



DIRECTOR, BLACK STUDIES Position Profile

Skidmore College invites nominations and applications for the inaugural position of Director of the Black Studies Program, which includes the administration of an academic minor. Possessing a track record of excellence in teaching and research and the capacity to design and implement interdisciplinary programs, the Director will be a bold, entrepreneurial, intellectual, and collaborative leader in helping to guide the institution's highest aspirations of inclusivity and excellence.

The Black Studies Program

The emergent Black Studies Program at Skidmore College seeks to create and maintain spaces for intellectual exchange among students, staff, and faculty for the purpose of bringing knowledge of past and present to bear on discussions of the welfare of Black communities as we imagine new futures.

Since the Civil Rights struggle in the 1960s, the discipline of Black Studies has been a key contributor to national conversations on race and the status of African Americans. Skidmore's Black Studies Program will build on that tradition, seeking to deepen appreciation for and understanding of the lives, communities, and cultures of the African diaspora, linking Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas. To this end, the Program will build upon the College's strengths in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, while recognizing that Black Studies is an intellectual tradition with theories and methods that are uniquely suited to the study of Black lives. Black Studies is inward and outward looking, illuminating the beauty and complexities of Black experiences.

The Program will engage in close examination of Black triumphs and travails in ways that implicate the histories, politics, literatures, religions, philosophies, arts, and musical traditions of African and African-descended peoples. It will interrogate systems of power, justice, struggle, and liberation, while paying special attention to traditions of Black survival and innovation. The Program will deliver all of this through courses and co-curricular programming centered in Black Studies and spanning into numerous other departments and disciplines—leaving our community inspired and equipped to think and act creatively in service of Black lives in the 21st century.

Rationale

The creation of a Black Studies Program represents a significant step toward the fulfillment of priorities articulated in the College's most recent *Strategic Plan: [Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2015-2025](#)*. Specifically, the interdisciplinary nature of Black

Studies aligns well with Goal I of the *Strategic Plan*, which highlights the importance of integrative learning. As proposed, the Black Studies minor will focus on “the lives, communities, and cultures of the African diaspora, linking Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas” (*Black Studies Mission Statement*). Educating students about historical and contemporary Black experiences, as well as the connection with the Black diaspora and the possibilities for the future, connects to our larger strategic priorities for student learning and development. Specifically, the creation of a Black Studies Program will help Skidmore realize the goals of the new General Education curriculum, especially with respect to the Bridge Experience on Power and Justice, Global and Cultural Perspectives, and Humanistic Inquiry. Finally, in introducing the Black Studies Program, we are filling an important gap between our curricula and our ideals, a gap that prevents us from reaching our highest aspirations of inclusivity and excellence.

Skidmore College

Skidmore is a highly selective, nationally ranked liberal arts college, currently enrolling approximately 2,500 students from diverse backgrounds and experiences; the student population includes 24% domestic students of color and 13% international students from 46 different countries. The College’s principal mission is the education of predominantly full-time undergraduates in roughly 40 degree programs, including programs in both traditional liberal arts and pre-professional disciplines.

Skidmore’s 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 learn. In keeping with the College’s founding principle of linking theoretical with applied learning – and its more recent expression, “Creative Thought Matters” – the Skidmore curriculum balances a commitment to the liberal arts with an emphasis on integrated learning and interdisciplinarity, along with preparation for professions, civic leadership, and personal fulfillment.

Skidmore is currently ranked 41st nationally among prestigious liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News & World Report*, with highlights including its Number 12 ranking in the category of strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and its overall ranking as 29th by high school guidance counselors. The College has received a wide variety of accolades from media sources including *College Choice*, *Kiplinger’s*, *Money*, and *Forbes*. It is also ranked regularly among the top colleges for the quality of its student residences, dining quality, and attractive campus. Featured in *Newsweek* (2010) as one of “America’s 25 new elite ‘Ivies,’” the College enjoys tremendous momentum. The College is an active member of the New York Six Consortium (NY6), which also includes Colgate, Hamilton, Hobart and William Smith, St. Lawrence, and Union. Members of the NY6 collaborate on academic initiatives, cost-reduction measures, and many other areas of common interest.

The history of Skidmore reflects a tradition of dynamic leadership, high aspiration, and corresponding achievement. Founded in 1903 by Lucy Skidmore Scribner as the Young Women’s Industrial Club of Saratoga to provide a practical education for women that would also be infused with the liberal arts, the school rapidly developed into a thriving enterprise: it was chartered in

1911 by the New York Board of Regents as the Skidmore School of Arts and then in 1922 as Skidmore College. In 1971, Skidmore became one of the first women's colleges to make a successful conversion to coeducation.

