



To: Michael Ennis -McMillan and Cori Filson, Co -chairs, Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU), members of CIGU, and members of the Skidmore community

From: Philip A. Glotzbach, President

Date: 2 November 2011

Re: Response to the CIGU "Statement of Observations, Concerns, and Recommendations" (18 May 2011)

Thank you for formulating the concerns and recommendations that you addressed to the Cabinet and me, and to IPPC, in your communication dated May 18, 2011, having reflected at length about the issues you raised and having discussed them with various groups and individuals. I write at this time to provide a response.

As you know, we acknowledged receipt of your statement last spring, and Cabinet members took up the concerns immediately. But because IPPC had already held its final meeting of the 2010-11 academic year, we were not able to discuss your concerns in IPPC until this fall. Your statement was distributed for IPPC's initial meeting of the year (that committee includes members who are new to the group this fall), and we discussed your correspondence at IPPC's second meeting of the year on 23 September 2011.

Let me say, first and most importantly, that I hear and take seriously your concerns, that Cabinet

continue to challenge ourselves to participate honestly in difficult dialogues regarding these issues, to insure that we are actively listening to one another and that we are prepared to change our minds on the basis of what we hear. In short, we must get better as a community at hearing and understanding the information that is available to us, at acknowledging troubling patterns, and in moving to change situations that are inconsistent with our values and goals.

I also agree that we need to attend to the structures we have put in place to advance the work of Goal II and to be sure that we have – or further develop – the institutional capacity to support the work of Goal II on campus. As CIGU well knows, your committee is a key part of the structure we have created at the College to advance the work of intercultural and global understanding.

As you will note below, I look forward to further discussions with CIGU, and with the individuals who comprise the “diversity triad,” to consider whether the structures (now in place for approximately 4 years) are functioning as we envisioned them – and, if not, to consider what changes should be made.

Having acknowledged the frustrations expressed in CIGU’s opening paragraphs, I also want to acknowledge the progress the College has made with regard to Goal II of the Strategic Plan. That Goal – like any major strategic initiative articulated in any strategic plan – has been advanced in stages. When the Plan was published in 2005, most in our community recognized that our first order of business had to be increasing access for students of color. In that regard, Skidmore has made enormous progress. In the Plan’s first year, our student population included approximately 13% students of color, and international students made up less than 2% of our student body. By contrast, the class that entered in fall 2011 included 26% certified students of color (20% domestic students of color), 6% international students (with some overlap in students of color), and an additional 6% U.S. citizens holding a second passport – most of whom have spent most of their lives abroad.

We have made considerably less progress in increasing the numbers of faculty members of color and international faculty members. In 2005-06, ALANA faculty members represented 11% of our total faculty, since then those numbers have fluctuated between 12% and 13%. The fact that we have not been able to move beyond this plateau is deeply concerning. During this same time, the percentages of ALANA representation among the members of our staff have risen from 5% to 7% – progress, but still not sufficient in relation to our objective. Furthermore, we must acknowledge immediately that we recently have seen the departure of several faculty members of color. In short, significant work remains to raise the diversity within our faculty and staff to levels approximating the diversity of our student body.

Let me turn now to the specific suggestions CIGU has offered. First, let me express the appreciation of Cabinet and IPPC that CIGU afforded the courtesy of reporting the suggestions first to the Cabinet and IPPC, before sharing them more broadly with the campus community. As you know, at the September 20th meeting of IPPC when the group discussed your statement, IPPC expressed unanimous support for CIGU’s distributing the recommendations broadly within the community. I hope that in addition to attaching the full statement (with recommendations) to CIGU’s 2011 Annual Report, CIGU also can engage the broader community in discussions – and action – regarding the important efforts outlined in Goal II of the Plan.

- Item 26 in the “Strategic Action Agenda” indicates that we will engage a consultant to provide “diversity and inclusion training” for the campus, beginning with the Cabinet. The consultant has been retained, and this work will commence later this year.
- There is ongoing work with the city of Saratoga Springs, including a new community initiative aimed at creating dialogs relating to diversity and inclusion among various

faculty represents a much more stable population across time, so we need to ensure that the developmental programs for faculty referenced in 4. above are both effective and ongoing.

9. Review current support for international faculty members (e.g., support for visa issues, etc.) and provide an appropriate support structure that addresses issues of attraction and retention of this cohort, including a presence on the Skidmore Website.

We have created a new position in Student Affairs to support international students as well as faculty with regard to visa, F1, and J1 documentation. That position has now been filled. Academic Affairs will continue to be in conversation with international faculty members to assess their needs and determine how best to assist them. The VPAA and the Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Vice President for Finance and Administration, are exploring the implications of some of the changes we hope to implement regarding visa support for international faculty.

Beyond the initiatives described above, the Cabinet, in collaboration with the IPPC and other appropriate groups, will continue its planning efforts in support of the broad objectives of Goal II of the Strategic Plan. Special Programs has brought and will bring a number of speakers this year (e.g. Daniella Talmor-Heller, Zana Briski, Angela M. Brown, et al.) and the Tang is mounting several exhibits relevant to these issues.

Let me conclude with a paragraph taken from this year's "Strategic Action Agenda": I hereby reaffirm my personal commitment, as President, to provide leadership in this area to help the College move forward toward a better future. If we are to be the academic community we seek to become, we must continue to increase the capacity of us – every member of our community, including every member of the faculty, staff, and administration – to engage in meaningful dialogue about issues relating to race, class, sexual orientation, disability, and other markers of difference that can divide us as a campus community (and indeed that can divide our nation and the world)... I ask that everyone in the Skidmore community embrace this undertaking and seek opportunities to increase our ability to engage in these difficult conversations, always within a context of mutual respect. Even as we direct our attention to the specific objectives we have identified for this year, we must remain focused on our long