

Civic Engagement at Skidmore A Status Report

Responsible Citizenship Task Force¹
February 2009

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Executive Summary

In Goal III of its Strategic Plan, Skidmore declares, “We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world.”² To fulfill this promise, the college needs to both educate and motivate students to become engaged citizens. It also requires a coherent strategy that considers what kinds of experiences are necessary for students to fully embrace social responsibility.

Defining what it means to be an “informed, responsible citizen” is not an easy task, and there is much room for debate. However, the Task Force believes that *an informed, responsible citizen has the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to effectively respond to public issues and concerns.*

While colleges and universities are rapidly implementing new programs related to civic engagement, there is no one model that has been widely adopted. Among the great variety of efforts, we describe four major strategies. First, many traditional liberal arts courses include civic education by examining social issues from a variety of perspectives. Second, service-learning courses, which combine academic learning with service experiences, add a unique dimension of pedagogical engagement to service. Third, community research that involves students in problem-focused scholarship can take place within coursework, independent projects, and as collaborative research with faculty. Finally, many co-curricular programs provide students with the opportunity to do volunteer work and to develop leadership skills.

Civic-Learning Courses

Although Skidmore has not catalogued its civic-learning courses, we believe many courses in our curriculum would meet this definition. In the social sciences, civic-learning courses include examination of social problems, identifying historical and structural causes, recognizing complex forces that sustain these problems, and contextual solutions that apply theory and evidence. In the natural sciences, civic courses may be illustrated by the NSF-funded SENCER Model (Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities). SENCER emphasizes teaching “‘to’ basic, canonical science and mathematics ‘through’ complex, capacious, often unsolved problems of civic consequence.”³ In the arts and humanities, civic-learning courses may emphasize, for example, ethical decision-making and the creative expression of social issues, stimulating public discourse about them. Pre-professional programs might focus on civic professionalism, helping students to develop the values, organizational skills, and practices for public service, non-profit management, education, and social work.

Service Learning

Service learning combines traditional classroom teaching with community service. The applied learning that often coincides with civic engagement efforts has been shown to increase critical thinking and problem-solving capacities in students. Research on service learning has found that the classroom supports abstract theorizing, the learning of basic principles, and critical reflection. Service work supports learning about ambiguity, uncertainty, time pressure, contextual relationships, and resource constraints. Students engaged in service learning tend to have more nuanced, complex, and realistic understandings of social problem-solving.

Of the approximately 1600 classes taught in the 2007-2008 academic year (excluding internships and independent studies), 41 were service-learning courses (2.6 percent of the total). These courses enrolled 702 students, with 68 of them taking more than one of the service-learning classes. Of the college's 2604 students, 24 percent took at least one service-learning class.

In addition to offering service-learning courses, Skidmore has several sustained service-learning projects that go beyond individual courses and semesters:

- *Expanding Horizons*: K-16 partnership between Skidmore and the Schuylerville Central School District.
- *Dialogue Facilitation Initiative*: Skidmore offers four kinds of dialogue facilitation programs that reach beyond particular courses and semesters including mediation, restorative justice conferencing, study circles, and intergroup dialogues.
- *Latino Advocacy Project*: Internship and volunteer program that allows students to expand upon their academic studies by working directly with Spanish-speaking populations in a variety of communities.
- *Center for Sex and Gender Relations*: Advocacy, training, and education pertaining to all aspects of sexual health and sexual conduct.

Community-Focused Collaborative Research

Individual courses in sociology, government, social work, environmental studies, and the First Year Experience offer opportunities for students to conduct research focused on community issues. An excellent example of engaged scholarship at Skidmore is the Water Resources Initiative (WRI). WRI is administered by the Environmental Studies (ES) Program and integrates coursework, field trips, team-based research, and engagement with local, regional, national, and international concerns for water resources. Unfortunately, it is common for faculty to feel a tension between institutional and professional priorities toward basic research and their own interest in conducting community-focused research. Skidmore currently offers little systematic guidance to faculty on this question.

Co-Curricular Programs

Although not formally tied to the curriculum, co-curricular programming is a place where students often apply what they learn in the classroom, express the values and commitments central to their civic identity, and develop the core skills and dispositions of civic engagement. Through participation in student government, on faculty and all college committees, in orientation programs, residential life, student clubs and organizations, retreats, trainings, and volunteer work, students enact the role of a citizen in both the campus and the broader community. Highlights of co-curricular initiatives are listed below:

- *Honors Forum Citizenship Requirement*: The Honors Forum is the only academic program at Skidmore that requires a co-curricular service experience.
- *The Office of Community Service Programs*: Currently, Skidmore has an Office of Community Service Programs (OCSP) under the Office of Campus Life in Student Affairs. In 2007/2008, 50 percent of our students volunteered, students held 20 different fundraising events that raised more than \$54,000. Skidmore partnered with 36 community agencies locally, such as Habitat for Humanity and Saratoga Mentoring, and

coordinated an “alternative spring break” for students to help with the ongoing recovery efforts in New Orleans. OCSP also sponsors a volunteer-based pre-orientation program.

- *100 Projects for Peace*: The Davis Foundation provides grant funding to undergraduates students to initiate “projects for peace.” Five students at Skidmore have received funding for four international development projects in the summers of 2007 and 2008.
- *Sustainable Skidmore*: Under the leadership of our new sustainability coordinator, several projects educate the community and to reduce Skidmore’s ecological footprint.
- *Athletic Team Service Projects*: Each athletic team conducts a service project, such as offering free sports clinics for area children, sponsoring a Special Olympics swim meet, helping at local social service agencies, and conducting fundraisers for charities.

Institutional Support of Civic Engagement

Part of a civic engagement infrastructure must include the capacity to identify specific needs of these agencies so that we can tailor our outreach to students and faculty based on their interests and expertise. Many colleges and universities have established centers that serve as clearinghouses for campus civic engagement efforts. Based on a review of our peer institutions, it is apparent that Skidmore does not yet have the infrastructure to support civic engagement at a comparable level. While we have one full time administrative position, the Director of Community Service Programs, it is normative for our peers to have civic engagement centers with staffs of three to seven.

Recommendations

It is readily apparent from this status report that civic engagement is thriving at Skidmore. Students are motivated to participate in these community-based opportunities and their contributions are substantial, highly varied, and creative. They are making a difference for the campus community, the local region, and even globally. Yet despite these accomplishments, the activities are not well coordinated, many are poorly linked to the academic experience, and students are largely unaware of the activities of their peers and of opportunities for their own engagement.

We believe that by acting on the following recommendations, Skidmore will not only better serve our current students, but also become even more attractive to prospective students. Indeed, Tulane University, which added a two course service-learning requirement for all of its students as part of its “Renewal Plan” after Hurricane Katrina, has been receiving a record number of applications. Last year, the school received 34,000 applications to fill its first year class of 1500 (a 100 percent increase from the year before).⁴ We hope that Skidmore will not have to experience a major natural disaster before implementing our recommendations.

1. Support faculty participation in civic engagement initiatives

Many faculty support Goal III but are uncertain about how to best foster student civic learning. The following recommendations focus on faculty development:

- *Symposium*: Civic engagement is relevant to all majors and programs, but it should be up to each discipline to define its own criteria and pedagogical strategy. The Dean of the Faculty should sponsor departmental retreats or an all-faculty symposium that asks each department to articulate its relationship to Goal III. What is the public relevance of the

discipline? How is this relevance articulated as learning outcomes in the major and/or courses?

- *Faculty Survey*: Survey the faculty about their commitment to civic engagement.⁵
- *Faculty Education*: Offer workshops to faculty on civic engagement opportunities in the community and pedagogical training. Offer support to faculty to attend national higher education conferences on civic engagement. Workshops can be topically specific: community-based research, hiring processes for civic-minded faculty, civic engagement in first year courses, capstone experiences, honors courses, and for specific divisions or disciplines as well as for new faculty. In conjunction with workshops, offer faculty resources online such as a database of service-learning syllabi and other materials that assist curriculum development.
- *Faculty Incentives*: Expand recognition and rewards for faculty who incorporate civic engagement into their courses.
- *Faculty Fellows*: Offer stipends to experienced faculty for mentoring their peers on civic engagement activities.
- *Quadracci Chair in Social Responsibility*: This endowed chair should be reviewed for purpose and integration with Goal III priorities.
- *Community-Focused Collaborative Research*: Propose changes to the Faculty Handbook that identify the role of engaged scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. Create faculty development funds specifically for community-focused collaborative research. Educate department chairs and CAPT about the value of community-focused research and criteria for its evaluation.
- *Collaboration with other Initiatives*: Currently, Skidmore is seeking to develop pedagogical support to faculty through a possible center for teaching and also strengthen its support of the natural sciences. Planning groups should meet to develop joint initiatives, such as service-learning pedagogical support and scientific literacy projects that involve civic learning. For example, as we increase our support in the natural sciences, we might collaborate to identify for majors how scientific knowledge can be used in service of the public good and how a focus on social concerns can enhance the education of non-majors in scientific literacy.

2. Promote pedagogical civic engagement initiatives

- *Civic-Learning Courses*: Develop criteria and a process for identifying, evaluating, and promoting civic-learning courses, as well as a means to list them so that students and faculty could easily locate them. These courses would be identified by the Registrar's Office, prominently identified (for example, by using a "C" designation after the course number) and publicized so that students could explore these offerings in their course selection process.
- *Service-Learning Courses*: As with civic-learning courses, mechanisms need to be developed to regularly identify and promote service-learning courses.
- *Community-Focused Collaborative Research Opportunities*: Identify and promote course-based and summer program opportunities.
- *International Service Learning*: Develop new opportunities for global service learning. Encourage departments to pre-approve service-learning programs. Explore models like Princeton University's new bridge program that defers incoming students for one year while they live abroad doing community service.

- *Service-Learning Internships*: Create new credit-bearing opportunities to parallel internships or develop an identifier for service-oriented internships. Develop resources to support students pursuing service internships and link this program to the summer collaborative research program.
- *Certificate Program*: Create a certificate program that combines civic engagement coursework, co-curricular training opportunities, and capstone civic projects. Explore similar models such as the Civic Scholars Program at the University of Pennsylvania⁶ and the Public Service Scholars Program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.⁷
- *Sequencing the Service-Learning Experience*: Develop criteria and a plan for introducing service-learning experiences with increasing complexity. For example, identify what service-learning experiences should look like in the FYE and other introductory courses, and how they may be presented differently in advanced coursework and in associated programs, such as study abroad and internships.
- *Service-Learning Peer Mentors*: Offer trainings and retreats to students, such as FYE peer mentors and SGA Academic Council representatives, which prepare them for leadership positions in civic engagement projects.
- *Create Community Partner Advisory Board*: The board would include several representatives from community agencies that regularly work with our students. The board would meet once each semester to brainstorm collaborative opportunities for service-learning projects, internship placements, and community-focused collaborative research needs.
- *Secure Transportation*: Engaging students in the community requires reliable transportation services between the college and community agencies.

3. Enhance Recognition of Civic Engagement

- *Service Awards, Prizes, Scholarships, and Honors*: While the lists of awards, prizes, and scholarships noted above could certainly be expanded, a limitation is their focus on individual recipients when there may be a large number of students who merit recognition of their good citizenship. We could also recognize student civic engagement with the creation of “service honors.” Unlike the various prizes and awards we currently offer, this would recognize a class of students who meet a particular standard for service. Such students might receive a certificate or tassel at commencement.

