

# First Steps

## Strategic Action Agenda 2016-2018

We are now in the first year of implementing our new *Strategic Plan: Creating Pathways to Excellence*, and as we continue this work, we remain mindful of the recommendations that

initiatives identified in the *Plan* and the Middle States recommendations are complementary. This Strategic Action Agenda (SAA) departs from past practice by setting out a two-year implementation horizon for the highest priority initiatives. In addition, it is organized on the basis of the four goals identified in the *Plan* and not in relation to administrative divisions of the College.

Now is the time to embrace a new sense of dedication to our common purpose. As the *Strategic Plan* makes clear and as our current experience confirms, Skidmore is positioned to achieve a set of objectives that would not have been imaginable just a few years ago. At the same time, external pressures can place any college or university at risk. Our best response to this complex situation is to move forward with initiatives that will add to our strength, enable us to support our students in achieving ever higher levels of academic excellence, attend to the health and wellness of our community in new ways, and solidify our position as a leading liberal arts college. Let us work together and share in these efforts as we continue our positive momentum.

**I. Integrative Learning and Education—To Develop Students’ Capacities to Create, Imagine, and Change the World, and to Enhance the Work of the Faculty as Teacher–Scholars:** *We will invest in pedagogical and scholarly programs and educational strategies that develop the capacities of students and faculty members to achieve, model, and demonstrate excellence as scholarly, creative, and integrative learners. In doing so we are committed to developing and implementing new and creative pedagogies and curricula that will support our transition to a technology-rich college.*

**1. Continue the progress towards construction of the Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS).**

Complete construction document phase. [Year 1]

Begin permitting process. [Year 1]

Complete plan for interim space arrangements, in conjunction with campus-wide space utilization study (done by external consultant). [Year 1]

Complete permitting process. [Year 2]

Begin construction phase. [Year 2]

Using support from Arthur Vining Davis Foundation grant, pilot program for the Schupf Idea Lab. [Years 1 & 2]

**2. Continue fundraising to achieve target identified in CIS funding plan (\$15M).**

Develop and launch new CIS fundraising initiative, secure \$5-10M in commitments. [Year 1]

Secure \$5-10M in commitments complete CIS funding plan. [Year 2]

Continue to seek naming gift. [Years 1 & 2]



**II. Access—To Ensure Access for All Our Students to an Extraordinary**

**Educational Experience:** *Students will have full access to opportunities for*

*educational excellence*

financial data from two tax years prior to  
financial aid budgeting and packaging. [Year 1]

into institutional



Determine best ways to deploy available resources to support local arts organizations; use support as a lever to create internships or job opportunities for our undergraduate students. [Year 1]

Increase community awareness of ODSP programming. [Years 1 &

**38. Determine resource needs (e.g., housing, dining, counseling services) based on size of student body.** [Year 1]

**39. Revamp divisional structure in Student Affairs to mitigate risk, provide space for strategic planning and implementation, and provide additional layer of process for student appeals.** [Year 1]

**40. Maintain the fiscal discipline of balanced and fully funded budgets.**

Manage Operating Budgets, Capital Budgets, New Major Construction Projects, and New Initiatives. [Years 1 & 2]

Continue to balance the operating budget while holding increases in the comprehensive fee so that our fee is not greater than the median of our peer group. [Years 1 & 2]

Maintain and fund the Total Compensation Framework Plan for faculty and staff. [Years 1 & 2]

For new Major Construction Projects and New Initiatives, continue the discipline of including a provision for an additional endowment fund to support the increased operational costs resulting from the project. [Years 1 & 2]

Review endowment spending rate, given projected muted investment performance in the intermediate term. [Year 1]

Review funding for deferred maintenance. [Year 1]

Develop a long-term cost-containment program tied to projections of key budget parameters. Limit the growth for the internal financial aid discount rate to one percentage point annually. [Years 1 & 2]

**41. Manage summer programs to generate more revenue and make a positive financial contribution to the College.**

Attract new conference business, increase enrollments in selected summer arts institutes, raise more funding from individuals and institutional grants, create new programs, and continue to assess the viability of existing programs. [Years 1 & 2]

**42. Expand training for managers and professional development opportunities for staff.**

Focus on quality of work, retention, work/life balance. [Years 1 & 2]

Continue to support the Staff Advisory Group. [Years 1 & 2]

**43. Engage a space planning consultant to undertake a study of space utilization across campus and to develop an overall campus space plan.** [Years 1 & 2]

**44. Complete the formation of the new division of Communications & Marketing to reflect an emphasis on Skidmore's external reputation.** Increase national and international media awareness of Skidmore with a primary focus on unique and newsworthy stories that reflect such strategic plan goals as integrative learning, science, sustainability, access, diversity, wellness, and creativity.

Hire a permanent Vice President for Communications & Marketing. [Year 1]