Skidmore's campus is located in the suburban setting of Saratoga Springs, New York. The College's campus encompasses more than 750 acres of wooded land a short walk from a thriving downtown. Among the College's more recent construction projects are the new Arthur Zankel Music Center, which opened in 2010; and the Frances Young Tang '62 Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, which opened in 2000. The College also has committed significant resources to student housing; the completion of the Northwoods Apartments in 2006 and replacement of the Scribner Village apartment complex, with Sussman Village completed in 2013, enhance the College's outstanding residential facilities, allowing approximately 90% of Skidmore students to live on campus. These residences, as well as several other newly constructed and renovated buildings, reflect the College's commitment to sustainability by utilizing geothermal heating and cooling systems.

The Lucy Scribner Library's 2012 renovation added seats, study carrels, and new group study rooms. Additionally, the department of Information Technology was relocated to the Library, along with the College Writing Center, the newly created John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS) Documentary Studies lab, and the Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning. The College also has invested in its athletic facilities and has recently completed a new Athletic Facilities Master Plan.

Saratoga Springs is a half-hour drive from the tri-city area of Albany, Schenectady, and Troy, and a three-hour drive from New York City, Boston, and Montreal. The Adirondacks, Berkshires, and Green Mountains are in easy driving distance. The College is closely aligned with the city in which it is located. A ten-minute walk from Skidmore puts one in the heart of galleries, clubs, boutiques, and restaurants. The city is also known for its famed mineral waters, a historically significant Revolutionary War battlefield, and the nation's oldest thoroughbred racetrack. Among many other cultural venues at Skidmore and around the region, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center serves as the summer home to the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra and as a venue for top rock and jazz performances.

Institutional Philosophy

Skidmore is deeply committed to the first principle of liberal education—the importance of educating the mind to liberate the soul. The College's goal is to educate students who will contribute meaningfully to the world and who understand the importance of intellectual humility, responsible citizenship, and inclusive excellence.

Creative Thought Matters: every life, every career, every profession, is made more profound with creative ability at its core. At Skidmore, the theme of creativity carries throughout and across all disciplines. The goal is to encourage creativity in every area of the Skidmore curriculum, where it matters just as much in chemistry or government or business and management as it does in theatre or dance or the visual arts.

Goal III of the *Strategic Plan* focuses on well-being and states that “we will create new opportunities for developing the skills that will make Skidmore a more healthful, inclusive, and creative community.” Current inclusion efforts center on: strengthening our curricular offerings; continuing the focus on the recruitment, retention, and quality of the experience of students, staff, faculty, and alumni of color; and assessing current diversity training efforts for students, staff, and faculty.

College-wide leadership on diversity, equity, and inclusion is provided through a Chief Diversity Officer who resides in the Office of the President, the shared governance (students, staff, faculty, and administrators) Committee on Intercultural Global and Understanding (CIGU), and the Inclusion Liaisons (representatives from each of the College’s divisions).

Skidmore’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is also evident in recent institutional decisions, including: the hiring of a Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity in 2015, broadening our curriculum, approving the ability to hire faculty with tenure, the designation of central campus space for a forthcoming Social Justice Center, increased focus on the recruitment of Black students, and the launch of Black Studies.

Skidmore College is committed to fostering an inclusive campus community and, as an Equal Opportunity Employer, does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, military or veteran status, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, predisposition or carrier status, domestic violence victim status, familial status or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

The Curriculum

The Skidmore curriculum provides a creative intellectual foundation for every student to live a life of professional success, civic responsibility, and personal fulfillment. Specifically, the College is firmly committed to providing its students with a superior grounding in the arts, humanities, physical and life sciences, and social sciences, along with the opportunity to pursue career-specific fields such as management and business, education, health and human physiological sciences, and social work. The cross-disciplinary, highly sophisticated environment of the College, coupled with skilled faculty guidance, results in a transformational educational experience that promotes a lifelong commitment to learning. Students pursue connections among an unusually wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, embarking on their careers well prepared to take full advantage of the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in the complex modern world.

The members of the Skidmore faculty are well known for the quality of education, research, and experience they bring to the classroom. Skidmore faculty have earned national and international recognition including Guggenheim, MacArthur, Pulitzer, and Emmy awards, and major fellowships and grants from Fulbright, Getty, NEH, NIH, NSF, and the Andy Warhol Foundation. Though they are accomplished scholars and artists, their emphasis is always on teaching, on translating the richness of their disciplinary and professional experiences into meaningful

learning and inspiring their students. Approximately 313 full-time faculty members afford an 8:1 student-faculty ratio on campus. Skidmore's faculty represents many of the top graduate schools in the nation and the world. Over 97 percent of Skidmore's tenured and tenure-track faculty members hold the Ph.D. or the terminal degree in their field. The annual teaching load is five courses or equivalent.

