**53. Conduct second round of off-campus Town Hall Meetings focusing on post-baccalaureate experience.**

Administrative Responsibility: Vice President for Advancement.

**54. Develop comprehensive social media plan.**

- Create temporary two-year position for Social Media Director whose work will focus on Admissions.
- Develop plan for Admissions and Advancement; identify opportunities to integrate into broader campus activities.

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

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

**55. Create and market “CTM 2.0” “branding” effort.**

- Hire firm to do research and creative work.
- Launch branding video and subsequent satellite videos for Admissions.

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

➤ *Cultivate a broader positive awareness of Skidmore within local, regional, and national populations.*

**56. Engage in presidential initiatives to enhance Skidmore’s regional and national visibility.**

- *Best of Our Knowledge* commentaries for WAMC.
- Serve as chair of Annapolis Group Executive Committee.
- Continued involvement with AAC&U Presidents’ Trust (leadership group supporting Liberal Education and America’s Promise [LEAP] initiative).
- Complete sabbatical writing projects.

Administrative Responsibility: President.