

# ABOUT SKIDMORE COLLEGE

## Mission

*The principal mission of Skidmore College is the education of predominantly full-time undergraduates, a diverse population of talented students who are eager to engage actively in the learning process. The College seeks to prepare liberally educated graduates to continue their quest for knowledge and to make the choices required of informed, responsible citizens. Skidmore faculty and staff create a challenging yet supportive environment that cultivates students' intellectual and personal excellence, encouraging them to expand their expectations of themselves while they enrich their academic understanding.*

*In keeping with the College's founding principle of linking theoretical with applied learning, the Skidmore curriculum balances a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences with preparation for professions, careers, and community leadership. Education in the classroom, laboratory, and studio is enhanced by cocurricular and field experience opportunities of broad scope.*

*Underpinning the entire enterprise are faculty members' scholarly and creative interests, which inform their teaching and contribute, in the largest sense, to the advancement of learning.*

*The College also embraces its responsibility as an educational and cultural resource for alumni and for a host of nontraditional student populations, and for providing educational leadership in New York's Capital District and beyond.*

As a result of a commitment to the principles affirmed in the mission statement cited above, faculty and students are engaged in a variety of initiatives focused on collecting information about both teaching and student learning. Student work is periodically collected and used anonymously for assessment purposes. Information gathered from reviews of student work helps faculty members determine if students are learning what the curriculum is designed for, whether changes need to be made in courses or pedagogy, and what improvements need to be made in the curriculum. Assessment results are analyzed and used, therefore, to improve the Skidmore teaching and learning experience for students and faculty.

## History

Skidmore College was founded by Lucy Skidmore Scribner in 1903 as the Young Women's Industrial Club of Saratoga. The school rapidly developed into a thriving enterprise and was chartered in 1911 by the New York Board of Regents as the Skidmore School of Arts.

Scribner recruited Charles Henry Keyes, a well-known educator from Teachers College, as Skidmore's first president. In 1922 Keyes fulfilled his avowed ambition of having the school chartered as Skidmore College, a four-year degree-granting institution.

Henry T. Moore, Skidmore's second president, arrived in 1925 from the chairmanship of the Dartmouth College Psychology Department. His 32-year presidency brought Skidmore College to a position of leadership in women's education. By the time of Moore's retirement in 1957, the young college had grown to an enrollment of more than 1,100.

Val H. Wilson, formerly of Colorado Women's College, became Skidmore's third president. He concentrated on strengthening the faculty and academic programs, initiated inroads in the creation of interdepartmental offerings, and encouraged more students to enter graduate school.

With the College's growing enrollment and complexity, many of its turn-of-the-century buildings were becoming obsolete, requiring increased maintenance and renovation. During this critical time in Skidmore's history, trustee J. Erik Jonsson and his wife, Margaret, donated funds to purchase a 650-acre tract on the outskirts of Saratoga Springs. The board voted October 28, 1961, to purchase the land and begin the construction of what is now known as the Jonsson Campus.

By the time of his sudden death in 1964, Wilson saw construction begin on the Lucy Scribner Library and on the first residential and dining complex.

Joseph C. Palamountain Jr., Skidmore's fourth president, took office in 1965. Palamountain came to Skidmore from Wesleyan University, where he was provost. He guided Skidmore through a period of dynamic growth and change.

Palamountain's 22-year presidency was characterized by impressive growth in the physical, academic, and financial areas of the college. Skidmore experienced the doubling of the student body and major increases in applications, the near-doubling of the faculty, the transition from a women's college to a coeducational institution, and the creation of the first external degree program in New York state, the University Without Walls.

David H. Porter, the College's fifth president, came to Skidmore in 1987 from Carleton College, where he taught classics and music. During the Porter presidency, Skidmore launched the Honors Forum and a program of scholarships in science and mathematics. The campus landscape changed dramatically as Skidmore renovated and expanded Scribner Library, constructed an outdoor athletic complex, upgraded computer and telecommunications capabilities, built an addition to the Sports and Recreation Center (renamed the Williamson Sports Center in 2010), and expanded Dana Science Center.

In 1999 Jamiene S. Studley became Skidmore's sixth president and the first woman to hold that office. She was previously associate dean of Yale Law School and general counsel of the U.S. Department of Education. During the Studley presidency, the College adopted a new core curriculum and expanded opportunities for international study. President Studley shepherded the renovation and expansion of Case College Center, the establishment of the Intercultural Center, and the construction of the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery.