With more than 40 majors and approximately 40 minors, the flexibility of Skidmore's curriculum allows students to major and minor in multiple fields, pursue an interdepartmental major combining two disciplines, design self-determined majors, and include extensive off-campus learning opportunities as part of their degree programs. Students are encouraged to test their interests and develop their skills through credit- and non-credit-bearing internships across the curriculum coordinated through the Career Development Center. The Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges organizes a wide range of opportunities abroad for students and faculty members in many regions of the world, and approximately 60% of students study abroad during their Skidmore career. Students also may take advantage of various joint programs in business administration, engineering, and health and allied health.

In accordance with our Strategic priorities, Skidmore remains committed to expanding and refining curricular offerings and programs that support the study of racial and other social identity categories from a national and global lens. For instance, Skidmore's Latin American Studies program was recently expanded to include Latinx Studies. In addition, we anticipate that the Black Studies Program will find opportunities for fruitful collaboration with our signature Intergroup Relations minor, which trains students to facilitate dialogues on race. There are additional opportunities for synergistic collaborations with our American Studies and Gender Studies Programs, as well as with Asian Studies and International Affairs.

The Lucy Scribner Library cultivates rich local primary and secondary collections and puts a world of resources into the hands of our students and faculty through a statewide consortium, interlibrary loan, open access publishing, and other resource sharing initiatives.

The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery invites curiosity and collaborative learning through active engagement with ideas, artworks, and exhibitions. Programming tailored to foster formative connections between contemporary art and students of all ages is central. Critical to this end are direct experiential opportunities for Skidmore students to participate actively in integral aspects of innovative museum practice that involve both the Skidmore and broader communities.

Skidmore students engage in a multitude of co-curricular activities, including a competitive NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletics program. There are more than 110 student clubs and organizations. The Skidmore campus is active year-round and sponsors many public events, which are particularly popular in the summer, including the nationally recognized New York State Summer Writers Institute, the Skidmore Jazz Institute, the Storytellers' Institute, and residencies of major dance companies. The College's Summer Programs draw diverse participants and audiences throughout the season and add significantly to the cultural and arts offerings of the

region. Beyond the campus, the quarterly journal of the humanities and social sciences *Salmagundi* represents Skidmore within the arena of influential public debate and the arts.

President

Dr. Philip A. Glotzbach became the seventh President of Skidmore in 2003. A philosopher, academic administrator, and spokesperson on issues of higher education, he joined the College following eleven years at the University of Redlands in southern California and fifteen years on the faculty of Denison University. President Glotzbach is a leader on the issue of science literacy within a liberal arts education and is leading the charge at Skidmore for exciting new initiatives in science education. He also has lectured on effective academic administration and the deep connection between liberal education and responsible citizenship.

During President Glotzbach's tenure, the College has added new academic programs, instituted a new first-year experience, greatly increased both the academic strength and diversity of the student body, significantly enhanced the College's commitment to financial aid, and opened a number of impressive new facilities that have increased the vitality of the College's living-learning environment. In addition, Skidmore has made major strides in sustainability, including significant investments in geothermal heating and cooling and solar energy. Throughout this time, President Glotzbach has placed major emphasis on building and sustaining a campus educational community based on respect and a commitment to inclusive excellence. This work has been guided by the past strategic plan *Engaged Liberal Learning: The Plan for Skidmore 2005-2015* and the current one, *Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2015-2025*, which focuses on completing the building of the Center for Integrated Sciences (CIS) and more fully integrating the curriculum, among other alignment objectives.

Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Following a national search to fill this critical leadership position in 2018, Michael T. Orr was named Skidmore's next Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dean Orr brings to Skidmore extensive experience as an administrator and academic leader, having served as the Krebs Provost and Dean of the Faculty at Lake Forest College, IL, for the past seven years. During his tenure, he led a number of initiatives, including completing the current strategic plan, revising the general education curriculum, coordinating the planning for a \$43 million expansion and renovation of science facilities, and helping to launch an African American Studies major.

A scholar of late medieval English illuminated manuscripts, Dean Orr earned his bachelor's degree in art history at University College London, UK, and his master's and doctoral degrees in art history at Cornell University. He is co-author of three volumes in the Harvey Miller series *An Index of Images in English Manuscripts from the Time of Chaucer to Henry VIII, c. 1380–c. 1509* and has published a range of other articles and book chapters on English medieval art.

