

Erik J. Morrison '15

The David H. Porter Award for Young Alumni Service



Erik Morrison believes that relationship-building is the engine that powers growth — of vibrant communities as well as robust enterprise — and is a source of opportunity for all. As an active alumnus volunteer, he is committed to ensuring that the next generation of students have access to the same opportunities he did.

A Capital Region native, Erik grew up volunteering for local nonprofits. When the first-generation college student entered Skidmore's Opportunity Program, he viewed the concept of "work-study" through the same collaborative lens. Erik spent his college career helping faculty, staff and students develop new campus initiatives while simultaneously creating his own uniquely tailored internship experience.

After graduating with a history major and arts administration minor, he earned an MBA from Notre Dame de Namur University while working in human resources for WSWHE BOCES, a regional education organization. In 2019, Erik launched Morrison Consultancy Group in partnership with graphic designer and marketing specialist **Katie Koke '18**. The firm advises businesses and nonprofits in areas ranging from organizational strategy and marketing to restructuring. Erik's ability to cultivate relationships has served him well, and he is especially grateful for the many he developed at Skidmore.

From the moment he arrived on campus, Erik began to "pay it forward." An American Red Cross youth volunteer, he saw the value of sharing the organization's mission with the Skidmore community. In 2011 he founded a Red Cross chapter at Skidmore, serving as its president and advisor for three years. Working with the Student Government Association and several departments, Erik built up membership and hosted several campus events. His partnership with Professor Emerita Holly Hodgins and the Psychology Department resulted in a dramatic rise in student participation in campus blood drives. The Skidmore chapter also provided free CPR/AED training for students in conjunction with Campus Safety. "Looking back," he reflects, "it was a lot like building and maintaining a small business."

Over the next several years, Erik's campus work positions dovetailed with his academic and career interests. He worked as a financial assistant in the Office of Special Programs, helped the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program with marketing initiatives and assisted other student club leaders through the Office of Leadership Activities.

He was especially pleased to sign on as media coordinator for the newly established John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS). He worked closely with its inaugural director, Jordana Dym. The role complemented Erik's internship in development, marketing and management at Saratoga's Universal Preservation Hall, where he boosted public awareness of the historic arts hub. Taken together with an earlier internship at The Hyde Collection, a historic art museum in Glens Falls, New York, these hands-on experiences functioned as a primer in how nonprofits are developed and sustained. Moreover, the connections he made have been consequential and long-lasting. Soon after graduation, Erik was invited to join the MDOCS staff as assistant to the director.

Erik cites David Howson, executive director of the Arts Administration program, as an important influence. Halfway through his college career, Erik added a minor in arts administration and was asked to coordinate a mentoring program for Foundations of Arts Administration participants. Howson continues to be a sounding board for Erik today.

In 2015, he stepped up to serve on the Senior Gift Executive Committee, helping the student scholarship fund achieve a significant increase in participation and dollars. Erik's many contributions to the Skidmore and local communities were recognized with the 2015 Charles S. & William P. Dake Community Service Award. He earned the American Red Cross Exceptional Youth Volunteer Award in 2012 and 2013.

As an alumnus, Erik's Skidmore connections continue to be omnipresent. A Career Development Center volunteer, class agent and Reunion co-fund chair, he is a welcoming presence at events like Career Jam, regional alumni gatherings and Presidents Society celebrations.

"I believe it is especially important that young alumni stay involved with current students and the College," he says. "It is truly an opportunity to shape Skidmore's legacy and help it continue to thrive in challenging times. For me, it's a chance to give back to an institution that has given me so much."