

Applied Civic Engagement courses that emphasize the value that community-based research brings to scholarship. Topics range from gender and intersectionality in political marketing to

“The students had so many questions, so many ideas, so much energy,” says Sobol. “We were getting a huge amount of value out of the students’ questions and perspectives, and it was also a significant learning experience for them. We were both mentoring and being mentored.”

Burke is adamant that she isn’t going to let any deliverable go out to the community that isn’t an A+. She is also quick to point out that the success of SSCP comes from many sources: the willing collaboration of Skidmore faculty members; the interdisciplinary liberal arts curriculum; and the diversity and inclusivity of the campus community, to name some.

In true Skidmore fashion, SSCP students bring a variety of majors to the mix — math, physics, social work, political science, studio art, dance, philosophy, and more — which brings multiple perspectives to class discussions and consultant teams.

A growing Skidmore alumni network is also crucial to SSCP’s success. Some graduates come back from their consulting firms — Deloitte, Accenture, Ernst & Young (EY), KPMG, Kantor, and IBM Consulting — to recruit SSCP students for internships and entry positions. Others come to SSCP classes in person or via Zoom to share their expertise. Bill McKendree ’74 from the Clarion Group, Amy Munichello ’94 from EY, Tess Mattimore ’16 from IBM, and Jack Sloan ’18 and Mark Purowitz ’87 from Deloitte have had a huge impact on the course, says Burke.

The idea for a Skidmore-Saratoga partnership was developed by Economics Professor Roy Rotheim in 2000. Since Burke inherited the partnership in 2013, SSCP has consulted for more than 60 local businesses and organizations, including Saratoga National Bank, Saratoga Eagle, Wellspring, Saratoga Senior Center, Habitat for Humanity, the Daily Gazette, and Artisanal Brewery.

Many of the clients implemented SSCP’s recommendations: Healthy Living Market added the family-owned image to its public story; Saratoga Today adopted its “blue box” identity; bike lanes and bikeshares appeared on the streets of Saratoga Springs after SSCP engaged with the Capital District Transportation Authority and the city Mayor’s Office; and the Saratoga Farmer’s Market changed its foot traffic flow after SSCP consultants flew a video drone over the market to capture disruptions. The YMCA and Pitney Meadows even appointed SSCP graduates to their boards of directors.

In addition, SSCP students are occasionally offered positions at client organizations. Aaron Rosenblum ’20, a business major and arts administration minor, consulted with and was subsequently hired by Yaddo, the retreat for artists here in Saratoga Springs.

“More than anything, our team brought a youthful perspective to Yaddo,” says Rosenblum. “I think that is a big part of what SSCP brings to local businesses — a curiosity and fresh thinking that brings things into a different light and creates new possibilities.”

Back at the 2019 Skidmore team presentation for SPAC, a guest from the Abu Dhabi-based parent company of semiconductor producer GlobalFoundries, headquartered in nearby Malta, New York, was so impressed, he quickly hired two SSCP students: Roman DiPasquale ’19, a Filene Music Scholar (violin) and business major, and Sonju Mohan ’19, a double major in business and economics.

DiPasquale’s SSCP team focused on positioning SPAC as a cultural destination. They interfaced with about two dozen cultural leaders, from SPAC board members to the UPH president to the head of the Chamber of Commerce.

“People were excited to be involved and talk to one another, and they were impressed with what we brought to the table. ‘Oh, you’re Skidmore students — Wow!’ they said.” — Roman DiPasquale

SSCP and SPAC are now in conversations about fall 2022, when the new SPAC School of the Arts may become an SSCP client.