

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

MIDDLE STATES

Self-Study Design

September 30, 2004

Submitted by:

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Associate Dean of the Faculty and

Middle States Steering Committee Chair

Middle States Accreditation

Design for the Self-Study

Skidmore College, Fall 2004

Skidmore goes into this periodic review for Middle States accreditation in a rather different place than we occupied ten years ago, at the time of our last review. We were then in the midst of a presidency that had successfully consolidated the remarkable achievements of the previous presidency: we were settled into our new campus and into our relatively new identity as a more academically balanced and stronger co-educational liberal arts college. This year, in contrast, we have a new president in his second year, Philip Glotzbach, and are embarking on a new campaign that emerges out of five years of strategic planning. We are considering significant changes in our core curriculum for the first time in some twenty years. And we have heightened ambitions for the college: to continue to strengthen our faculty and student body, to expand our facilities, to maintain our position as a top-tier liberal arts college, and to challenge every student to achieve full engagement with a rigorous academic experience.

The college's leadership has decided to undertake a focused review with a selected topic. Our reasons are several. Perhaps most importantly, our extensive process of strategic planning under our previous president, Jamienne Studley, constituted a thorough self-evaluation. The documentation included in our self-study to demonstrate compliance with all of the standards will reveal the scope of our undertaking during that planning process. Over the past two years, our Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, Charles Joseph, has been leading the faculty through a process of defining our academic vision and shaping changes to our curriculum in response to the vision and to the information we have gathered. Our Office of Institutional Research, led by Ann Henderson, also gathers substantive information routinely so that our decision-making is informed by essential data. Our Director of Assessment, Ray Rodrigues, has been instrumental in guiding the college towards more pervasive and substantial

assessment both at the departmental level and college-wide. Although we are constantly made aware of the need for new information to inform our decision-making processes, we are also confident that we can document basic compliance with the standards and their fundamental elements.

Perhaps more important, however, is our wish to make use of the focused self-study to dig more deeply in an area that is of particular concern to us at this moment in our planning. The topic we have selected is student engagement: we wish to study the ways we are planning for and working to increase the degree of students' engagement in their Skidmore education. When we participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) activity last year, some of the results took the college by surprise. Most striking were the differences between first-year students' and seniors' responses in the categories associated with student-faculty interaction and academic engagement. Since we had been pioneers in the world of first-year curriculum when in 1985 we launched our new interdisciplinary Liberal Studies curriculum, and since Liberal Studies 1 and 2 have been a hallmark of a Skidmore education, we were concerned about what we found. In addition, we knew that it is becoming increasingly difficult to staff the courses with full-time faculty. We have also known for some years that we typically lose 10% or more of the first-year class after the first year, while our aspirant and several of our peer institutions do not. It is worth noting that the NSSE data show that our seniors are fully engaged, at a level equal to or greater than our peer institutions. Consequently, we have been particularly concerned about engaging our students more fully during their first year. The NSSE data have been confirmed and amplified in various ways by information we have gleaned through our on campus Student Cultures Project, led by Professor Susan Walzer in Sociology, and through studies undertaken by an ad hoc committee studying factors that influence our retention of students. The confluence of our work with these data, faculty work on our academic vision and curricular revision, and planning for resource development in the current campaign, has led us directly to our topic for this self-study.

Within that focus we have three areas on which we will concentrate: designing a new model for our students' first-year experience; strengthening the sciences and recruiting students

earlier and in greater numbers into the sciences; and engaging our students more fully in a more culturally diverse environment and course of study. Each of these areas has been the subject of review in recent years, and in each we have recently made gains and are engaged in significant planning. All of them relate to what we see as a major challenge for the college: to increase the degree to which our students, from the moment they arrive, eagerly and energetically undertake the transformation essential to the liberal arts education. The key to that transformation is, of course, the faculty, and we understand in this review that the faculty, in their passion for their own professional work, exemplify engaged learning for our students. In this review now and in our planning, faculty are working with other areas of the college to meet our common goals. The topic we have selected for our focus thus allows us to make use of the Middle States review process both to demonstrate our commitment to the standards of excellence expected of us, and to gather more information and motivate further discussion and planning in an area of major collective interest and concern.

We plan to follow the first option for the Selected Topics model and have the review of those standards not substantively reflected in this self-study take place during the team Chair's preliminary visit. We understand that this means we will have assembled the compliance documentation prior to the team chair's visit with a designated generalist evaluator, and we will provide a concise roadmap to clarify the relationship between the documentation and the standards.