Philip A. Glotzbach was named Skidmore's seventh president in July 2003, coming to the College from the University of Redlands, where he served as vice president for academic affairs and earlier, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Under President Glotzbach's leadership, Skidmore completed major infrastructure projects, including the Northwoods Village student apartments, the renovation of Murray-Aikins Dining Hall, the 55,000 square-foot Arthur Zankel Music Center, and Sussman Village, which replaced the Scribner Village apartments. The College also launched construction of the Center for Integrated Sciences, the single largest academic project in Skidmore's history.

Glotzbach spearheaded *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2005-2015*, a strategic plan endorsed by the faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees. To help realize this plan's agenda, the College launched the ambitious *Creative Thought, Bold Promise* campaign, which exceeded its goal of \$200 million in 2010. By early 2016, a new strategic plan, *Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2015-2025*, was endorsed. Glotzbach also played an essential role in the

successful conclusion of *Creating Our Future: The Campaign for Skidmore*, which ended in December 2020 and raised \$229.4 million to top its \$200 million target.

On July 1, 2020, Marc C. Conner, an innovative leader of interdisciplinary academic programs and longtime advocate of diversity and inclusion, assumed office as Skidmore's eighth president. Conner, a widely published professor of English, formerly served as provost of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. As chief academic officer, Conner led the university in reaffirmation of its accreditation, co-chaired its strategic planning process and oversaw other major initiatives. He co-founded Washington and Lee's African American studies program in 2007 and was the program's director until 2012.

President Conner brings to Skidmore a deep understanding of changes facing higher education and a strong commitment to the liberal arts. His first year in office coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, and President Conner successfully navigated Skidmore through the many educational, logistical, financial and health-related challenges that the pandemic posed. Skidmore's campus remained open for in-person learning throughout the 2020-21 academic year, which ended with Skidmore on a strong financial footing and poised well for the future. In addition to presiding over the opening of the first phase of the Center for Integrated Sciences and the successful conclusion of the *Creating Our Future* campaign, President Conner has launched major initiatives for the College's future, including Skidmore's Racial Justice Initiative, a series of bold initiatives to ensure all members of the campus community feel welcome, represented, safe and supported.

There has been a continuity of purpose underlying the change and growth at Skidmore. The College has consistently espoused the goal of liberal education as the best means of preparing for a life of continuing personal growth and of responsible and significant service to the community. Skidmore's programs, both those in the traditional liberal arts and those of a professional nature, represent liberal education in their common pursuit of academic excellence and their concern with sensibilities, values, and qualities that distinguish educated persons.

## The Setting

A lively city combining historical charm with modern culture and a cosmopolitan atmosphere, Saratoga Springs is a popular place among Skidmore students year-round.

Ceded to the Dutch by Native Americans in 1694, the city takes its name from "Saraghtoga" ("place of swift water"). Its reputation as one of the world's leading spas grew steadily through the 19th century, as it increasingly became known as the home of the nation's oldest thoroughbred racetrack and social center for elite society.

Today Saratoga is best known as a cultural, convention, and entertainment center revolving around horse racing, outdoor recreation, classical and popular music, dance, and theater. The city is well known for its restored Victorian mansions, which attract students of art and architecture. The Saratoga Spa State Park, with its springs and mineral waters, is of more than recreational interest to biology students, and the wealth of rock formations in the region brings geologists from around the world. The city's convention facility brings conferences and exhibitions from across the state and nation.

Thanks in part to the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the city has greatly increased its offerings as an important cultural center. Located in the state park, SPAC hosts both the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra, in addition to being a venue for top rock, country

and jazz musicians. Distinguished theater companies and chamber music groups also perform in the nearby Spa Little Theater.

Saratoga Springs is also known for its downtown shops, restaurants, galleries, and coffeehouses which appeal to people of virtually all interests. Over the years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Saratoga Springs one of its "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" for the year, *Sports Illustrated* named Saratoga Race Course one of the world's top 10 sporting venues, Saratoga Springs was recognized by *American Heritage* magazine with its "Great American Place" award, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation honored the city with a "Great American Main Street" award.

The area's historical tradition includes the nearby Saratoga Battlefield, scene of the pivotal 1777 clash between the Colonial and British armies that led directly to the end of the American Revolution. Dozens of landmarks celebrate the area's role in American history. The Saratoga Historical Society and Walworth Museums, housed in the Canfield Casino in Congress Park, feature exhibits and period rooms highlighting the city's fascinating past.

## The Campus

Set in a former park of historic summer residences, Skidmore's campus encompasses more than 750 acres of wooded land at the northwest edge of Saratoga Springs. Since 1964, when ground was broken on the Jonsson Campus, more than 50 buildings have been constructed. While contemporary in style, the campus buildings honor human scale and reflect Skidmore's Victorian heritage in numerous aesthetic details.