4. Create a Center for Civic Engagement

Our peer institutions have made significant commitments to civic engagement by developing centers that coordinate both academic and co-curricular civic engagement. Such a center at Skidmore, led by Academic Affairs, but serving as a bridge to Student Affairs, would be the umbrella for a diverse array of initiatives from volunteering to service learning to community-based research. There are already a number of relevant initiatives and programs on campus, yet their visibility is limited, information sharing between them is informal, and no coordinated operation exists to enhance these activities, promote new ones, or capitalize on their successes.

The center would coordinate and provide administrative support to civic engagement activities. Responsibilities would include the following:

Faculty

- Work with departments to identify how they help prepare civic-minded graduates.

- Oversee faculty development opportunities in both pedagogies and scholarship of engagement.

Students

- Oversee student volunteer placements, service-learning projects, and community-based research activities, with an emphasis on building sustained community projects and partnerships.
- Support student clubs and organizations for volunteering and charitable fundraising endeavors.
- Offer a civic dialogues program that includes mediation, restorative justice, and facilitated dialogues on diversity and public issues.
- Administer and/or facilitate civic projects that go beyond the academic calendar such as international service-learning travel seminars, pre-orientation programs, summer service learning internships, and alternative spring breaks.
- Offer public recognition of student contributions through awards, honors, and scholarships.
- Host campus lectures by outside speakers and a brown-bag series of talks by campus faculty and students about relevant research and projects.

Assessment and Administration

- Provide a visible hub of civic engagement activity.
- Maintain a website providing resources and opportunities for participation.
- Seek external funding in support of civic engagement activities and oversee grants.
- Work with Admissions and Communications to identify civic-minded applicants and promote and publicize civic engagement efforts.
- Sustain membership and participation in various external organizations to ensure the College is active in the community.
- Gather data on civic engagement at Skidmore and provide an annual report that assesses progress on Goal III.
- Work with the Director of Assessment and others to develop civic engagement learning outcomes and link to broader student assessment efforts.

The center would have a highly visible website and an office on “Main Street” in Case Center through which students, faculty, and the wider community can identify relevant opportunities and resources. The Director of Community Service Programs in Student Affairs would take the initiative in developing regional and non-local community partnerships that promote mutually beneficial resources and opportunities for all parties. A Faculty Director would provide support to faculty as they develop and assess civic engagement courses and community research projects. The Faculty Director will assist faculty in identifying grant opportunities, funding agencies, and foundations whose mission statements match the stated goals of project proposals.

We believe that a civic engagement center would promote recruitment, engagement, and retention of students by offering exciting and innovative opportunities for academic learning that emphasize rigor, critical inquiry, problem-solving, and collaboration between students, faculty, and the wider community. A center would meet the needs of our faculty, many of who have expressed a personal commitment to civic engagement, but have not had the resources or support to bring it to their scholarship and their classrooms.

Immediate Priorities and Action Steps

Although the task force recommends implementation of all of the recommendations above, we recognize that this will take time and resources. In order to sequence implementation strategically, we recommend the following steps be taken as soon as is feasible.

1. We recommend modifying a current faculty line to create a new position—*Director of Civic Learning*—as a stepping stone to the creation of a center for civic engagement and a full-time director. This faculty position would be parallel to the Director of Intercultural Studies, a position focused on advancing the curricular components of Goal II (Intercultural and Global Understanding). Thus, we would have a similar position focused on Goal III. The position would be housed 60 percent in a department and 40 percent in administration. The director would focus on the development of civic learning, service learning, and community-based collaborative research opportunities and collaborate with the Director of Community Service Programs, who will maintain a focus on co-curricular service opportunities.
2. Offer a faculty symposium during Senior Week in May, 2009. The task force would facilitate workshops for faculty to discuss collectively and as departments and programs how they can best advance the civic engagement of our students.
3. Offer a series of open and targeted workshops for faculty to assist them in the development of service-learning courses. These would include open pedagogy workshops as well as sessions for new faculty and for faculty teaching in the First Year Experience.
4. Develop a formal mechanism to assist our students in identifying civic engagement opportunities in the curriculum, especially service-learning courses.
5. Support the leadership development of our students by creating new roles for them as service-learning peer mentors. These students would be liaisons between the campus and community partners. They would be trained to assist students and faculty in their major discipline with the brainstorming and coordination of service-learning projects.

Introduction: The Civic-Minded Graduate as a Goal of Liberal Education

I think that in order to graduate that students should participate in activities that will help prepare them to be active contributing members of society. I think that an important part of education is preparing students to enter the world ready to fulfill their personal goals in their careers, but also recognizing the responsibility that they have as citizens. Skidmore Student, 2004

How well does Skidmore cultivate civic-mindedness in our students? When do we ask our students to articulate how they will use their education to make a meaningful contribution to the world? This report is an overview of civic engagement education at Skidmore and a guide to fulfilling the letter and the spirit of Goal III of the strategic plan. The report begins with a conceptualization of civic engagement in higher education and then moves to recent concrete activities. There is much to celebrate in this review, but the report concludes with a set of recommendations about how to enhance student civic engagement in support of our strategic plan.

Civic Engagement in Higher Education

In the last decade, the pundits of higher education have begun to assert a new vision of civic education. Leading organizations such as the Association for American Colleges and Universities are articulating key principles of liberal education. Recently, Skidmore College pledged its support for AAC&U's Core Commitments project,⁸ which states:

We, the college and university presidents who sign this call to action, pledge to provide new leadership to reestablish education for personal and social responsibility as a central goal within American colleges and universities. In partnership with AAC&U's Core Commitments initiative, we pledge to give particular attention to the following dimensions of personal and social responsibility:

1. Striving for excellence
2. Cultivating personal and academic integrity
3. Contributing to a larger community
4. Taking seriously the perspectives of others
5. Developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning

The dimensions outlined by the Core Commitments project are decisive in their commitment to civic education: providing students with the academic and co-curricular opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills to make moral decisions, engage in substantive dialogue in the context of diversity, and take actions that advance the welfare of others. In their important book, *Educating Citizens*, Anne Colby and her colleagues argue that the core of a liberal education should be “the preparation of students for lives that provide personal satisfaction and promote the common good.”⁹

Nationally, colleges and universities have dramatically expanded their commitment to citizenship education. A recent study for the Core Commitments project revealed that students, faculty, and administrators across the nation widely believe that “personal and social responsibility should be a major focus of college education,” but they also believe that current curricula typically fail to meet this expectation.¹⁰ In response to this gap, alumni and foundations

at various institutions have been supporting new high level positions and programs. Consider the following examples from just the last two years:¹¹

- Jonathan Tisch's \$40 million gift to create the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University and the creation of a new dean's position whose primary responsibility is to develop civic learning programs across the university's departments and programs.
- The Lilly Endowment's grant of \$40 million to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.
- The Gates Foundation's \$30 million gift to Duke University to create an undergraduate civic engagement program.
- The Argosy Foundation's \$13 million gift to Amherst College to create a Center for Community Engagement, largely focused on service-learning internships.
- Barbara and Edward Netter's gift of \$10 million to the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships.
- Tulane University's new service-learning requirement for all of its students and Columbia University's service-learning requirement for all engineering majors.¹²

Skidmore's Strategic Goal to Create Informed, Responsible Citizens

In Goal III of its Strategic Plan, Skidmore declares, "We will prepare every Skidmore student to make the choices required of an informed, responsible citizen at home and in the world."¹³ To fulfill this promise, the college needs to both educate and motivate students to become engaged citizens. It also requires a coherent strategy that considers what kinds of experiences are necessary for students to fully embrace social responsibility. In this arena, partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs is especially important as students apply what they are learning in the classroom to their co-curricular activities.

Defining what it means to be an "informed, responsible citizen" is not an easy task, and there is much room for debate. However, the Task Force believes that *an informed, responsible citizen has the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to effectively respond to public issues and concerns.*

What is most important about the definition above is that citizenship involves more than intellectual knowledge. We believe that in higher education, we too often treat social problems as abstract and distant, perhaps to be analyzed in the classroom, but only to be acted upon at a later date or after hours. When public issues are examined, rarely is new knowledge about them coupled with the development of skills and dispositions necessary for students to respond effectively to them. We do not believe that educators should dictate what a student should value or what cause should elicit their passion, but we do believe that we should provide a curricular and co-curricular environment in which students are able to reflect upon their passions and develop their abilities to be engaged in causes larger than themselves. As Colby and her colleagues argue, a college-educated person should,

...have the ability to think clearly and in an appropriately complex and sophisticated way about moral and civic issues; he or she must possess the moral commitment and sense of personal responsibility to act.¹⁴

Adopting a simple, yet illuminating schema identified by Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles, in their book, *Where is the Learning in Service Learning?*, the Task Force identifies five dimensions of citizenship that can be used as criteria for learning outcomes:¹⁵

- Knowledge: “I know what needs to be done and why.”
 - Capacity to understand and evaluate complex public issues and institutions
 - Sophisticated grasp of democratic principles and practices
 - Ability to evaluate and generate policies and solutions
- Skills: “I know how to do.”
 - Form and express opinions
 - Interact civilly with diverse others to promote goals
 - Participate in collective-decision making processes
 - Organize people for action
 - Implement policy decisions
- Values: “I ought to do.”
 - Articulation of personal and collective goals and convictions
 - Sense of social responsibility
 - Concern for civil rights and liberties
 - Commitment to democratic values such as respect and tolerance for others
- Efficacy: “I can do, and it makes a difference.”
 - Self-confidence
 - Belief in personal influence on individual and collective change
- Commitment: “I must and will do.”
 - Capacity to persevere in the face of challenge
 - Civic identity: sense of self as politically engaged and socially concerned
 - Positive emotional associations with engagement, e.g., hopefulness, inspiration

Civic Engagement in the Disciplines

Civic engagement is relevant to all disciplines and should not be relegated to the more obvious locales of pre-professional programs such as education and social work, or majors such as sociology and environmental studies. Each department or program should be able to specify the larger public purposes of their discipline, and majors should be able to articulate these goals when they graduate. Ideally, students in every discipline would have multiple opportunities for concrete application of these goals. Drawing on the work of Richard Battistoni, Table 1 provides a conceptual framework across divisions and examples of relevant civic-learning opportunities.¹⁶

Table 1. Civic Learning Across Divisions.

Academic Division	Civic Framework	Examples
Social Sciences	Civic Knowledge and Participation Policy Analysis Program Evaluation	Program/Policy Evaluation Voter Registration and Education
Natural Sciences	Problem Identification and Response Technical Support	Research Projects that Address Public Issues Public Education and Tutoring for Scientific Literacy Computer Support for Nonprofit Organization
Arts and Humanities	Civic Imagination/Engagement Public Intellectual/Discourse	Social Justice Creative Projects Grant Writing Mentoring
Pre-Professional	Leadership Skills Public Service Organizational Analysis	Tutoring Field Placements and Internships Organizational Development for Nonprofits

The table offers some conceptual criteria that may be relevant to each of the major academic divisions at Skidmore. While there is certainly overlap, the dimensions of engagement vary, and suggest that each discipline may develop its own criteria and set of applications. Ideally, departments will define for themselves how they believe their discipline and curricular offerings contribute to the larger goal of creating civic-minded graduates. Rather than requiring conformity to a narrow vision or constricting standard, each area should identify how it can best contribute to Goal III of our strategic plan.