Our selected topic will allow us to provide complete or partial documentation for the following standards:

Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Standard 8: Admissions

Standard 9: Student Services

Standard 10: Faculty

Standard 11: Educational Programs

Standard 12: General Education

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning.

As we have crafted the charge to the Middle States Steering Committee, we have reviewed all of the standards and their fundamental elements with our focus on student engagement in mind. The process has been useful in helping us to frame not only the charge for our self-study but also the questions we must pose to ourselves as we plan and implement changes. Some of the questions in the charge have emerged out of thinking about standards not listed above—for example, about governance and resources—but our attention to compliance will be focused on the standards listed above.

The charge to the Steering Committee is reflected in the work of three different subcommittees, each of them concentrating on one of the sub-topics within our focus on student engagement, and of other members of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee consists of the faculty who chair the three subcommittees; three student representatives; and leaders in key areas of the college: the Office of Institutional Research, the Director of Assessment, Student Affairs, the Dean of Studies' office, the Library, the Center for Information Technology, Admissions, Special Programs, and the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. Two members of the Board of Trustees are consulting members of the committee, as are the Director of Diversity, the Director of International Programs, and the college's budget officer. A full list of the participants follows this section. Additionally, other members of the community have read and responded to drafts of the charges at various stages. Our design includes a separate charge to each subcommittee, as well as a timetable for gathering input from a number of constituencies as we collect information responding to the charge, draft the study, and circulate succeeding drafts. Given the focus on student engagement, we are particularly concerned to go beyond the data that we have previously collected and to include students actively in the self-study. There are student members on each of the subcommittees, in addition to three student members of the Steering Committee; they will be an integral part of the process of gathering further information about student engagement at Skidmore, as well as the process of communicating with the students as a whole about the Middle States review process.

Our goals for this review begin, of course, with the wish to succeed in the re-accreditation process by being re-accredited. Success for us will also mean learning more about the college as we conduct the self-study. More concretely, we want to make further progress in refining, building consensus around, determining benchmarks for, and implementing objectives, determining next steps and assigning responsibilities in each case:

- We seek to engage our students more fully in their education, recognizing that we need to make the largest gains here in their first year;
- We seek to engage our students more in the sciences: to gain greater balance in the student body and the curriculum by increasing the numbers, visibility, and engagement of science majors, minors, and students enrolled in science courses;
- We seek to engage our students more fully in learning about cultural diversities, both domestic and global.

These are goals that have been established as part of our institutional planning over the past five years, and much longer in more general terms. In each case they are only part of the picture: for example, students' engagement in their education is a matter of compelling interest to us throughout their four years here and in our non-traditional degree programs as well; our goals for the sciences include high priorities for staffing, facilities, and resources; and we are deeply concerned about our community as a culturally diverse place for faculty and staff as well as students. But the focus on student engagement allows us to perceive each of these planning areas as serving the most important aspect of our mission: "The principal mission of Skidmore College is the education of predominantly full-time undergraduates, a diverse population of talented students who are eager to engage actively in the learning process." How eager are they? And how engaged? How might we engage them more in their own education as we understand it? Those are the questions that frame our charge.

These questions are relatively new to us: we are not certain that we have or can easily obtain answers to all of the questions that follow. Framed this way, our self-study is indeed much more than a compliance document; we are discovering our own lack of information at times even as we collect the data and reports that demonstrate the seriousness with which we take our

mission. The self-study design that follows necessarily has an element of the unknown: the information we gather, and the planning we are even now undergoing, may take us in some different directions over the course of this year. We welcome the challenge of being changed by what we learn.

List of Committee Participants

Sarah W. Goodwin, Professor of English & Associate Dean of the Faculty – Steering Committee
Chair.

First-year Experience

Michael Arnush – Associate Professor of Classics and Chair of the Committee on Educational
Policy and Planning – Chair of the First-Year Experience Subcommittee

Subcommittee members:

- Joanna Zangrando, Professor of American Studies and Director of Liberal Studies
- Linda Simon, Professor of English and Director of Expository Writing
- Thomas P. Oles, Dean of Students
- Molly Appel '07
- Daniel Moran '07

Diversity

Patricia Rubio – Professor of Spanish; Chair of the Diversity Subcommittee

Subcommittee members:

- Jordana Dym, Assistant Professor of History, participating faculty member in Latin
American Studies
- Jack Ling, Director of Institutional Diversity
- Gerardo Rodriguez, Visiting Assistant Professor of Physics
- Mason Stokes, Associate Professor of English
- Michelle Yee '05