The campus was carefully designed to provide a feeling of freedom and wide horizon. From the covered walkways uniting residential, academic, and social centers, the prevailing views are of the mountains, woods and fields, and the central campus green. An arts quad brings together music, theater, and studio art facilities with the Tang Teaching Museum. When the final two phases of the Center for Integrated Sciences is completed, it will house all of Skidmore's science programs in an innovative and interdisciplinary facility near the campus core. The very walkable campus allows students and faculty to meet often and informally.

Among the College's more recent construction projects, the Sussman Village apartments, housing 200 students, opened in 2013. These and several other campus buildings are mostly heated and entirely cooled with geothermal systems. In 2014 and 2015, a large solar-panel array and a refurbished hydropower dam were completed. Approximately 20% of campus electricity is now generated by the dam (9%) and solar field (11%). Currently, 35% of campus is geothermally heated and cooled. The completion of the Center for Integrated Sciences is projected to increase geothermal capacity to nearly 45%.

## The Faculty

Skidmore's size and its student-faculty ratio are two of the keys to creating an academic environment that fosters close associations and the exchange of ideas among faculty and students. About 2,300 full-time students bring a wide range of academic and cultural experiences to the campus, and a student-faculty ratio of 8:1 assures each student the chance for the close faculty attention that enhances the liberal arts experience.

At Skidmore, teaching is not merely the imparting of knowledge. It is the key to helping students

- develop their creative abilities, talents and values;
- enrich themselves as human beings;
- integrate scholarship and cocurricular offerings with their career goals; and
- prepare for lives of productive contribution to society and of continuous learning and inquiry.

The abilities to think and analyze clearly, to express oneself effectively through speaking and writing, to discern and value excellence, and to serve society are the hallmarks of a Skidmore education.

The members of the Skidmore faculty are well known for the range of education, research and experience they bring to the classroom. Although they are prolific in their writing, productive in their research and outstanding in their creative endeavors, their emphasis is always on teaching, on translating the richness of their experiences into meaningful learning and inspiration for their students. Skidmore's approximately 200 full-time teaching faculty represent some of the top graduate schools in the nation and the world.

Beyond their academic interests, Skidmore's faculty are known for taking a personal interest in their students, offering the added words of encouragement, the extra time outside the classroom or the open mind for questions - all of which contribute to the incentive a student may need. These attitudes have helped create a campus renowned for its warmth and sense of community.

## The Academic Program

As a highly selective liberal arts college, Skidmore is firmly committed to providing men and women with a superior grounding in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Skidmore students also have the opportunity to pursue career-specific fields such as business, education, exercise science, and social work. This blend of the theoretical and the practical makes Skidmore uniquely responsive to individual student needs as well as to the needs of the increasingly interdependent world in which we live. A core belief at Skidmore is that every life, every endeavor, every career is made more profound with creative ability as a foundation, and creative thinking as an integral part of the campus culture.

The Skidmore curriculum provides a creative intellectual foundation for every student, beginning with the First-Year Experience, a combination of small seminars and related cocurricular activities that also feature faculty and peer mentoring. Regardless of their choice of major, students pursue connections among an unusually wide range of disciplinary perspectives and embark on their careers well prepared to take full advantage of the diversity of opportunities they will encounter in the complex modern world. As practiced at Skidmore College, the liberal arts produce a transformational educational experience and promote lifelong learning.

Skidmore offers more than 50 degree programs, including majors in both traditional liberal arts disciplines and preprofessional areas. The curriculum's flexibility allows students to major in one field and minor in another (an English major with a business minor, for example), pursue an interdepartmental major combining two disciplines, or design a self-determined major.

Facility with contemporary digital technologies and with the retrieval and interpretation of information is fostered through a series of courses that incorporate computer resources in the learning process and through special workshops.

The internship program complements this flexibility through exploratory and preprofessional learning opportunities off campus. Students are encouraged to test their skills through internships in science, government, industry, communications, and nonprofit organizations at the local, state, and national levels. Many students intern with alumni, who are generous with their time and support of the internship program. In addition, a growing number of courses across the disciplines include a service-learning component in which classwork and assignments are integrated with hands-on activities that benefit the Saratoga community. Honors Forum members are required to participate in service learning.

Beyond the Skidmore campus, students may take advantage of courses offered at other Capital District colleges through the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities, which includes such institutions as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Union College, and the State University of New York at Albany. Cooperative programs include one in engineering with the Thayer School at Dartmouth College and one in nursing at New York University.

The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges organizes a wide range of opportunities for students and faculty. The office provides administrative oversight for Skidmore's programs in England, France, New Zealand, Spain, a variety of faculty-led travel seminars, and domestic programs such as the Skidmore Exchange with Spelman College.

The College operates under a semester calendar with 15-week fall and spring semesters. Skidmore's summer program includes two five-week academic sessions and other study options.