Four Campus Strategies for Civic Engagement

While colleges and universities are rapidly implementing new programs related to civic engagement, there is no one model that has been widely adopted. Among the great variety of efforts, we next describe four major strategies. First, many traditional liberal arts courses include civic education by examining social issues from a variety of perspectives. Second, service-learning courses, which combine academic learning with service experiences, add a unique dimension of pedagogical engagement to service. Third, community research that involves students in problem-focused scholarship can take place within coursework, independent projects, and as collaborative research with faculty. Finally, many co-curricular programs provide students with the opportunity to do volunteer work and to develop leadership skills. In the following sections, each of these major strategies is defined and current activities at Skidmore are reviewed.

Strategy I: Civic-Learning Courses

Civic-learning coursework introduces students to scholarly perspectives on citizenship. They help students develop the skills and dispositions necessary to be effective participants in public life. These courses may provide philosophical or historical background for civic engagement, topical examinations of problems, or focus on developing specific skills used by engaged citizens. Such courses may appear in any discipline and particularly in interdisciplinary programs. What is common to all civic-learning courses is that they help students to “develop the capacity for critical thinking and the habit of using it, teach[es] them to be open-minded and interested in pursuing ideas, require[es] them to back up their claims and to expect others to do the same, and encourage[es] them to be knowledgeable and accustomed to thinking about moral, civic, and political issues [that] will put them in a strong posture to think independently about their positions and commitments.”¹⁷

Although Skidmore has not catalogued its civic-learning courses, we believe many courses in our curriculum would meet this definition. In the social sciences, civic-learning courses include examination of social problems, identifying historical and structural causes, recognizing complex forces that sustain these problems, and contextual solutions that apply theory and evidence. In the natural sciences, civic courses may be illustrated by the NSF-funded SENCER Model (Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities). SENCER emphasizes teaching “‘to’ basic, canonical science and mathematics ‘through’ complex, capacious, often unsolved problems of civic consequence.”¹⁸ In the arts and humanities, civic-learning courses may emphasize, for example, ethical decision-making and the creative expression of social issues, stimulating public discourse about them. Pre-professional programs might focus on civic professionalism, helping students to develop the values, organizational skills, and practices for public service, non-profit management, education, and social work.

Civic-Learning Courses at Skidmore

At this time, we have no inventory of civic-learning courses at Skidmore. Some institutions have developed a set of criteria to evaluate their curriculum and identify relevant courses. Table 2 lists the criteria used by Tufts University.¹⁹ For a course to qualify, it must fulfill at least three of the items listed.

Table 2. Tufts University Criteria for Civic-Learning Courses

Knowledge of Self	To be an effective active citizen a person must be self-aware. This includes knowledge about one's values, skills and interests; about how one's identity (which can include gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual identity, and socio-economic class) can shape one's world view; and cross-cultural knowledge about the meanings of the concepts "self", "other" and "community".
Knowledge of the Other	Working effectively to build stronger communities and societies necessitates working with people who may be very different from oneself in terms of values, skills and interests as well as identities and world views. An active citizen must know how to respond effectively to this challenge and recognize the opportunity.
Knowledge about Communities	An active citizen needs to understand the many meanings of community including geographic; identity; issue-based; electronic; and local, national, international. This knowledge should include cross-cultural and historical concepts about the meaning of community and knowledge about the value of asset-based approaches to strengthening communities.
Knowledge about Democratic Principles and Practices	Communities are strongest when all members participate in priority setting and decision-making. An active citizen knows how to work with others to build a robust democracy.
Problem Analysis	An effective citizen needs to know how to analyze a public problem or issue, understand the problem, assess the resources for addressing the problem, and recognize the range of strategies for solving the problem.
Intervention Skills	An effective citizen needs a range of skills for making a positive difference in the community with a focus on addressing root causes and implementing sustainable change.
Opportunities for Action	Knowledge about opportunities for being an effective active citizen is essential but often in short supply. This includes opportunities that span direct service to social change and include the workplace, the political arena, volunteer activities, and the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

The Task Force recognizes that a liberal education broadly prepares students for citizenship. Every course in its own way adds knowledge and develops skills, which can be used for the promotion of the common good. Therefore, we prefer a narrower, more rigorous standard for identifying civic-learning courses in the curriculum. Such courses should broadly speak to the four knowledge dimensions outlined in Table 2, but should especially (and measurably) include the examinations of the latter three practical dimensions of problem analysis, intervention skills, and opportunities for action. While such courses are not service-learning experiences because they do not include actual community service, they can certainly provide necessary tools and the capacity for civic engagement. We suspect that there are many courses currently in our curriculum that could be identified as civic-learning courses.

Strategy II: Service Learning

With the rapid development of service learning across higher education, numerous definitions exist, but in general, “service learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.”²⁰

Service learning combines traditional classroom teaching with community service. The applied learning that often coincides with civic engagement efforts has been shown to increase critical thinking and problem-solving capacities in students. Eyler and Giles found that the classroom supports abstract theorizing, the learning of basic principles, and critical reflection.²¹ Service work supports learning about ambiguity, uncertainty, time pressure, contextual relationships, and resource constraints. Students engaged in service learning tend to have more nuanced, complex, and realistic understandings of social problem-solving.

Service-learning coursework includes community service as an experiential learning technique to deepen students’ understanding of course content, to build their skills in the application of theory to practice, to increase their experiences with diversity, and to develop their interest in and commitment to social action and social problem solving. Service learning is focused on student development, but also provides volunteer and technical resources to communities and strengthens town-gown relations. *Service-learning internships* meet community needs while extending personal development, career awareness, and application of knowledge gained as a part of students’ course of study. These professional experiences may occur during the academic year or the summer. *International service learning* has blossomed in study abroad programs, enabling students to work on service projects that support their cultural learning. *Sustained service-learning community partnerships* are collaborations between the college and community partners that provide service-learning opportunities that extend beyond a particular course and semester. Each of these forms of service learning is reviewed below.

Numerous national organizations have arisen to provide resources and support for the development of service learning in higher education. Among the most prominent are Campus Compact,²² Learn and Serve America’s National Service Learning Clearinghouse,²³ and the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement.²⁴

In 2004, David Karp worked with the students in his sociology research methods class to survey students, faculty, and community agencies to examine their participation and interest in community-based research and service learning. Some major findings are listed below and the full report is available online.²⁵

1. There is both a need and an interest in the local community for student volunteers, especially for service-learning and research projects.
 - a. 91 percent of community agencies were interested in having more student volunteers.
 - b. 81 percent were interested in collaborating on community-based research projects.
2. Student interest in academically-based civic engagement outpaces current capacity—by a lot.
 - a. 79 percent expressed interest in taking a service-learning course in the future.

- b. 46 percent supported the idea of a service-learning requirement.
 - c. 68 percent were interested in participating in community-based research in the future.
 - d. 37 percent supported the idea of a community-based research requirement.
3. Faculty support for academically-based civic engagement is strong, but they see challenges to implementation.
- a. 86 percent of the faculty place civic engagement as a “moderate or high priority” for themselves, but only 3 percent believe it to be a high priority for the College.
 - b. 62 percent are willing (22 percent very willing; 40 percent somewhat willing) to teach a service-learning course in the future.
 - c. 59 percent are interested in working on community-based research projects in the future.
 - d. 63 percent believe it would be somewhat or very difficult to make use of service learning in their discipline.
 - e. 63 percent would support the creation of a civic engagement center at Skidmore.

These findings suggest that student and faculty interest in advancing Goal III is strong, but that institutional support is needed to build opportunities particularly in the areas of coursework and community-based research.

Service Learning and Learning Outcomes

In the last decade, literally hundreds of studies have been published demonstrating the pedagogical impact of service learning, such as Eyler and Giles’ *Where is the Learning in Service Learning?* A small study recently completed by David Karp at Skidmore is consistent with national findings. Comparing nine service-learning Scribner Seminars to a comparison group of eleven seminars that did not include service learning reveals a pattern of strong findings summarized in Table 3. End-of-semester surveys were collected for students enrolled in these seminars, with a response rate of 62 percent (n=169). In every case, service-learning students report higher levels of learning and engagement than non service-learning students, with differences reaching statistical significance in 15/17 of the items. This is apparent for learning outcomes that are directly related to civic responsibility, such as “This class caused me to feel more concern about social problems in the local and/or global community.” It is apparent for traditional liberal learning outcomes, such as “Comprehending, analyzing and interpreting texts” and “Solving quantitative problems (using math, statistics, etc.).” And it is apparent for student engagement outcomes, such as “I was very actively involved as a learner in this class” and “Outside of class time, I frequently thought about the issues raised in class.” Finally, service-learning students reported greater commitment to Skidmore and that their seminars were more helpful to their decisions about selecting a major and a career path.

Table 3. End-of-Semester Student Survey Results (bold items p<.05).

	Service Learning (n=72)	Not Service Learning (n=97)
	Mean	Mean
Self-reported growth due to seminar (5 point scale from no growth to great deal):		
1. Comprehending, analyzing and interpreting texts	3.89	3.21
2. Speaking in a small or large group setting	3.68	3.16
3. Expressing ideas, opinions, facts in writing	3.85	3.44
4. Analyzing complex issues to make informed decisions	4.01	3.27
5. Changing approach to a problem based on the situation	3.68	3.17
6. Understanding values of people different from you	3.78	3.61
7. Keeping your composure when dealing with conflict	3.51	2.93
8. Solving quantitative problems (using math, statistics, etc.)	2.04	1.49
Level of agreement (4 point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree):		
1. I frequently spoke with my instructor outside of the classroom.	3.32	2.97
2. I was very actively involved as a learner in this class.	3.68	3.43
3. Outside of class time, I frequently thought about the issues raised in class.	3.58	3.32
4. This class provided me with useful skills and knowledge.	3.75	3.36
5. This class frequently caused me to think about my own attitudes, values, and perspectives.	3.62	3.39
6. This class has helped with my decision-making about a major and/or future career.	2.90	2.37
7. The student friendships I developed through this class are intellectually stimulating.	3.35	3.17

Service-Learning Courses

Two academic programs require service learning as part of their curriculum. Both pre-professional programs with a service orientation, Education Studies and Social Work place students in community settings offering field supervision and faculty supervision as well as in-class reflection. As Social Work Professor Peter McCarthy puts it, “We do service learning on steroids.”

Currently, Skidmore has no formal mechanism for designating and tracking service-learning courses. Some programs, such as sociology, categorize its fourth credit hour by its enhanced focus on writing, research, collaborative learning, or service learning. Data on service learning for the last four years have relied on email solicitations to the faculty to self-identify courses they are teaching each semester. Therefore, some courses may have been misidentified and others overlooked. In spite of these limitations, Table 4 lists the service-learning courses offered in the 2007-2008 academic year, excluding summer courses. Of the approximately 1600 classes taught (excluding internships and independent studies), 41 are service-learning courses (2.6 percent of the total). These courses enrolled 702 students, with 68 of them taking more than one of the service-learning classes. Of the 2604 students at Skidmore in the 2007/2008 academic year, 24 percent took at least one service-learning class.