Sciences

Robert DeSieno, Professor of Computer Science and Sponsored Research Officer – Chair of the
Sciences Subcommittee

Subcommittee members:

- Karen Kellogg, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies and Acting Director of the Environmental Studies Program
- Vasantha Narasimhan, Professor of Chemistry
- Bernard Possidente, Professor of Biology

Additional members

Mary Lou Bates, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

Grace Burton, Associate Professor of Spanish and Interim Dean of Studies

Dan Coleman, Director of Master of Arts in Liberal Studies; representing Special Programs

Ruth Copans, College Librarian

Matthew Cronin '06

Beth DuPont, Director of Academic Computing, also representing the Center for Information
Technology

Sebastian Fica '07

Emily Gentes '05

Ann Henderson, Registrar and Director of Institutional Research

Gayle King, Associate Director of Administration, Tang Museum

Susan Layden, Director of HEOP; also representing Student Affairs

Elliott Masie, Skidmore College Board of Trustees

Ray Rodrigues, Director of Assessment

Joseph Stankovich, Associate Director of Institutional Research

Linda Toohey, Skidmore College Board of Trustees

Charge to the Steering Committee

Core Charge

Design and implement the Focused Self-Study for the Middle States accreditation review process; host the team visit; respond to any concerns; determine next steps to follow up once the review is completed.

- Collect documentation, and oversee the process of generating new information and documentation for the review.
- Meet regularly as a group and with other constituencies and consulting members as needed.
- Keep the college community informed about the review process on an open and regular basis.

Framing questions for the Steering Committee charge:

- What do we know about what most—and least—engages our students in their education?
- In what particular areas do we hope to engage them more? How are we planning to do so, with what goals and objectives?
- What resources do we need to make progress in these areas?
- What governing bodies and leaders within the college are responsible for implementing any recommended changes or next steps?
- How will we recognize progress?

Charges to the Subcommittees

The First-Year Experience

The design of the Skidmore self-study on the First-Year Experience focuses extensively on student engagement, both the extent to which students engage in their education in the first year and how we assess their success. For more than twenty years Skidmore College has delivered a first- and second-year curriculum called the Liberal Studies program (LS). Initially, Liberal Studies consisted of a first-semester interdisciplinary team-taught course (LS I) that served as a common experience for each entering class of students, and three additional courses taken before the senior year, chosen from a broad set of interdisciplinary offerings (LS II, III and IV). In the 1990's the faculty modified the Liberal Studies curriculum to two courses: LS 1 and one course chosen from interdisciplinary offerings under the rubric of LS 2. From the outset the LS program has introduced our students both to the liberal arts and to interdisciplinary ways of thinking and knowing. In recent years faculty and institutional commitment to the Liberal Studies program – but not to interdisciplinarity – has waned, in part because of the demands upon faculty to contribute to our increasingly strong interdisciplinary programs. Consequently, the College's Committee on Educational Policies and Planning has crafted a long-range academic vision with a new first-year curriculum as its centerpiece. The foundation of the proposed new First-Year Experience (FYE) is the First-Year Seminar (FYS), which incorporates small seminars on interdisciplinary topics, emphasizes writing in the disciplines, has faculty serve as instructors and mentors to the students in the seminars, and connects the seminars' content to the students' co-curricular and residential lives.

Thus the timing of the Middle States self-study is propitious, for it affords the College the opportunity to look carefully at the trends in student engagement in the first year (and, to some extent, in the first two years), at the motivations to reform the curriculum, and at the anticipated outcomes. The Skidmore faculty and administration have long recognized the critical importance

of the curriculum we offer our first-year students: to serve as a foundation for the general education curriculum and the majors; to engage students from the outset and help them develop habits of rigorous inquiry and reflection; to inculcate in our students a lifelong passion for learning.

This self-study of Skidmore's program for first-year students will not draw exclusively on the current Liberal Studies program and the proposed First-Year Experience, for the courses that constitute our students' initial foray into higher education do not comprise their entire academic experience in the first year. Both the LS program and the proposed FYE seek to extend our students' education beyond the walls of the classroom, reaching into their co-curricular and residential lives. Accordingly, this self-study will explore the effectiveness of student engagement, beginning with prospective students' consideration of Skidmore as their college of choice and continuing through their entire college career. We will ask ourselves how best to foster the kinds of mentoring relationships between faculty and students that have always existed at Skidmore. We will consider the role the proposed FYE will play in the development of students' skills and literacies (in communication, in information resources, in quantitative analysis, and in visual resources). We will seek ways to strengthen the connections between the classroom and the rich array of co-curricular activities. We will study the effect that student engagement has on our students' progress through the general education curriculum, their choice of major, and their success as undergraduates as they prepare for life beyond college. The FYE self-study will also explore the College's allocation of resources to student engagement in the first year, including the student services in support of the proposed FYE; the expectations the faculty have of first-year students and the extent to which the students meet, fall short of or exceed those expectations; the connections between the first-year courses and the rest of the College's curriculum; the relationship between the FYE and the residential and co-curricular side of students' lives; and the place of the FYE in the College's overall Strategic Plan. The self-study will examine the First-Year Experience in three general areas: student engagement, faculty participation and administrative support.