Finances

Over the past fifteen years, the College also has seen increasing student enrollments, rising donor support, steadily increasing net assets, and balanced operating budgets. Investment in the College's physical plant and infrastructure has exceeded \$200 million. In May 2018, the College

broke ground for the first phase of a new Center for Integrated Sciences, projected to cost approximately \$150 million when complete. The College recently issued \$35 million in bonds to help finance this project. The first phase of new construction – the North Wing – is anticipated to cost approximately \$67 million. The Center for Integrated Sciences, which will be Skidmore’s largest capital project since the College relocated to the current campus, will represent Skidmore’s commitment to the STEM fields and the importance of science in a liberal education. In recent years, the College has made significant investments in its academic programs and particularly in faculty lines. The College’s institutional debt totals approximately \$100 million, and the endowment market value is approximately \$380 million, with an annual operating budget of approximately \$200 million and a capital budget of \$9 million for the upcoming fiscal year. The College has earned an A-1 rating from Moody’s Investors Service with a “stable” outlook.

Governance

Skidmore College is overseen by its 35-member Board of Trustees. In addition to the President of the College, designated members include the President of the Alumni Association, other alumni representatives, parents, and friends of the College. Skidmore is committed to the principle of shared governance, which encompasses faculty, staff, students, and trustees. The rights and responsibilities of the faculty, along with descriptions of the role of faculty, student, and all-College governance, are set forth in the *Faculty Handbook* and *Student Handbook*. The central deliberative body for all-College governance is the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC), a group chaired by the President, with a faculty member as vice-chair. Membership includes cabinet members, faculty, staff, and students. The IPPC advises the President with regard to strategic planning and policy matters, taking into account a comprehensive view of significant issues affecting the College. Reflecting the importance of shared governance, decisions requiring a vote of the faculty are considered at the monthly Faculty Meeting, which is typically well-attended and rich with robust conversation.

The Position

Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the inaugural Black Studies Director will be responsible for providing vision and oversight for the Black Studies Program, including an academic minor and the development of its curriculum. Working collaboratively with other faculty at the College, the Director will oversee the growth and strategic direction of this institutionally important area for Skidmore, helping the program to achieve its potential as a premier model for interdisciplinary education in a liberal arts setting.

The successful candidate will have a distinguished scholarly record, demonstrated excellence in teaching and research, and will be an established leader within the field of Black Studies. The appointment will be at the faculty rank of Associate or Professor with tenure.

The Director will work in collaboration with an advisory committee of faculty and be assisted by a part-time administrative assistant.

Primary Responsibilities

Administration

- Leading efforts to institutionalize, assess, and expand the Black Studies Program and minor.
- Managing the administrative tasks associated with the Program.
- Providing support and mentorship to Black Studies faculty/staff as well as advisees and students.

Teaching

- The position carries a 50% teaching load, typically 2-1 (equivalent to 9 credit hours per academic year). Primary teaching responsibilities will be with Black Studies. The candidate will likely also have the opportunity to teach courses affiliated with other departments and/or programs on campus.

Scholarly Engagement

- Scholarly area within Black Studies is open; the successful candidate is expected to remain engaged in the scholarly life of their field(s) of expertise.

Desired Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate will be an approachable and collaborative leader able to forge a vision for Black Studies and its role within the College. The individual will be a creative and nimble leader with a problem-solving mindset and the soul of a teacher.

Qualifications include a strong and demonstrated commitment to the principles and values of a liberal arts education and a record that demonstrates skills as a leader, program-builder, and effective communicator, working with a culturally and socially diverse range of students, staff, and faculty.

The Director of Black Studies can expect to find interdisciplinary synergies with the Intergroup Relations (IGR) program, the first established minor in the U.S. that trains students to facilitate race-related dialogues. Additional opportunities for collaboration may be found with Latin American and Latinx Studies, American Studies, Gender Studies, Asian Studies, and International Affairs. The Director may also wish to partner with the Office of Student Diversity Programs, the Black Faculty & Staff Group, and/or the people of color and international faculty/staff affinity group.

Other qualifications and characteristics include:

- A PhD or a terminal degree;
- Tenured appointment at the rank of Associate or Professor;
- Excellence in teaching and mentoring;
- A proven record of active scholarly engagement in Black Studies as well as the candidate's other field(s) of expertise; and
- Effective organizational and administrative skills.

Nominees and Applications

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and contact information for three references. References will not be contacted without the approval of the candidates. In the letter of interest, applicants should include information about how they will effectively engage with issues of diversity in the classroom, on campus, and in the broader community.

Nominations, applications, and expressions of interest should be directed to:

Steve Leo, Partner
Matthew Bunting, Managing Associate
Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates, LP
SkidmoreBlackStudies@storbecksearch.com

For more information about Skidmore College and its programs, please visit: www.skidmore.edu

Employment at Skidmore College is contingent upon an acceptable background check result.