Table 4. Service-Learning Courses 2007-2008

	<i>Semester</i>	<i>Academic Area</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
		<i>Arts/Humanities</i>			
1	Spring 08	Dance	274	Dance for the Child	DiSanto-Rose
2	Spring 08	Music	205	Hip Hop Culture	Bryant
3	Spring 08	Studio Art	358	Art for Children	Miller
4	Spring 08	English	105H	The Reader Within	Golden
		<i>Interdisciplinary</i>			
5	Fall 07	Environmental Studies	351	Urban Ecology	Gibson
6	Spring 08	Environmental Studies	105	Field Studies	Gibson
7	Spring 08	Environmental Studies	375	Case Studies in Environmental Sustainability	Turner
8	Fall 07	Honors Forum	201	Great Books Workshop	Aldrich
9	Fall 07	Honors Forum	371	Sex and Gender Relations Peer Advocate Training	Burden
10	Spring 08	Honors Forum	201	Great Books Workshop	Aldrich
11	Fall 07	Law and Society	200	Law, Citizenship, and Justice	Mulligan
12	Fall 07	Scribner Seminar	100	Human Dilemmas	Gershuny
13	Fall 07	Scribner Seminar	100	The Killing State	Breslin
14	Fall 07	Scribner Seminar	100	Who Governs Saratoga Springs	Turner
15	Fall 07	Women's Studies	375	Senior Seminar	Stange
		<i>Natural Science</i>			
16	Spring 08	Exercise Science	361	Chronic Disease Epidemiology	Burden
17	Spring 08	Psychology	207	Introduction to Child Development	Choi
		<i>Pre-Professional</i>			
18	Fall 07	Education	100	Exploring Early Childhood Teaching	Rubin
19	Fall 07	Education	200	Child Development and Learning	Brent
20	Fall 07	Education	334	Practicum in Teaching and Instruction	Rubin
21	Spring 08	Education	200	Child Development and Learning	Brent
22	Spring 08	Education	261	English Language Learning Practicum	De La Luna
23	Spring 08	Education	261	House of Horrors: Oppression in the United States	De La Luna
24	Spring 08	Education	361	Student Teaching in Antigua	Rubin
25	Spring 08	Education	350	Student Teaching Field Practicum and Seminar	Riley
26	Fall 07	Management/Business	240	Coaching and Teamwork Service-Learning Experience	Harper
27	Spring 08	Management/Business	355	Business, Ethics, and Society	Kopec
28	Spring 08	Management/Business	240	Coaching and Teamwork Service-learning Experience	Correa
29	Spring 08	Management/Business	214	Foundation of Marketing	Ladd
30	Spring 08	Management/Business	376	Business Issues	Rotheim
31	Spring 08	Management/Business	337	Advertising and Promotion	Epstein
32	Fall 07	Social Work	222	Introduction to Social Work	Mills-Dick
33	Fall 07	Social Work	333	Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families	Mills-Dick
34	Spring 08	Social Work	382	Social Work Field Practicum	McCarthy
35	Spring 08	Social Work	381	Social Work Field Practicum Seminar	McCarthy
36	Spring 08	Social Work	222	Introduction to Social Work	Mills-Dick
37	Spring 08	Social Work	334	Social Work Practice with Org. and Communities	Mills-Dick
		<i>Social Science</i>			
38	Fall 07	Sociology	351	Political Sociology	Scarce
39	Spring 08	Sociology	223	Environmental Sociology	Scarce
40	Spring 08	Sociology	219	Race & Power	Ford
41	Spring 08	American Studies	260	Hip Hop Culture	Woodfork

Figure 1 demonstrates that the number of service-learning courses is increasing. The data are drawn from seven recent semesters (excluding Spring 2006 when no data were collected). However, trend lines are imperfect since our tracking of courses has improved over time.

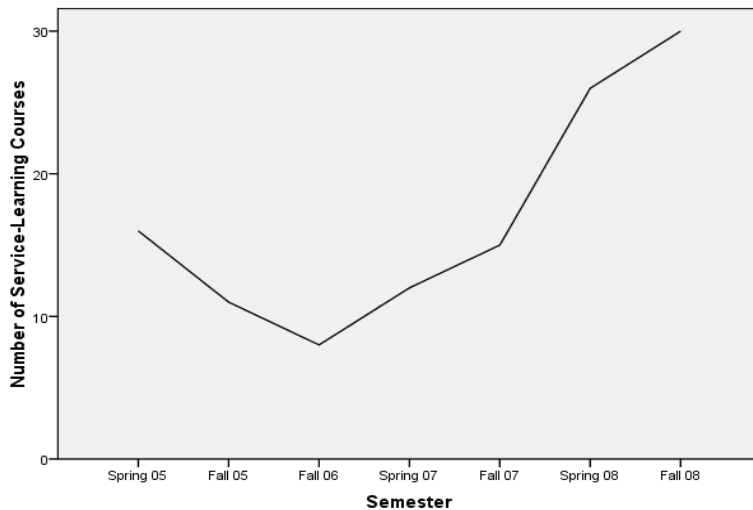


Figure 1. Service-Learning Courses Offered Per Semester.

Table 5 lists the majors and programs that have offered service-learning courses during this period. The table reveals that Education Studies offered the highest number of service-learning courses, accounting for 17.8 percent of the total number of service-learning courses offered during the seven semesters. It also shows that 24 percent of the courses offered in Education included service learning. Social Work offered slightly fewer courses (16), but a greater percentage (34%) of the courses that the program offers include service-learning.

Figure 2 demonstrates that most (76 percent) of the courses are housed in pre-professional and interdisciplinary programs and are rarely offered in the traditional liberal arts disciplines. Nevertheless, 49 percent (18/37) of all programs/majors have offered at least one service-learning course. Our data also reveal that 53 faculty have offered service-learning courses, and 36 (68 percent) of those are tenure-line faculty. More to the point, of the 192 tenure-line faculty at the college, 19 percent have offered a service-learning experience.

Table 5. Service-learning Courses by Department, Spring 2005-Fall 2008

	<i>Total Number of SL Courses Offered</i>	<i>Percent of All SL Courses Offered</i>	<i>Percent of Department Courses that are SL²⁶</i>
Education Studies	21	17.8	24
Social Work	16	13.6	34
Scribner Seminar	16	13.6	8
Management/Business	15	12.7	6
Sociology	9	7.6	9
Honors Forum	8	6.8	9
Environmental Studies	8	6.8	32
Psychology	5	4.2	2
Studio Art	4	3.4	1
Law and Society	4	3.4	44
Exercise Science	3	2.5	3
Women's Studies	2	1.7	11
English	2	1.7	<1
Music	1	0.8	<1
Dance	1	0.8	<1
Chemistry	1	0.8	1
Anthropology	1	0.8	1
American Studies	1	0.8	2
Total	118	100	

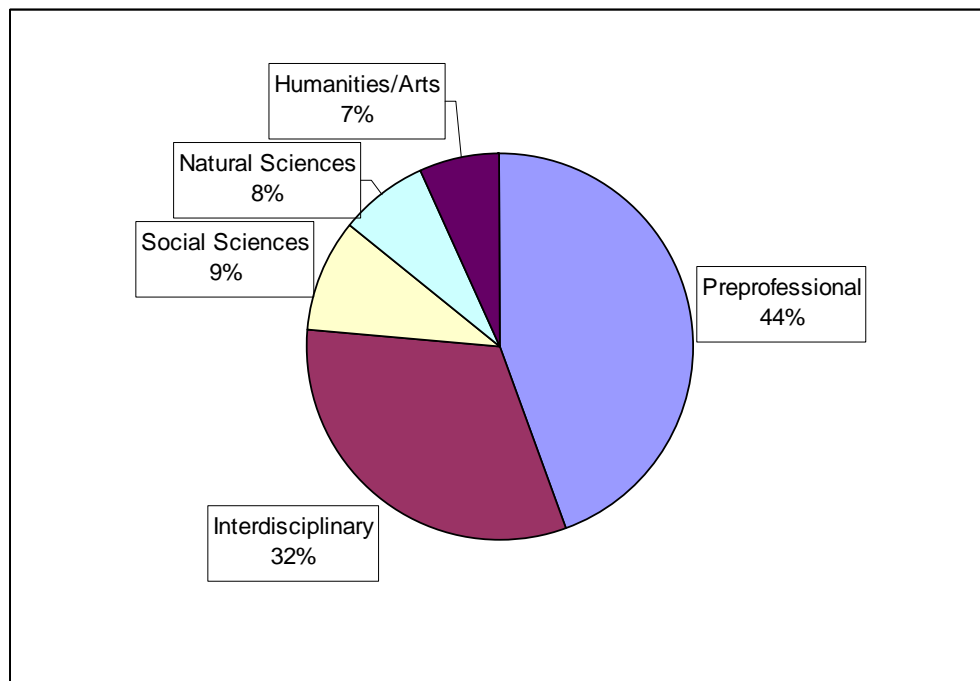


Figure 2. Contribution to Total Number of Service-Learning Courses by Division.

International Service Learning

The Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges has identified programs that offer international service-learning opportunities. Some programs, like the American University Program in Provence, for example, include service-learning opportunities and some of our students have participated in them. At this time, however, we offer no approved programs that specialize in service learning, such as those with the International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership.²⁷

Between fall '05 and spring '08, 148 students engaged in service learning and/or community service while studying abroad in France, Guatemala, Mexico, Australia, Chile, Ghana, Germany, Italy, Costa Rica and Vietnam, among others. This accounts for 14 percent of Skidmore students pursuing study away. Some programs, such as IES Abroad and SIT, account for most of our students' international service-learning experiences. A separate international service-learning project is coordinated by the Education Studies Department and involves a collaboration between UWW-trained Antiguan teachers and residential student education majors.

Service-Learning Internships

According to the Office of Career Services, nearly 60 percent of students complete an internship over the course of their four years at Skidmore. In 2007/2008, 97 students completed an internship for academic credit. 33 (34 percent) of these were placements in non-profit agencies where students have the opportunity to offer a service to the community while receiving academic credit and professional development experience.

With a grant from the President's Discretionary Fund, six students worked closely with faculty in their majors and served as service-learning interns in the summer of 2007. The purpose of the summer grant was to further the students' academic understanding of their field and enhance their career development. Three of the students remained on campus and worked in local community organizations, and three conducted their internships in New York City.

- Katie Frankel, a social work major, worked with the Backstretch Employee Service Team to provide multiple on-site health and social services.
- Molly Mayerson, a social work major, worked at the Saratoga Center for the Family on various parent education projects about child abuse and neglect.
- Erin McAvoy, a major in Education Studies, worked with the Battery Park Conservancy to develop its first public educational programs and curriculum. An art professor, Doretta Miller, supervised.
- Caitlin Newman, an art major, painted a mural with children in the Lower East Side. The mural, entitled "Heat Dances to the Sun's Beat" was an educational project about Global Warming.



- Sarah Grime, a double major in Spanish and international affairs, worked with the Latino Community Advocacy Program of the Saratoga County E.O.C. Using her Spanish, she assisted with ESL classes, conducted outreach to backstretch workers, attended social service appointments and trials in the municipal court.



- Kasey Loeffel, an education studies major, interned at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum and delivered a curriculum on Inuit culture to groups of 6th-8th graders.

Funding for summer service-learning internships was not available in 2008. Compare this, for example, with Amherst College, which funded over 200 students for a similar internship program in the summer of 2008.²⁸

Sustained Service-Learning Community Partnership Projects

Skidmore has created several sustained service-learning, community-based research, and co-curricular volunteer projects that offer ongoing opportunities for faculty and student engagement.