Core Charge to the Self-Study Subcommittee on the First-Year Experience:

Explore the relationship between student engagement and our first-year experience, both current and planned, aiming to understand what is working, what is not; what we need to change; how to plan for and implement changes; the most crucial resource needs; and how to recognize and assess the outcomes.

Student engagement within the existing program

- How do we gauge students' engagement in their education, especially during the first year?
- How does the Liberal Studies program serve to advance our mission? What aspects does it serve best? Where might it be stronger?
- What do we expect our students to learn during their first year? What intellectual capacities and basic skills do we want them to have as a foundation for their education, and where are they learning them?
- Do we provide our students with appropriate opportunities to explore new disciplines and to make connections among the disciplines?
- How have we revised the LS program in recent years? Which faculty have undertaken the work, with what objectives and support? What have been the results?
- How does the LS program foster an intellectual community and collaboration among the faculty? With what effect on our students, as far as we know? As we move to a new model for the first year, what of these aspects may we want to retain?
- Which groups within the faculty most often teach the core courses in LS for first-year students, both LS 1 and LS2?
- How are faculty who deliver LS courses evaluated and reviewed? What are the contractual terms for temporary faculty delivering LS courses – i.e., do they mentor and advise?
- What impact does having a faculty member serve as instructor and mentor have on student engagement?

- What are the expectations of advising and mentoring, and why does mentoring foster student engagement?
- How do we foster first-year student engagement beyond the classroom?
- How does the Honors Forum affect student engagement in the first year?
- How does the Library support student engagement and learning in the first year? What role do Library staff play in determining and meeting our goals for information literacy?
- How does the Center for Information Technology support student engagement and learning in the first year?
- How does the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery support student engagement and learning in the first year, both in the current curriculum and in the proposed FYE?
- What does the Admissions process contribute to shaping the expectations of our entering students for learning and engagement during their first year?

Planning for change and resource needs

- What are our goals for a revised and enriched FYE, particularly in terms of student engagement?
- How do we use what we know about student learning and student engagement when we plan curricular change?
- What might we learn about ways to enhance the engagement of first-year students by examining the practices of the Honors Forum and the college's Special Programs?
- How broadly-based is the support for our existing LS program among the faculty? How are we planning now to extend the support further as we plan for an FYE that more fully engages our students?
 - Do we have sufficient tenure-track faculty to deliver the proposed FYE? What are the other demands on the faculty that compete with potential participation in the FYE?
- Do we need to plan for library and technology resources in support of our goals for the FYE?

- How well do the institutional vision of the President and the institutional planning that is underway dovetail with the curricular planning led by CEPP?
- How does the existing administrative structure support the current FYE? What collaborations exist among leaders in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Dean of Studies office? What changes might be needed or desirable as we plan for change in both curricular and co-curricular areas?
- Who will determine our objectives for student engagement in the first year, plan next steps, gather information, and track progress towards our goals?

PRELIMINARY DOCUMENTATION FOR THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE				
STANDARD		FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
1	Mission, Goals & Objectives	Mission	Mission Statement	Catalog
		Curricular planning	Commission on the '90s	President's office
			Vision Statement	CEPP webpages
			CEPP minutes, retreat reports, open fora	CEPP webpages
			LS annual reports	LS archives
			IPC reports	President's office
			Faculty minutes	DOF webpages
2	Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal	Institutional goals and objectives	Distillation Report	President's office
			Strategic Plan	President's office
			Assessment Plan	President's office
		Departmental allocations of faculty to LS/FYE	Institutional Research reports	Registrar's office
		LS/FYS budgets	LS annual reports; FYS proposal	LS archives; CEPP webpages
		Institutional responsibilities for planning, accountability	CEPP operating code	CEPP archives
			Various committee reports	CFG webpages
			Course proposal process	Curriculum Committee webpages
8	Student Admissions	Admissions policies	Admissions Committee reports	Admissions Committee webpages
			Marketing Plan	Marketing office
		Assessment of student success; retention	Committee on Retention and Attrition Planning	DOF webpages
			NSSE report	DOF office
			Student Cultures report	Susan Walzer, SASW
			Honors Forum Reports	Honors Council

