

# **SKIDMORE COLLEGE TOTAL COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK**

Fall 2003

Skidmore College affirms the importance of each employee's contribution to its educational mission and accordingly is committed to providing appropriate compensation – the combination of direct pay and benefits – to everyone who works at the College. This commitment is grounded in two principles: First, Skidmore College adheres to basic values of fairness and equity (both internal and external) in the workplace. Second, the College can fulfill its mission only by hiring and retaining members of its faculty, staff, and administration who are capable of meeting the highest standards of performance and are motivated to do so.

The College also strongly believes that working at Skidmore should be rewarding not only because of compensation but also because of

- the advantages of association with a vibrant liberal arts college noted for its unique sense of community,
- the nature of the work itself,
- working conditions,
- opportunities for continuing education and professional development,
- educational opportunities extended to dependents, spouses, and domestic partners,
- where possible, opportunities for career advancement within the College, and
- opportunities to participate in institutional governance.

For these reasons, the College will strive both to maintain externally competitive and internally equitable levels of compensation and to consider other factors affecting job satisfaction in strategic planning, in budgeting, and in other areas of institutional decision-making.

To address issues of compensation, the College will identify overall goals for compensation and then develop specific targets for the discrete elements of total compensation for different employment categories and, in some cases, for individual positions. In establishing such targets, the College will take account of appropriate external benchmarks while attending to considerations of internal equity. The College will also aim to provide individual choices, where possible, for managing health and welfare benefits. Targets for both salary and benefits will be reviewed regularly and modified as necessary. The College will also regularly explore alternative approaches to benefits. Such decisions will necessarily be informed by constraints on resources and other budgetary considerations. In all cases, the Board of Trustees retains final authority to approve budgetary principles, as well as annual budgets and projected expenditures.

This total compensation framework is predicated on the ideas that the community spirit of the College is paramount and that compensation programs should reflect the needs of both the College, as an institution, and its employees. The College community will continue to be involved in providing input regarding the design and assessment of programs through focus groups, interviews, representation on governance committees, and in general meetings. The elements of the framework itself, specific goals and targets, and the College's progress in meeting them will be reviewed regularly by the College administration in collaboration with appropriately constituted governance bodies. The results of such analyses, any ensuing changes in the compensation system (along with the reasons for such changes), and their implications for employees, will be communicated in a clear and timely manner.

The following principles will inform the College's decisions regarding compensation:

#### Goals for External Positioning

Within the constraints of its financial resources, Skidmore College will aim to

- Align salary ranges at the median of comparator markets (as described below), with individuals' base salaries generally extending over the middle third of those ranges (assuming satisfactory performance);
- Ensure that hourly wage levels are positioned at or above the current "living wage" level for the region;
- Provide annual salary and wage increases to maintain market competitiveness and, where possible, to improve such positioning relative to external benchmarks.
- Target benefits near the middle third of our peer institutions (where such comparisons can be made).

#### Market Comparisons

*Comparator markets* – markets against which the elements of compensation will be compared – will be identified on the basis of criteria including the nature of the position, knowledge and skills required to perform the work, areas of recruitment (national, regional, local), the nature and size of comparable institutions or employers, the financial resources of comparable institutions (in relation to the financial resources of the College), and (where relevant) location. More specifically, the following comparator groups will be utilized.

- Faculty members, senior administrators, and higher-ed-specific mid-level administrators: A peer group of schools that are comparable in size, financial structure and mission as well as national data (e.g., the annual AAUP faculty survey).
- Administrators with comparable jobs in industry: The peer group as described and regionally based and comparably sized general industry companies.
- Members of the support staff: Businesses in the region.

#### Internal Equity

In order to recognize the contributions of individual employees while treating everyone with fairness and respect, the College will

- Establish ranges of compensation for different positions based first of all upon a systematic analysis of factors such as responsibilities and the levels of education, skills, and experience required to perform a given function, with the goal of providing equitable compensation for comparable work.
- Acknowledge an employee's individual contribution to Skidmore – as reflected both in current levels of skill and the history of performance at the College – when determining individual positioning of salaries within the salary range.

### Work Satisfaction and Career Development

The College is committed to the principles that work should be satisfying in its own right, that employees should find that they are able to employ their skills effectively, to contribute thoughtfully to the advancement of institutional goals, and that their time on the job is well spent. To implement these principles, the College will

- Give proper attention to training and oversight of those employees in supervisory and administrative roles.
- Provide employees with opportunities to develop their professional skills and increase their knowledge in ways that contribute both to professional and personal growth.
- Provide opportunities, where possible, for employees to enhance both their personal satisfaction and their contributions to the College through lateral moves to new areas or involvement, promotion, or involvement in new areas of work through participation on committees or task forces.

### Acknowledgement of Individual Performance

In all cases, the expectations and ways of assessing individual performance should be clear and consistently applied and should support the College's values and mission. Fair and helpful performance review should be an integral aspect of work at all levels within the College. Where possible, the College will develop ways of acknowledging high levels of performance, individual contribution, or achievement.

In some instances, the College will be able to acknowledge with stipends or other forms of supplemental pay the work of employees who have taken on additional responsibilities or time commitments that substantially exceed the normal expectations of their positions. Where possible such additional compensation will be standardized to ensure that employees performing comparable work will receive equitable pay.