Expanding Horizons: The Skidmore/Schuylerville Connection

Expanding Horizons is a K-16 partnership between Skidmore and the Schuylerville Central School District. Created by now-retired education professor Ruth Andrea Levinson, the program is currently directed by Michelle Hubbs, Director of Community Service Programs. In the Schuylerville schools, the project exposes students to a new level of educational opportunity and fosters an interest in, and access to, higher education. Expanding Horizons provides a platform for service-learning projects, interdisciplinary and collaborative activities, and faculty development opportunities that fall outside the bounds of the regular curriculum. Projects include the 1000 Books Program (a Head Start literacy program), Jr. Great Books (a primary and secondary school reading program), the Enrichment Program (a before- and after-school program), and Mini-College (Schuylerville students visit Skidmore to participate in a day of classes offered by Skidmore faculty).



Dialogue Facilitation Initiative

Skidmore offer four kinds of dialogue facilitation programs that reach beyond particular courses and semesters. (1) *Mediation*: Developed by sociology professor David Karp, students, faculty and staff participate in a 30 hour mediation training each fall semester. The training is sponsored by the Law and Society Program in collaboration with Mediation Matters, a local nonprofit organization. This is a New York State certified program enabling participants to become volunteer mediators in court-referred disputes and mediate student conflicts on campus. (2) *Restorative Conferencing*: Similar to mediation, restorative conferencing is a co-facilitation model for resolving cases that involve an offender and a harmed party. Skidmore offers a 15 hour training by David Karp during winter break to trained mediators. Students are able to facilitate restorative conferences as part of the campus judicial program for student disciplinary cases. (3) *Study Circles*: These are small-group, democratic, peer-led deliberative dialogues on important social and political issues. Through the Office of Student Diversity Programs, Skidmore offers a two-day pre-orientation program called “Building Bridges,” using the study circles methodology to introduce new students to the issue of diversity. The college also offers a two-day January Diversity Leadership Institute to discuss diversity and develop student-led projects such as the Respect Matters! Campaign. (4) *Intergroup Dialogues*: Intergroup Dialogues at Skidmore consist of a three-course series that introduces students to social justice issues and offers training in intergroup dialogue facilitation. Based on the model developed at the University of Michigan, this project is directed by sociology professor Kristie Ford and English professor Sarah Goodwin.

Latino Advocacy Project

Coordinated by Spanish professor Charlene Grant, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has launched an internship and volunteer program that allows students to expand upon their academic studies by working directly with Spanish-speaking populations in a variety of communities. Students work within the structure of established outreach programs of the Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council and The Amsterdam English Language Learning Program. Student responsibilities include offering ESL classes, visiting Spanish-speaking families to help determine health care needs or find ways for them to access community services, translating applications and institutional documents, and working as a Spanish speaking student’s liaison with a classroom teacher.

Center for Sex and Gender Relations

The center provides advocacy, training, and education pertaining to all aspects of sexual health and sexual conduct. It partners with Health Services, the Counseling Center, and the Saratoga County Center for Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis to offer education to the campus community and services to victims. The center supervises a team of students who serve as peer advocates and educators. The training for these advocates is offered by Jen Burden, director of Health Promotions, as an Honors Forum course.

Strategy III: Community-Focused Collaborative Research

Community-focused collaborative research is scholarship (including collaborations between faculty, students, and/or community partners) that is directed toward investigating and solving behavioral, social, educational, and environmental problems. In a widely read essay, Ernest Boyer called for a “scholarship of engagement...connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities.”²⁹

Boyer argued that higher education should promote four complementary forms of scholarship. The first he called the “scholarship of discovery,” which prioritizes the accumulation of new knowledge, and found primarily within disciplinary specializations. The second is the “scholarship of integration,” which places such discoveries in a larger context through interdisciplinary discourse. The third is the “scholarship of sharing knowledge,” which disseminates scholarly findings through teaching and by teaching students how to conduct research. And the fourth is the “application of knowledge” in the service of the public good.

In response to Boyer’s call for engaged scholarship, several national projects promote community-based research. The Clearinghouse for the Scholarship of Engagement assists colleges and universities in their efforts to promote community-based scholarship.³⁰ They also sponsor the National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement to provide external peer review and evaluation of faculty’s scholarship of engagement. Another major project is Community-Campus Partnerships for Health.³¹ Despite a misleading title, it is focused on community building and development and is not limited to research on health. A major initiative of the CCPH is the promotion of “faculty development, facilitating peer review and dissemination of products of community-engaged scholarship, and supporting community-engaged faculty through the promotion and tenure process.”

Although the task force is aware of several examples of community-focused collaborative research, we have no accurate measures of its breadth or depth across the college. Civically-engaged scholarship may occur in internships, independent studies, summer collaborative research projects, and within the scope of a particular course. David Karp’s sociology courses, for example, have offered opportunities for students to conduct evaluation research for community agencies. Beau Breslin’s Law and Society and Scribner Seminar courses have had students participate in the legal research for death penalty cases. In Crystal Moore’s social work research methods course, students develop feasible community-based research proposals and many students implement them. One project examined the prevalence of student drinking and driving and explored community stakeholders’ attitudes toward the issue and proposed solutions. This study resulted in a forthcoming publication in the *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work* co-authored by the Liz Heckel ‘06 and Crystal Moore.

Water Resources Initiative

An excellent example of engaged scholarship at Skidmore is the Water Resources Initiative (WRI). WRI is administered by the Environmental Studies (ES) Program and integrates coursework, field trips, team-based research, and engagement with local, regional, national, and international concerns for water resources. WRI was launched in 2004, and interdisciplinary,

community-based research, focused on the local Saratoga Lake watershed, has become the major emphasis of the initiative. The Saratoga Lake watershed is large and encompasses many land use patterns (e.g., rural and urban housing development, logging, mining, industry) and ecologies, and Saratoga Lake has been a controversial, potential new drinking water source for our growing community. WRI research is conducted through summer collaborative research, independent studies during the academic year, and is the heart of the ES capstone course—ES 375 *Case Studies in Environmental Sustainability*. Students and faculty members from ten departments and interdisciplinary programs have conducted collaborative research projects, several of which are leading to publications in academic journals³². Skidmore has partnered with several community organizations to build knowledge about the Saratoga Lake watershed, and Skidmore faculty and students have contributed valuable data to our ongoing community discussion and debate over water.



Some WRI-related projects have gone beyond the Saratoga Lake watershed. In the summer of 2008, two students worked with sociologist Rik Scarce on an examination of environmental justice in the fifteen-county Hudson River region of New York. The project, which was begun at the request of the Hudson Sloop Clearwater environmental group (but was completely independent), examined race and income disparities between the neighborhoods immediately surrounding nearly 2,500 “noxious facilities” in the region and the remainder of the area’s population. The results indicate that those facilities, ranging from landfills to power plants, are home to disproportionate numbers of non-white and poor residents, as predicted by environmental justice theory.

Supporting Community-Focused Collaborative Research

Unfortunately, it is common for faculty to feel a tension between institutional and professional priorities toward basic research and their own interest in conducting community-focused research. Skidmore currently offers little systematic guidance to faculty on this question. Although the Faculty Handbook suggests that scholarship includes “studies that bridge theory and practice in applied fields,”³³ it does not specifically address community-focused research, the kinds of products it might generate, such as technical reports, or ways to assess such non-peer reviewed products, such as evidence of community impact through report recommendation implementation.

Some institutions have applied Boyers' or similar criteria in tenure and promotion decisions. For example, California State University at Monterey Bay evaluates scholarship partly on how faculty "use their academic training and experience to serve the public."³⁴ Montclair State University also applies Boyers' criteria directly, and faculty scholarship is evaluated in three weighted categories: scholarship of pedagogy, scholarship of discovery, integration, or aesthetic creation, and scholarship of application. The latter category "requires evidence of scholarship that applies knowledge to issues of contemporary social concerns and that, in the process, yields new intellectual understanding, and could include work in, for example, the public schools, museums, social agencies, and government."³⁵ Portland State University takes this even further by stating that "a significant factor in determining a faculty member's advancement is the individual's accomplishments in community outreach."³⁶ At this time, Skidmore does not provide criteria for the evaluation of scholarship to encourage and reward engaged scholarship.

Strategy IV: Co-Curricular Programs

Although not formally tied to the curriculum, co-curricular programming is a place where students often apply what they learn in the classroom, express the values and commitments central to their civic identity, and develop the core skills and dispositions of civic engagement. Through participation in student government, on faculty and all college committees, in orientation programs, residential life, student clubs and organizations, retreats, trainings, and volunteer work, students enact the role of a citizen in both the campus and the broader community. The skills they acquire include leadership, strategic planning, collaboration and cooperation with people of different perspectives and backgrounds, ethical decision-making, personal efficacy and commitment; skills that complement and reinforce the knowledge and skills developed in civic-learning courses, service-learning experiences, and community-focused collaborative research.

Many colleges and universities are now offering integrated programs that lead to certificates or degrees in civic engagement. Typically, these would include a combination of coursework, co-curricular training experiences, and multi-layered service experiences that sequentially apply knowledge and skills developed in courses and trainings. At George Mason University, for example, students may graduate with a degree in conflict resolution and the program requirements include a series of academic courses, conflict resolution skills trainings, and relevant internships or service placements. The University of Michigan offers a “Certificate of Merit” in their Intergroup Relations Program. Certificates are awarded to students who have complete multiple courses in intergroup relations as well as training and implementation of peer facilitated intergroup dialogues. Co-curricular programming, especially when linked to the curriculum, provides an important foundation for civic learning.

The following list summarizes a wide range of activities across the campus. Some refer to relatively thin civic engagement opportunities, such as a one day volunteering activity, while others reflect significant commitments of student time and intellectual energy.

Co-Curricular Programs at Skidmore

Honors Forum Citizenship Requirement

The Honors Forum is the only academic program at Skidmore that requires a co-curricular service experience. Unlike Education Studies or Social Work, both of which require service-learning as part of their majors, the HF Citizenship Requirement is not specifically tied to the curriculum, but is instead an expression of the program’s values. According to the Honors Forum, “The citizenship project should stretch you creatively and intellectually beyond the scope of a normal academic or extracurricular undertaking.”³⁷ The project must be completed by the end of the junior year in order to retain membership in the Forum. Project proposals are evaluated by a committee of faculty and students, and members must write a final report about their projects. Some examples of citizenship projects, drawn from the HF website, include:

- Erin Anderson ’09 organized a showing of the documentary, *Who Killed the Electric Car?*, followed by a panel discussion that included Chelsea Sexton, an electric car expert from the film.
- Mihaela David ’10 and Arielle Bernard ’10 organized a benefit concert to aid and raise awareness for flood victims in Africa.

- Meghan Garvey '11 created the Dining Services Nutrition Database.
- Jessada Mahatthananchai '09, recruited natural science majors to guide tours through the *Molecules That Matter* exhibit in the Tang.

The Office of Community Service Programs

Currently, Skidmore has an Office of Community Service Programs (OCSP) under the Office of Campus Life in Student Affairs. The office has a director, Michelle Hubbs, and her position changed from 50 percent to full time in 2007. The office is located in Case Center. The office shares one administrative assistant with the Director of Campus Life, the Office of Student Diversity Programs, the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and the Leadership Activities Office. According to its website, OCSP, “identifies volunteer opportunities in the community and initiates service programs. The Office of Community Service Programs also coordinates student efforts to meet the volunteer needs in the public and private sector, and helps coordinate placements for service-learning classes.”³⁸

In 2007/2008, 50 percent of our students volunteered, students held 20 different fundraising events that raised more than \$54,000. Locally, Skidmore partnered with 36 community agencies. Each of these figures represents an increase over the previous year and reflects a steady upward trend over the past six years. OCSP works closely with Benef-Action, an SGA chartered student volunteer club. OCSP and Benef-Action work on several projects annually.