	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
			London FY Program Documents	Office of International Programs
		Financial aid allocation	Financial Aid reports	Financial Aid office
9	Student Support Services	Student affairs support	Student Affairs Organizational Chart	DOSA office
			Student Life Plan	DOSA office
			Residential Life Plan	DOSA office
			Reports to Board of Trustees	DOSA office
			Focus groups	
		Academic advising	DOS reports	DOS office
		Peer tutoring	DOS reports	DOS office
		BI sessions and other information resources support	Library reports; CITS reports; IRC Information Technology Plan	Library office; CITS office; IRC webpages
		Writing in the curriculum	Writing Center; Expository Writing Committee	WC/EWC reports
		Role & reportage of the DOS	DOS Advisory Committee report	DOF/DOSA offices
		FYS proposal on advising, tutoring, info.res. support, writing and the DOS	FYS proposal	CEPP webpages
10	Faculty	Faculty appropriately prepared and qualified	Percentage of faculty with terminal degrees; other qualifications	DOF office
		Educational curricula designed by appropriately prepared/qualified faculty	Catalog listing of faculty	Catalog webpage
		Excellence in teaching and professional development	Curriculum Committee guidelines; Faculty Development Committee reports	CFG webpages
		Linkage teaching and professional development	Faculty committee annual reports	CFG webpages
11	Educational Offerings	Educational offerings congruent w. mission, depth & breadth of curriculum	Departmental assessment plans; Catalog descriptions	DOF office Catalog webpage
		Information resources support	Library Assessment plan; CITS assessment plan	Library office; CITS office

	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
		Course syllabi with learning outcomes	Academic department and Curriculum Committee archives	Academic department & Curriculum Committee archives
		Co-curricular and residential programming	DOSA reports; HF reports; SGA reports; Tang reports; Student Cultures reports	DOSA, HF, SGA and Tang offices; Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work
		Study abroad opportunities	OIP reports	OIP
			Special Programs Documents	Special Programs
12	General Education	General education program	All-College requirements	Catalog webpage
			Academic Information Guide; Faculty Advisor Handbook	DOS office
		Assessment of general education	Senior Exit Surveys	Registrar's office
			Portfolios, capstone courses	Academic departments
			First-Year mentoring pilot	LS office
			General education assessment project	Director of Assessment
			LS1 & LS2 assessment	LS office
			Writing assessment	Writing Center
			Multicultural Student Affairs report; International Education report	OMSA; OIP
13	Related Educational Activities	Identifying students not fully prepared for college	HEOP reports	HEOP office
14	Assessment of Student Learning	Expectations & assessment of student learning	Department and program assessment reports	Academic department offices; Director of Assessment
		Evidence that assessment information is used to improve teaching & learning	Graduate follow-ups, alumni surveys, portfolios	Registrar's office; Advancement office; department offices; Director of Assessment
			Pedagogy Workshops	DOF
			Student Cultures reports	DOF

The Sciences

In this self study, we will focus upon the capacity of the natural sciences to engage students deeply with fundamental scientific ideas and with the application of those ideas in solving problems. Our review will inquire about the pedagogies we employ, the roles of faculty and students we encourage, the laboratory and classroom resources that we use, and the staffing we require to assure student engagement with breadth and depth that constitute excellent science education.

We are concerned with the education of science majors, with their acquisition of specialized knowledge and with their appreciation for the consequences of scientific discovery. Correspondingly, we wish to explore how well all of our students grasp the notion of science as a way of understanding the world, and the influence of this understanding upon human values and public policy choices. We will examine the emerging role of interdisciplinary science programs, looking to reveal the educational value of these programs, and considering the influence of these programs upon the qualifications of new faculty hires in the sciences and upon the migration of student majors into these fields and away from the traditional natural science disciplines.

Finally, we will inquire about our methods for assessing the resource needs of the sciences to foster student engagement, not merely department by department, but on the basis of a coherent arrangement that allows us to develop vision for the natural sciences as a community and that conveys such vision and its needs to the leadership of the College.

Core Charge to the Self-Study Subcommittee on the Sciences:

Identify the mission, goals, and objectives for the natural sciences at Skidmore College with respect to educational excellence, with particular focus on the students' engagement in their learning. Collect what we know about student engagement in the sciences, in their current

programs. Define resource needs central to this focus and a process for implementing goals and recognizing progress.