- Habitat for Humanity: Students participate in local builds, fundraising, and a Spring Break trip.
- Saratoga Mentoring: Students serve as Big Brothers/Big Sisters for disadvantaged youth and organize social activities for a “Saturdays at Skidmore” program.
- Nurturing Education Together: The NET program offers tutoring at the Caroline Street School three days per week.
- Special Olympics Swimming: Students work with differently-abled athletes in the pool weekly and sponsor a regional swim annually.
- National Hunger and Homelessness Week: Students organize a series of activities in collaboration with the Saratoga Homeless Coalition during this designated week in November.
- Charitable Fundraising: Each year, students raise thousands of dollars for charitable causes such as Liston Phiri, a college student in Malawi, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and Empty Stockings, a program that provides Christmas presents to local children.
- Single Day Volunteer Activities: Throughout the year, OCSP coordinates opportunities for volunteering such as Kids Fair (weekend fair for local children), Becca’s Closet (donation program of old prom dresses), and Double H Hole in the Woods Clean-up Day (a summer camp for children with chronic and terminal illnesses).
- Alternative Spring Break: Each year a group of students conduct service such as rebuilding homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Service-Oriented Pre-Orientation Programs

- Volunteer Program: Coordinated by OCSP, this is a 3-day program for incoming freshman prior to regular pre-orientation. The program consists of a combination of volunteer experiences, reflection and bonding. It provides an opportunity for new students to become familiar with several local community service agencies, the town and the student volunteer club.
- Sustainable Farming and Forestry Service Project: Coordinated by environmental studies faculty, in this program students are engaged in service learning at the Merck Forest and Farmland Center, focusing on innovative, sustainable management of forest and farmland through a variety of educational outlets including organic gardens and alternative energy sources.

Skidmore Cares

The Skidmore Cares Committee organizes a campus-wide food drive for a local food pantry during the holiday season.

Student Government Association JSS Activism and Civic Engagement Fund

Initially created in honor of President Emeritus Jamie S. Studley, SGA provides small grants for student civic engagement projects “to enable students to participate in political and social activism, or causes to expand their sense of community involvement, service, and awareness.”³⁹

Student Government Association Organizations

SGA distinguishes between its clubs, which meet the particular interests of its members, and its organizations, which are designed to serve the campus community and SGA clubs. Examples of student organizations include Benef-Action, Speaker’s Bureau, SkidNews, and the Environmental Action Council.

100 Projects for Peace

The Davis Foundation provides grant funding to undergraduates students to initiate “projects for peace.”⁴⁰ Five students at Skidmore have received funding for four international development projects in the summers of 2007 and 2008:

- Jazzmina Moore ‘09 developed a peace studies curriculum for a school in Tanzania. The project included the study of indigenous conflict resolution practices, painting a mural with symbols of peace from the Maasai culture, and installing a computer and solar power generation system for student study of peace practices.
- Joseph Kaifala ‘08 constructed a library for the St. Joseph Junior Secondary School in Sierra Leone. This included constructing the building, supplying it with books and computers, and offering instruction in computer use.



- Meghan Morris '09 and Peter Brock '09 assisted a Nepali women's group in the creation of a meeting house and early childhood program.
- Spencer Xiangjiandangzhi '11 worked on the repair and addition of three classrooms in a Tibetan primary school.



Sustainable Skidmore

Under the leadership of our new sustainability coordinator, Erica Fuller, the Campus Environmental Committee and the student Environmental Action Club promote several projects to educate the community and to reduce Skidmore's ecological footprint.⁴¹

- *North Woods Sustainability Stewards:* Two students are employed and housed at Skidmore for two months in the summer. They monitor and maintain the North Woods and provide public education and outreach.
- *Eco-Rep Program:* Ten students serve as Eco-Reps to raise awareness and change behavior, such as recycling and energy conservation, in the residence halls.
- *Food Sustainability Project:* This project involves a partnership between the Environmental Action Club, Dining Services, Health Services, and area farms to increase the use of local and organic foods in the dining hall.
- *Leave Your Car at Home Week:* A campus-wide initiative that supports a variety of initiatives such as a bicycle maintenance day, a bicycle-borrowing program, and carpooling and ride-sharing coordination.
- *Give and Go Program:* Collection of reusable belongings as students move out of the residence halls.

Athletic Team Service Projects

Each athletic team conducts a service project, such as offering free sports clinics for area children, sponsoring a Special Olympics swim meet, helping at local social service agencies, and

conducting fundraisers for charities. In addition, the community service subcommittee of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee coordinates projects such as a partnership with Saratoga Bridges to offer sports clinics to members of the community with various disabilities.

Voter Registration

With a big election year in 2008, Skidmore has been active helping students learn about the issues and register to vote. The college maintains a resource webpage for voter registration, and the Student Government Association has sponsored several nonpartisan registration and education events.⁴²

Blood Donation

The American Red Cross collects blood on campus three times per year. In a typical blood drive, approximately 50 to 75 units of blood are collected from students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The blood drive is coordinated by faculty in the Psychology Department.

Federal Work Study Program

Skidmore receives federal support for students on financial aid. These funds are used to pay students for part-time employment. According to federal requirements, "Institutions must use at least 7 percent of their Work-Study allocation to support students working in community service jobs, including: reading tutors for preschool age or elementary school children; mathematics tutors for students enrolled in elementary school through ninth grade; or literacy tutors in a family literacy project performing family literacy activities."⁴³ These positions can be on or off campus. In the 2006/2007 academic year, 42 students worked in such positions and received \$48,000 in compensation. The students worked at off campus at Saratoga Mentoring, EOC, Mayor's Office, Saratoga Center for Family, America Reads and America Counts Programs in Saratoga schools; and on campus at the Greenberg Childcare Center, the Early Childhood Center, Scribner Library, and the Office of Community Service Programs.

Career Services

The Office of Career Services offers consultation and web-based resources related to socially-conscious careers,⁴⁴ social activism,⁴⁵ and international volunteer opportunities.⁴⁶ The office also sponsors opportunities for students to meet with representatives from organizations such as Teach for America and Peace Corps throughout the academic year.

Institutional Support and Recognition of Civic Engagement

Community Partnerships and Capacity

As Skidmore expands student involvement in the community, it must strategically coordinate placements in community agencies. While generally receptive and appreciative, agencies do not have limitless capacity and our students often require substantial supervision and training. In 2007, the Office of Community Service Programs hosted a breakfast meeting of with representatives from 35 community agencies. The purpose of the meeting was to educate these agencies about the college's educational goals for student placements, especially with regard to service-learning experiences, and to learn how we might better support their work. The breakfast meeting confirmed that local agencies are enthusiastic about partnering with Skidmore, but we also learned about the need to partner strategically. Part of a civic engagement infrastructure must include the capacity to identify specific needs of these agencies so that we can tailor our outreach to students and faculty based on their interests and expertise. Not only can our students offer volunteer labor that is much needed in the community, but they can also offer specialized technical assistance (such as research, program evaluation, web or graphic design, language translation, etc.) that can significantly offset costs to agencies with limited budgets and increasing pressure to offer professional services and evidence of program effectiveness.

Many colleges and universities have established centers that serve as clearinghouses for campus civic engagement efforts. Important national projects are endorsing this direction. Project Pericles "is a not-for-profit organization that encourages and facilitates commitments by colleges and universities to include education for social responsibility and participatory citizenship as an essential part of their educational programs, in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community."⁴⁷ Our peer, Bates College is a Periclean institution. This project mandates that the Board of Trustees issue a resolution in support of civic engagement, and the creation of a center with a program director that reports directly to the president.

Increasingly, colleges and universities are coordinating the major activities through a specific office or center. Table 6 compares institutional support for civic engagement at Skidmore and at our peer institutions.⁴⁸ Although it is a complicated task to identify the full range of efforts at any one institution, the table identifies such centers at each college and its staffing levels as a rough measure of institutional support. Institutions are ranked into three tiers according to the level of support and their achievement.

Table 6. Civic Engagement at Skidmore and 16 Peer Institutions, 2007

Rank	College	Center Name	Leadership	Staff FTE
1	Bates College	Harvard Center for Community Partnerships	Director	7
1	Colgate University	Center for Outreach, Volunteerism, and Education	Director	7
1	Hamilton College	Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center	Director	5
1	Gettysburg College	Center for Public Service	Director	5
1	Oberlin College	Bonner Center for Service Learning	Director	5
1	Trinity College	Office of Community and Institutional Relations	Vice President for Community and Institutional Affairs	5
1	St Lawrence University	Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership	Director	5
1	Dickinson College	Office of Religious Life and Community Service Community Studies Center	Assistant Provost for Campus Academic Life	5
2	Franklin & Marshall College	The Ware Institute for Civic Engagement Center for Liberal Arts and Society	Director	4
2	Connecticut College	Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy	Associate Director	3
2	Vassar College	Office of Field Work	Associate Director	3
2	Sarah Lawrence College	Community Partnerships and Service Learning Office	Director	2
2	Bard College	Trustee Leader Scholar Program	Director	2
3	Skidmore College	Office of Community Service Programs	Director	1
3	Union College		Faculty Member	1
3	Wheaton College	Filene Center	Faculty Fellow	1

It is readily apparent that Skidmore does not yet have the infrastructure to support civic engagement at a level comparable to our peers; it is normative for them to have civic engagement centers with staffs of three to seven. Our investigation reveals that first tier institutions are widely recognized for their commitments to civic engagement. For example, Bates, Oberlin, Trinity (and Connecticut, a second-tier school) have all been designated as “colleges with a conscience” in the Princeton Review.⁴⁹ Bates, Hamilton, Gettysburg, Oberlin, Trinity, Dickinson (and Skidmore) were selected for inclusion in the *Guide to Service-Learning Colleges and Universities*.⁵⁰ Bates is a Project Pericles member. St. Lawrence and Dickinson are AAC&U Bringing Theory to Practice Intensive Site grant recipients.⁵¹

Institutional Grants

In addition to creating this task force to assess progress on Goal III of the strategic plan, President Glotzbach has used his discretionary funds to support recent initiatives:

- \$50,000 to the Responsible Citizenship Task Force to offer small grants to support civic engagement projects for the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic years.
- \$10,000 to support service-learning internships in the summer of 2007.

Two recent grants have helped develop service learning, and may help explain the growth of service-learning courses in recent years. The Mellon Foundation provided funding for a faculty fellowship over a three year period from 2004/2005-2006/2007 (David Karp and Ruth Andrea Levinson served consecutive 18 month terms). The grants provided a course release for the fellow to educate colleagues about service learning and assess learning in relevant courses. A second grant has offered \$500 stipends to faculty developing service-learning first year seminars and further funding for course support. This grant, from the AAC&U Bringing Theory to Practice Project, has supported faculty teaching seminars in the fall of 2008. Without subsequent funding, e.g., to support Scribner Seminars in 2009, we are uncertain if the upward trend in service learning will continue.

As mentioned earlier, the Davis Foundation has sponsored the 100 Project for Peace project, and several Skidmore students have received \$10,000 grants to undertake international peace-building projects.

Awards, Prizes, and Scholarships

Skidmore currently offers several awards, prizes, and scholarships for citizenship. These are listed below quoting the official language of the award and italicizing the phrases that are most relevant to civic engagement. Each of these should be reviewed for relevance, and awards and scholarships can be expanded.

Table 7 lists several prizes that are awarded by the President's Office and the Office of Student Affairs at the annual Student Leadership Banquet.⁵²

Table 7. Student Affairs and President’s Office Awards and Prizes.

Award/Prize	Description
The President's Awards	These awards recognize Skidmore community members who have embraced the educational mission and progressive spirit of the College through their <i>exemplary commitment to personal excellence, campus pride, and community service</i> . The awards are intended to foster school spirit and campus unity, and they represent an opportunity to express our collective appreciation of outstanding work on behalf of the College. Along with awards to faculty and staff, two students are typically selected for this award each year.
The Charles S. & William P. Dake Community Service Award	This award, established in 1988 through the benefaction of Mr. And Mrs. William P. Dake, is given in recognition of a student’s <i>volunteer efforts in the Saratoga community</i> during the past academic year. The award honors Charles S. Dake, past president of Stewart’s Ice Cream Company, who was a Skidmore trustee for one year until his untimely death in 1978, and William P. Dake, current president of Stewart’s and a Skidmore trustee since 1988. Both men’s strong belief in the importance of volunteerism is exemplified by their own long records of active community service at all levels. Susan Law Dake, a member of the Class of 1971 and wife of William, is one of Saratoga County’s most active volunteers and works closely with all of the Benef-Action organizations in the selection process for the Dake Award. Candidates for this award must be full-time members of the Skidmore student body in good academic and social standing. They must be nominated by the volunteer organization as individuals who have volunteered their time to the Saratoga Community on a regular basis throughout the academic year, or who have exhibited extraordinary efforts in support of the spirit of volunteerism within the Skidmore community.
The Katherine Scranton Rozendaal Citizenship Award	Established in 1980, this award honors Katherine Scranton Rozendaal, Skidmore trustee from 1947 to 1979 and Chair of the Board for 8 years. The award is in recognition of Ms. Rozendaal’s dedicated service to Skidmore College and her genuine interest in student life. The College honors a maximum of five seniors through the presentation of this award, for their <i>extraordinary commitment to enriching the life of the Skidmore community through individual responsibility, distinguished leadership and significant involvement in co-curricular activities</i> . Recipients of this award must also have remained in good academic standing and have maintained an excellent social conduct record throughout their tenure at Skidmore.
The Rodney D. Andrews Prize	Established by Dr. and Mrs. Carl R. Comstock in grateful appreciation of the beautiful character of the Reverend Rodney D. Andrews and awarded to the senior student whose life in the College community has been, like his, one of <i>cheerful, unobtrusive and unselfish service</i> .
The Jane Anne Hapeman Distinguished Service Award	This award, established in 1992, honors the memory of Jane Anne Hapeman who, through her work in the offices of Admissions and Student Academic Affairs over the course of 8 years, assisted countless students in making the transition from home and high school to college life. Candidates for this award are nominated by first year students. They must be full time upper-class students who are well-rounded individuals with diverse interests, <i>strong character and high initiative</i> , and who, like Mrs. Hapeman, clearly enjoy <i>giving of themselves in helpful and supportive ways</i> .

Table 8 lists awards offered by academic departments, which are awarded annually at the Honors Convocation.⁵³

Table 8. Academic Awards for Citizenship.

Award/Prize	Description
Interdisciplinary Award in Health and Human Services Jo C. Hebard '69 Memorial Prize	Awarded to an outstanding senior who, through academic achievement and <i>community service</i> , demonstrates particular promise of making a significant contribution in the field of health and human services.
John P. Shepard Prize in Education Studies	Established by Virginia Payne Morse '63 in memory of Professor Jack Shepard, faculty member in the Department of Education, 1960-1977, and Director of the Elementary Education Program, 1960-1966. Given to the student who has demonstrated outstanding performance, potential, and <i>commitment to education and working with children, leadership among peers</i> , and superior performance in both academic achievement and field work in education
The Gail Moran Morton '60 Prize	Awarded to a junior or senior whose excellence in the business major has been combined with a particularly broad liberal arts program of study, and who <i>demonstrates the humanistic concern for personal and community relationships</i> that embodies the spirit of the liberal arts and that we associate with the memory of Gail Moran Morton '60.
The Nancy Beth Rautenberg '83 Memorial Award	Given to a graduating senior sociology major who has combined commitment to the study of sociology at Skidmore College with <i>active student leadership</i> .

A handful of the more than 200 scholarships awarded to students refer to civic-mindedness.⁵⁴ Table 9 lists current scholarships awarded to outstanding juniors and seniors receiving financial aid. These students are recognized at an annual Scholarship Dinner to which both students and donors are invited.

Table 9. Scholarships with a Citizenship Focus.

Scholarship	Description
Melissa Mosher Bilodeau '76 Endowed Scholarship	Created in 1999 in memory of Melissa Mosher Bilodeau '76 by her family and classmates. The award is given to students who share Mrs. Bilodeau's <i>commitment to education and working with children</i> . (Typically awarded to education majors.)
The Moriarty Family Endowed Scholarship	Established in 2006 by the Moriarty Family, John and Carol, and their daughter Kate '07. This scholarship is awarded with a preference for students majoring in the education department.
Health and Human Services Scholarship	Established in 1975 by the Alumni Association of the Training School of Nurses of the New York Postgraduate Medical School and Hospital, in recognition of the many contributions made to the profession of nursing by the Skidmore College School of Nursing and its graduates. (Typically awarded to relevant pre-med, social science, or pre-professional majors.)

Student Portfolios

An ongoing challenge for the college is identifying civic-minded students to be recipients of the various awards. Many colleges and universities have invested in software to support online student portfolios and/or co-curricular transcripts that records their involvement in the community. These typically track club memberships, leadership positions, community service, and other activities that mark students' out-of-the-classroom experience. Using these portfolios, administrative offices are able to identify and celebrate students of great civic accomplishment. In the summer of 2008, the Student Government Association purchased OrgSync, which is administered by the Leadership Activities Office in Student Affairs, and we hope this will serve this important function effectively.

Conclusion: Enhancing Civic Engagement at Skidmore

It is readily apparent from this status report that civic engagement is thriving at Skidmore. Students are motivated to participate in these community-based opportunities and their contributions are substantial, highly varied, and creative. They are making a difference for the campus community, the local region, and even globally. Yet despite these accomplishments, the activities are not well coordinated, many are poorly linked to the academic experience, and students are largely unaware of the activities of their peers and of opportunities for their own engagement..

We believe that by acting on the following recommendations, Skidmore will not only better serve our current students, but also become even more attractive to prospective students. Indeed, Tulane University, which added a two course service-learning requirement for all of its students as part of its “Renewal Plan” after Hurricane Katrina, has been receiving a record number of applications. Last year, the school received 34,000 applications to fill its first year class of 1500 (a 100 percent increase from the year before).⁵⁵ We hope that Skidmore will not have to experience a major natural disaster before implementing our recommendations.

1. Support faculty participation in civic engagement initiatives

Many faculty support Goal III but are uncertain about how to best foster student civic learning. The following recommendations focus on faculty development:

- *Symposium*: Civic engagement is relevant to all majors and programs, but it should be up to each discipline to define its own criteria and pedagogical strategy. The Dean of the Faculty should sponsor departmental retreats or an all-faculty symposium that asks each department to articulate its relationship to Goal III. What is the public relevance of the discipline? How is this relevance articulated as learning outcomes in the major and/or courses?
- *Faculty Survey*: Survey the faculty about their commitment to civic engagement.⁵⁶
- *Faculty Education*: Offer workshops to faculty on civic engagement opportunities in the community and pedagogical training. Offer support to faculty to attend national higher education conferences on civic engagement. Workshops can be topically specific: community-based research, hiring processes for civic-minded faculty, civic engagement in first year courses, capstone experiences, honors courses, and for specific divisions or disciplines as well as for new faculty. In conjunction with workshops, offer faculty resources online such as a database of service-learning syllabi and other materials that assist curriculum development.
- *Faculty Incentives*: Expand recognition and rewards for faculty who incorporate civic engagement into their courses.
- *Faculty Fellows*: Offer stipends to experienced faculty for mentoring their peers on civic engagement activities.
- *Quadracci Chair in Social Responsibility*: This endowed chair should be reviewed for purpose and integration with Goal III priorities.
- *Community-Focused Collaborative Research*: Propose changes to the Faculty Handbook that identify the role of engaged scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. Create faculty development funds specifically for community-focused collaborative research.

Educate department chairs and CAPT about the value of community-focused research and criteria for its evaluation.

- *Collaboration with other Initiatives:* Currently, Skidmore is seeking to develop pedagogical support to faculty through a possible center for teaching and also strengthen its support of the natural sciences. Planning groups should meet to develop joint initiatives, such as service-learning pedagogical support and scientific literacy projects that involve civic learning. For example, as we increase our support in the natural sciences, we might collaborate to identify for majors how scientific knowledge can be used in service of the public good and how a focus on social concerns can enhance the education of non-majors in scientific literacy.

2. Promote pedagogical civic engagement initiatives

- *Civic-Learning Courses:* Develop criteria and a process for identifying, evaluating, and promoting civic-learning courses, as well as a means to list them so that students and faculty could easily locate them. These courses would be identified by the Registrar's Office, prominently identified (for example, by using a "C" designation after the course number) and publicized so that students could explore these offerings in their course selection process.
- *Service-Learning Courses:* As with civic-learning courses, mechanisms need to be developed to regularly identify and promote service-learning courses.
- *Community-Focused Collaborative Research Opportunities:* Identify and promote course-based and summer program opportunities.
- *International Service Learning:* Develop new opportunities for global service learning. Encourage departments to pre-approve service-learning programs. Explore models like Princeton University's new bridge program that defers incoming students for one year while they live abroad doing community service.
- *Service-Learning Internships:* Create new credit-bearing opportunities to parallel internships or develop an identifier for service-oriented internships. Develop resources to support students pursuing service internships and link this program to the summer collaborative research program.
- *Certificate Program:* Create a certificate program that combines civic engagement coursework, co-curricular training opportunities, and capstone civic projects. Explore similar models such as the Civic Scholars Program at the University of Pennsylvania⁵⁷ and the Public Service Scholars Program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.⁵⁸
- *Sequencing the Service-Learning Experience:* Develop criteria and a plan for introducing service-learning experiences with increasing complexity. For example, identify what service-learning experiences should look like in the FYE and other introductory courses, and how they may be presented differently in advanced coursework and in associated programs, such as study abroad and internships.
- *Service-Learning Peer Mentors:* Offer trainings and retreats to students, such as FYE peer mentors and SGA Academic Council representatives, which prepare them for leadership positions in civic engagement projects.
- *Create Community Partner Advisory Board:* The board would include several representatives from community agencies that regularly work with our students. The board would meet once each semester to brainstorm collaborative opportunities for

service-learning projects, internship placements, and community-focused collaborative research needs.

- *Secure Transportation*: Engaging students in the community requires reliable transportation services between the college and community agencies.