Student engagement within the sciences

- What goals do we have for student learning in our science courses for majors? Upon graduation, what are our science students prepared to do? How are we assessing these outcomes and using that information in planning?
- What content does our faculty deliver to the majors? Are our students engaging in rigorous science education comparable to that found at other strong liberal arts colleges?
- Are the interdisciplinary science programs particularly compelling for our science majors? Do they offer breadth and depth that make the programs competitive with analogous programs offered at other strong liberal arts colleges?
- What is the impact of interdisciplinary programs on student engagement in and our delivery of the traditional science disciplines? Is the commitment of our science faculty to such education sufficient to meet student interest with rigorous courses?
- What do our science faculty wish liberally educated students to understand about science? How do we engage arts, humanities, social science and pre-professional students in serious consideration of science and its consequences?
- What range of pedagogies do our science courses employ, and how much do we know about their effect on student engagement?
- How many faculty and students engage in collaborative research? What forms of support do we provide faculty and students engaging in collaborative research?
- To what extent are faculty able to make use of the college's more unusual resources—such as the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery and Special Programs—to enhance student engagement in the sciences?
- Do we offer co-curricular experiences to support student learning and engagement in the sciences?
- Do we have admissions policies specifically related to the sciences that support and reflect our missions, goals and objectives?

- Do we reach out to first-year students and attempt to engage them in studies in the sciences? What are the resources currently contributed by the science faculty in delivering Liberal Studies 1 and 2? The Natural Science breadth requirement?
- What has our work on student retention taught us about student engagement in the sciences in particular?

Resource needs and planning for change

- How well are we staffed (faculty, technical and administrative support) and equipped (space, time, instrumentation) to sustain a uniform and high level of educational engagement and excellence for our students among all the natural sciences on our campus?
- Do we have the library and IT resources, and appropriate personnel, necessary to student and faculty work in the sciences?
- How do we convey vision for the evolution of each of the natural sciences on our campus? How does that vision incorporate expectations of student engagement?
- Is there a mechanism for student input into planning and governance in the sciences?
- Who is responsible for establishing and tracking progress on goals for student engagement in the sciences?
- Do we have the necessary leadership and the proper governance structures to plan for and meet our shared goals and objectives in the sciences, now and in the longer term?

PRELIMINARY DOCUMENTATION FOR THE SCIENCES				
	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
1	Mission, Goals & Objectives	Mission	Mission Statement	College Catalog
		Curricular Planning	Commission on the 90s	President's Office
			Vision Statement	CEPP Web Page
			Middle States Reports	DOF Office
2	Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal	Institutional goals and objectives	Distillation Report	President's Office
			Recent external reviews of departments	DOF Office
			State of the Sciences Report	DOF Office
			Vital Issues for the Sciences	DOF Office
			Strategic Plan	President's Office
			A Vision for Science at Skidmore College, Aspirations and Challenges	DOF Office
			Recommendations for support of the natural sciences in capital campaign	DOF Office
			Minutes for the Science Planning Group meetings	DOF Office
			Statistical profile of the sciences at Skidmore College	Office of Institutional Research
3	Institutional Resources	Allocation of resources to science initiatives	Strategic Plan	President's Office
8	Student Admissions	Policies support mission, policies, criteria, info available	The Admissions Composite Report; Admissions WEB page and publications	Admissions

	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
10	Faculty	Hiring faculty to deliver the sciences	College catalogue and cv's of science faculty	DOF Office
11	Educational Offerings	Congruent with mission	Courses in the Sciences and collaborative research opportunities	Catalogue
			CEPP's Core Curriculum Proposal (2001)	CEPP
			Collaborative research reports and records	DOF Office
			Departmental and Program Reports	Departments
			Selected syllabi	Departments
			Framing documents from major curricular changes: Biology curriculum revision; unification of Geosciences and Environmental Studies; Physics Department; Tang Museum catalogues and programming	Departments
12	General Education	All-College requirements	Departmental and program reports	Departments and programs
14	Assessment of Student Learning	Expectations, activities, using evidence	Departmental plans and reports	Departments, programs
			Selected representative syllabi	Director of Assessment
			Biology	
			Pedagogy Workshops	DOF

Cultural Diversity: Domestic and Global

The design of this self-study on diversity will pay special attention to student engagement, focusing on the scope, frequency, and quality of their involvement with matters related to a broad range of topics that come under the rubric of cultural diversity, both domestic and global. It will also raise specific questions about the effectiveness of administrative, curricular and co-curricular efforts to promote student understanding and involvement with multicultural, intercultural, and cross-cultural/international activities, issues, and topics, paying particular attention to how majority and AHANA (African Hispanic Asian and Native American) students, faculty and staff engage each other in and out of the classroom.

In the late nineties, and in the wake of a commissioned review on diversity (see documentation list), President Porter introduced new measures to increase racial and ethnic diversity on campus. An interim diversity report (1998-2002) provided a broad picture of diversity at the institution, indicating a need for further and more targeted assessment of outcomes in a number of areas. As this and other reports on diversity were written mostly from the perspective of professionals on structural and programmatic issues without a particular focus on student learning about cultural diversities, the results of this self-study on student engagement in diversity will necessarily include new information, and thus may provide new impetus for planning and renewed efforts.

In this self-study, as in recent work undertaken by a subcommittee of our faculty Committee on Educational Policy and Planning, we are linking together goals related to racial and ethnic diversities in the American context with our planning to understand and deepen the kinds of intercultural awareness our students bring back with them from study abroad. The self-study will thus include substantial information about the growth of global and international content in the curriculum; of our study abroad programs; of events in the co-curriculum with global and international content; of the numbers of our students studying abroad and the programs they choose; in short, of international studies at Skidmore. As we see the conceptual links between

study abroad and cultural diversities at home, we are beginning to ask how we might forge those links more intentionally in every area of the college.

This self-study will draw from existing policy statements, documents, surveys, focus groups, and anecdotal data on diversity as well as on new assessment findings on student learning and participation in matters related to racial, ethnic, and global diversity. Our student representative on the subcommittee will facilitate the development of a student-based data gathering team, which may include the other students serving in the self-study process on subcommittees and the steering committee; and our faculty-administrative members will assemble and solicit information from other segments of the institution. In the end, the assembled information should capture the present status of student engagement with diversity, and we will close with recommendations for future planning and program evaluation.

Core charge to the Subcommittee on Domestic and Global Diversity:

Identify the goals and objectives for cultural diversity at Skidmore College with respect to educational excellence, with particular focus on the students' engagement in their learning. Identify how issues of diversity, both local and global, contribute to the engagement of students in the learning process. Explore what we know about how engaged our students are in their learning about diversity. Define resource needs central to this focus, and outline a process for implementing goals and recognizing progress.

Student engagement in the current contexts

- Do the college's mission, goals and objectives on diversity include student engagement as a focus?
- What are the definitions of diversity guiding institutional planning, policy and programs?
- What evidence do we have of engaged learning about local and global diversity, whether in the curriculum or in the co-curriculum?

- What are the goals of the Intercultural component of the all-college requirement? What are some of the specific diversity-related outcomes? How do we assess them?
- How do our departments and courses with global or international content, outside of the Intercultural requirement, serve our goals for student learning about diversity?
- What are students' expectations for learning about diversity at Skidmore, and to what extent are they satisfied?
- Which majors and minors focus on diversity in domestic and/or global contexts, and which courses do so? Are there goals for student learning articulated on syllabi and in mission statements, do we assess student learning in those areas, and do we use the results in planning?
- Do we have policies and procedures to ensure the recruitment and promote the retention of diverse faculty? How engaged are these faculty in curricular development and in co-curricular programming that supports our goals in these areas?
- Where do the leadership and accountability reside for working with diverse faculty in engaging their students in learning about diversity, both inside and outside the classroom? How do we recognize faculty work in these areas?
- What are the objectives of existing study abroad opportunities for our students? What do we know about the relationship between study abroad and student engagement?
- How does study abroad relate to the educational mission of the college, with respect to student engagement in cultural diversities in particular?
- What role does language study play in our students' experience abroad, especially with respect to their engagement in learning? How do we connect foreign language study on campus to global cultural awareness?
- How do we prepare students for study abroad and integrate their experiences after their return, particularly in terms of their learning about global and domestic cultural diversity?
- How does the library support diversity in its collections, instructional program, interactions with patrons, and in its presentation of resources to varying constituencies? Is the library

unbiased in its collections and services, and is a diversity of information encouraged through the organization of the traditional and electronic library collections?