3. Enhance Recognition of Civic Engagement

- *Service Awards, Prizes, Scholarships, and Honors*: While the lists of awards, prizes, and scholarships noted above could certainly be expanded, a limitation is their focus on individual recipients when there may be a large number of students who merit recognition of their good citizenship. We could also recognize student civic engagement with the creation of “service honors.” Unlike the various prizes and awards we currently offer, this would recognize a class of students who meet a particular standard for service. Such students might receive a certificate or tassel at commencement.

4. Create a Center for Civic Engagement

Our peer institutions have made significant commitments to civic engagement by developing centers that coordinate both academic and co-curricular civic engagement. Such a center at Skidmore, led by Academic Affairs, but serving as a bridge to Student Affairs, would be the umbrella for a diverse array of initiatives from volunteering to service learning to community-based research. There are already a number of relevant initiatives and programs on campus, yet their visibility is limited, information sharing between them is informal, and no coordinated operation exists to enhance these activities, promote new ones, or capitalize on their successes.

The center would coordinate and provide administrative support to civic engagement activities. Responsibilities would include the following:

Faculty

- Work with departments to identify how they help prepare civic-minded graduates.
- Oversee faculty development opportunities in both pedagogies and scholarship of engagement.

Students

- Oversee student volunteer placements, service-learning projects, and community-based research activities, with an emphasis on building sustained community projects and partnerships.
- Support student clubs and organizations for volunteering and charitable fundraising endeavors.
- Offer a civic dialogues program that includes mediation, restorative justice, and facilitated dialogues on diversity and public issues.
- Administer and/or facilitate civic projects that go beyond the academic calendar such as international service-learning travel seminars, pre-orientation programs, summer service learning internships, and alternative spring breaks.
- Offer public recognition of student contributions through awards, honors, and scholarships.
- Host campus lectures by outside speakers and a brown-bag series of talks by campus faculty and students about relevant research and projects.

Assessment and Administration

- Provide a visible hub of civic engagement activity.

- Maintain a website providing resources and opportunities for participation.
- Seek external funding in support of civic engagement activities and oversee grants.
- Work with Admissions and Communications to identify civic-minded applicants and promote and publicize civic engagement efforts.
- Sustain membership and participation in various external organizations to ensure the College is active in the community.
- Gather data on civic engagement at Skidmore and provide an annual report that assesses progress on Goal III.
- Work with the Director of Assessment and others to develop civic engagement learning outcomes and link to broader student assessment efforts.

The center would have a highly visible website and an office on “Main Street” in Case Center through which students, faculty, and the wider community can identify relevant opportunities and resources. The Director of Community Service Programs in Student Affairs would take the initiative in developing regional and non-local community partnerships that promote mutually beneficial resources and opportunities for all parties. A Faculty Director would provide support to faculty as they develop and assess civic engagement courses and community research projects. The Faculty Director will assist faculty in identifying grant opportunities, funding agencies, and foundations whose mission statements match the stated goals of project proposals.

We believe that a civic engagement center would promote recruitment, engagement, and retention of students by offering exciting and innovative opportunities for academic learning that emphasize rigor, critical inquiry, problem-solving, and collaboration between students, faculty, and the wider community. A center would meet the needs of our faculty, many of who have expressed a personal commitment to civic engagement, but have not had the resources or support to bring it to their scholarship and their classrooms.

Immediate Priorities and Action Steps

Although the task force recommends implementation of all of the recommendations above, we recognize that this will take time and resources. In order to sequence implementation strategically, we recommend the following steps be taken as soon as is feasible.

1. We recommend modifying a current faculty line to create a new position—*Director of Civic Learning*—as a stepping stone to the creation of a center for civic engagement and a full-time director. This faculty position would be parallel to the Director of Intercultural Studies, a position focused on advancing the curricular components of Goal II (Intercultural and Global Understanding). Thus, we would have a similar position focused on Goal III. The position would be housed 60 percent in a department and 40 percent in administration. The director would focus on the development of civic learning, service learning, and community-based collaborative research opportunities and collaborate with the Director of Community Service Programs, who will maintain a focus on co-curricular service opportunities.
2. Offer a faculty symposium during Senior Week in May, 2009. The task force would facilitate workshops for faculty to discuss collectively and as departments and programs how they can best advance the civic engagement of our students.

3. Offer a series of open and targeted workshops for faculty to assist them in the development of service-learning courses. These would include open pedagogy workshops as well as sessions for new faculty and for faculty teaching in the First Year Experience.
4. Develop a formal mechanism to assist our students in identifying civic engagement opportunities in the curriculum, especially service-learning courses.
5. Support the leadership development of our students by creating new roles for them as service-learning peer mentors. These students would be liaisons between the campus and community partners. They would be trained to assist students and faculty in their major discipline with the brainstorming and coordination of service-learning projects.

¹ Numerous people assisted the task force in the development of this report. Especially important were representatives of various community agencies including: Sister Charla Commins, Executive Director of Catholic Charities; Brenda Parobeck, Match Specialist Catholic Charities, Saratoga Mentoring Program; Julie Hoxsie, Executive Director of Economic Opportunity Council; Crystal Nowhitney, Latino Advocate for Economic Opportunity Council; Nancy Holzman, Associate Director Literacy NENY; Nicole McFarland, Director Senior Hope Counseling.

² Skidmore College. 2007. *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2005-2015*. <http://www.skidmore.edu/planning/index.htm>.

³ National Science Foundation. Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities. <http://www.sencer.net>

⁴ Tulane University. http://tulane.edu/news/newwave/030308_admissions.cfm

⁵ A useful instrument is an 18-item scale developed by Julie Hatcher at Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis.

⁶ University of Pennsylvania Civic Scholars Program. <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/civichouse/civicscholars>

⁷ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Public Service Scholars Program. <http://www.unc.edu/cps/students-scholars-index.php>

⁸ Association for American Colleges & Universities Core Commitments Project. http://www.aacu.org/core_commitments/call_to_action.cfm

⁹ Colby, Anne, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens. 2003. *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. P.23.

¹⁰ Eric E. Dey and Associates. 2008. *Should Colleges Focus More on Personal and Social Responsibility?* Center for the student of Higher and Postsecondary Education, University of Michigan School of Education. http://www.aacu.org/core_commitments/Assessment.cfm

¹¹ Hollister, Robert M. 2008. "Educating Students to Foster Active Citizenship." *Peer Review* 10:18-21. http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-spsu08/pr-spsu08_EducatingStudents.cfm

¹² Santora, Mark. 2008. "At Columbia, Students Mix Studies With Volunteer Work, for Credits." *New York Times*. September 10. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/11/nyregion/11service.html?pagewanted=1&ei=5070&adxn1=1&emc=eta1&adxnlx=1222348142-HbZ1tR2aR9wB3PPV02OYiw>.

¹³ Skidmore College. 2007. *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2005-2015*. <http://www.skidmore.edu/planning/index.htm>.

¹⁴ Colby et al., p.17-18.

¹⁵ Eyler, Janet S. and Dwight E. Giles. 1999. *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

¹⁶ Battistoni, Richard M. 2002. *Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.

¹⁷ Colby et al., p.17.

¹⁸ National Science Foundation. Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities. <http://www.sencer.net>

¹⁹ Tufts University Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/?pid=2>

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- ²⁰ Bringle, Robert and Julie Hatcher. 1995. "A Service-Learning Curriculum for Faculty." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* Fall:112-122.
- ²¹ Eyler, Janet S. and Dwight E. Giles. 1999. *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- ²² Campus Compact. <http://www.compact.org/>
- ²³ The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. <http://www.servicelearning.org>
- ²⁴ International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement. <http://www.researchslce.org>
- ²⁵ See full report: http://www.skidmore.edu/~dkarp/Karp%20Vitae_files/Civic%20Engagement%20Study.pdf
- ²⁶ These calculations are approximations based on courses offered only within the program (excluding courses that count toward the program but offered elsewhere) and also exclude one-credit courses, and non-traditional courses such as internships and independent studies.
- ²⁷ The International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership. <http://www.ipsl.org>
- ²⁸ Amherst College Center for Community Engagement. <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/cce>
- ²⁹ Boyer, Ernest L. 2003. "The Scholarship of Engagement." Pp. 245-251 in *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Readings and Resources for Faculty*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.
- ³⁰ The Clearinghouse for the Scholarship of Engagement. <http://schoe.coe.uga.edu/index.html>
- ³¹ Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/index.html>
- ³² For a comprehensive listing of these projects, see <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/wri/projects.htm>
- ³³ Skidmore College Faculty Handbook. Part 1, Section VI
- ³⁴ California State University, Monterey Bay. 2003. "Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Policy and Process." Pp. 283-285 in *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Readings and Resources for Faculty*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.
- ³⁵ Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Montclair State University. 2003. "Criteria, Documentation and Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion." Pp. 286-290 in *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Readings and Resources for Faculty*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.
- ³⁶ Portland State University. 2003. "Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Faculty for Tenure, Promotion, and Merit Increases." Pp. 291-299 in *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Readings and Resources for Faculty*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.
- ³⁷ Skidmore College Honors Forum. <http://cms.skidmore.edu/hf/about/citizenship.cfm>
- ³⁸ Skidmore College Office of Community Service Programs. http://cms.skidmore.edu/campuslife/community_service/index.cfm
- ³⁹ Skidmore College Student Government Association Financial Policies and Procedures
- ⁴⁰ Davis Projects for Peace. <http://www.kwd100projectsforpeace.org>
- ⁴¹ Skidmore College Sustainable Skidmore Project. <http://cms.skidmore.edu/sustainability/index.cfm>
- ⁴² Skidmore College Voting Information. <http://cms.skidmore.edu/vote/faq.cfm>
- ⁴³ U.S. Department of Education Federal Work Study Program. <http://www.ed.gov/programs/fws/index.html>
- ⁴⁴ Skidmore College Career Services. Social Activism/Socially Conscious Job Search Sites. www.skidmore.edu/administration/career/sustain.htm
- ⁴⁵ Liberal Arts Career Network Spotlight on Careers. http://www.spotlightoncareers.org/Social_Activism/index.html
- ⁴⁶ Skidmore College Career Services. International Volunteer Opportunities. <http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/career/intvolunteer.htm>
- ⁴⁷ Project Pericles. <http://projectpericles.org>
- ⁴⁸ Data were collected by David Karp and Michelle Hubbs in Fall 2007 through websites and follow-up telephone interviews with center staff.
- ⁴⁹ The Princeton Review. <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/conscience/default.asp>
- ⁵⁰ Beyond the Books. <http://www.beyondthebooks.org>
- ⁵¹ Association for American Colleges & Universities Bringing Theory to Practice Project. http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/index.cfm
- ⁵² Skidmore College Office of Campus Life. Student Awards. <http://cms.skidmore.edu/campuslife/awards.cfm>
- ⁵³ Skidmore College Honors Convocation. http://cms.skidmore.edu/honors_convocation/index.cfm
- ⁵⁴ Skidmore College Donor Relations. Named/Endowed Scholarships. http://cms.skidmore.edu/donor_relations/scholarships.cfm
- ⁵⁵ Tulane University. http://tulane.edu/news/newwave/030308_admissions.cfm

⁵⁶ A useful instrument is an 18-item scale developed by Julie Hatcher at Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis.

⁵⁷ University of Pennsylvania Civic Scholars Program. <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/civichouse/civicscholars>

⁵⁸ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Public Service Scholars Program. <http://www.unc.edu/cps/students-scholars-index.php>