- How do the college's Special Programs reflect and support our shared goals for global and domestic cultural diversity in our students, faculty, programs and learning content?
- How does the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery reflect and support our shared goals for global and domestic cultural diversity in our programs and in student learning?
- What goals have we established for recruiting diverse students in the past five years, how have we attempted to meet those goals, and what success have we had? Are those goals clearly grounded in our goals for student learning and engagement?
- Do we make full use of our resources such as Special Programs and the Tang Museum in recruiting targeted diverse students?
- What policies or guidelines do we have regarding the recruitment of international students, and what is the rationale for them?
- Do we perform ongoing assessment of student success, including but not necessarily limited to retention that allows us to evaluate the match between the attributes of admitted students and the institution's mission and programs?
- What collaborations exist among Admissions, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to recruit and retain diverse students?
- How do our student support services and co-curricular opportunities contribute towards our efforts to develop an engaged and diverse student body?
- Are students of diverse backgrounds supported and encouraged to share their experiences? When and how does co-curricular programming encourage students to draw connections among their diverse backgrounds, their lives on campus, and their studies?
- What offices on campus provide support to students of color and international students?

Planning for change and resource implications

- How and where are policies and plans regarding student engagement with diversity formed? What is the leadership and governance overseeing the planning process, and in what areas of the college, with what consultations, does it take place?
- How are such plans and policies implemented? Do planning and policies lead to concrete objectives? Who implements the plans, and who is accountable for them?
- What might we learn about ways to enhance the college's diversity from the practices of Special Programs?
- How and where do we assess the success of our efforts, specifically with respect to student learning and engagement, and where do we make use of results in the planning process?
- What resources has the institution committed to initiatives for student engagement in and learning about diversity, local and global? --to integrating the two? What further resources might be needed to help us establish and meet goals?
- How will we recognize progress in meeting our goals for student engagement in this area?

PRELIMINARY DOCUMENTATION FOR DIVERSITY				
	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
1	Mission, Goals & Objectives	Mission	Mission Statement	College Catalog
		Curricular Planning	Commission on the 90s	President's Office
			Vision Statement	CEPP Web Page
			Middle States Reports	DOF Office
2	Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal	Institutional goals and objectives	Distillation Report	President's Office
			Strategic Plan	President's Office
			Diversity at Skidmore: A Response to "The Plan for Skidmore: Excellence & Community"	Office of Institutional Diversity
3	Institutional Resources	Allocation of resources to diversity initiatives	Diversity Report (1998) (Jack Ling)	Office of Institutional Diversity
7	Institutional Assessment	Evaluation of goals and achievement of results	Thoughts on Diversity and Affirmative Action Initiatives at Skidmore College (Jack Ling)	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Thoughts on Diversity and Affirmative Initiatives from 1998 to the Beginning Years of the New Millennium (Jack Ling)	Office of Institutional Diversity
8	Student Admissions	Attracting students of various backgrounds to study at Skidmore	The Admissions Composite Report; Special Programs documents	Admissions, Special Programs
			Multicultural Recruiting planning documents	Admissions, Special Programs
9	Student Support Services	Providing adequate support to students	Proposal for the creation of the position of Director of the Center for Intercultural Studies	Dean of Students

	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
			Office of International Programs web information	OIP Web Page
			Student Cultures Project	Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work
			Focus Groups	
10	Faculty	Hiring faculty to deliver the curriculum	Guidelines for Faculty Searching and Hiring (9/1/1997 Jack Ling)	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color: A proactive Approach	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Increasing Racial and Ethnic Presence at Skidmore College	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy for the Skidmore College Community	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Sexual Harassment Policy for the Skidmore College Community	Office of Institutional Diversity
11	Educational Offerings	Course offerings related to diversity and study abroad	CEPP's Core Curriculum Proposal (2001)	CEPP
			The Curriculum, Diversity in the Curriculum (R. Rodrigues and Jack Ling)	Office of Institutional Diversity
			The Intercultural Brochure	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Skidmore's Guide to Culture-Centered Courses	Office of Institutional Diversity
			Study Abroad links	OIP Web Page
			Where Skidmore Students Studied Abroad (C Filson, OIP)	OIP Web Page
			Focus Groups	

	STANDARD	FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT	DOCUMENTATION	SOURCE
			Freeman Grant Documents	DOF
			Pedagogy Workshops	DOF
12	General Education	All-College requirements	Survey on Diversity Requirements (CEPP, 2000)	CEPP
14	Assessment of Student Learning	Expectations of Student Learning	Assessment Plans	Director of Assessment
			Course Syllabi	Departments
		Assessment activities	Plans, reports	Director of Assessment, departments
		Using info to improve	HEOP documents	HEOP
			International Affairs proposal	IA Director
		Using student learning info in institutional assessment	Diversity reports	Office of Institutional Diversity