

THE CREATIVITY IMPERATIVE

The Strategic Plan charts a path forward for the college, supported by institutional energy and support from the arts college and it takes seriously the need for certain foundational knowledge to adapt to changing circumstances and impact the world. Those skills are emphasized in education. Indeed, what we hope is inquiry, to identify and challenge present one's views effectively and modes of knowing, to develop exploration of/exposed one's side be

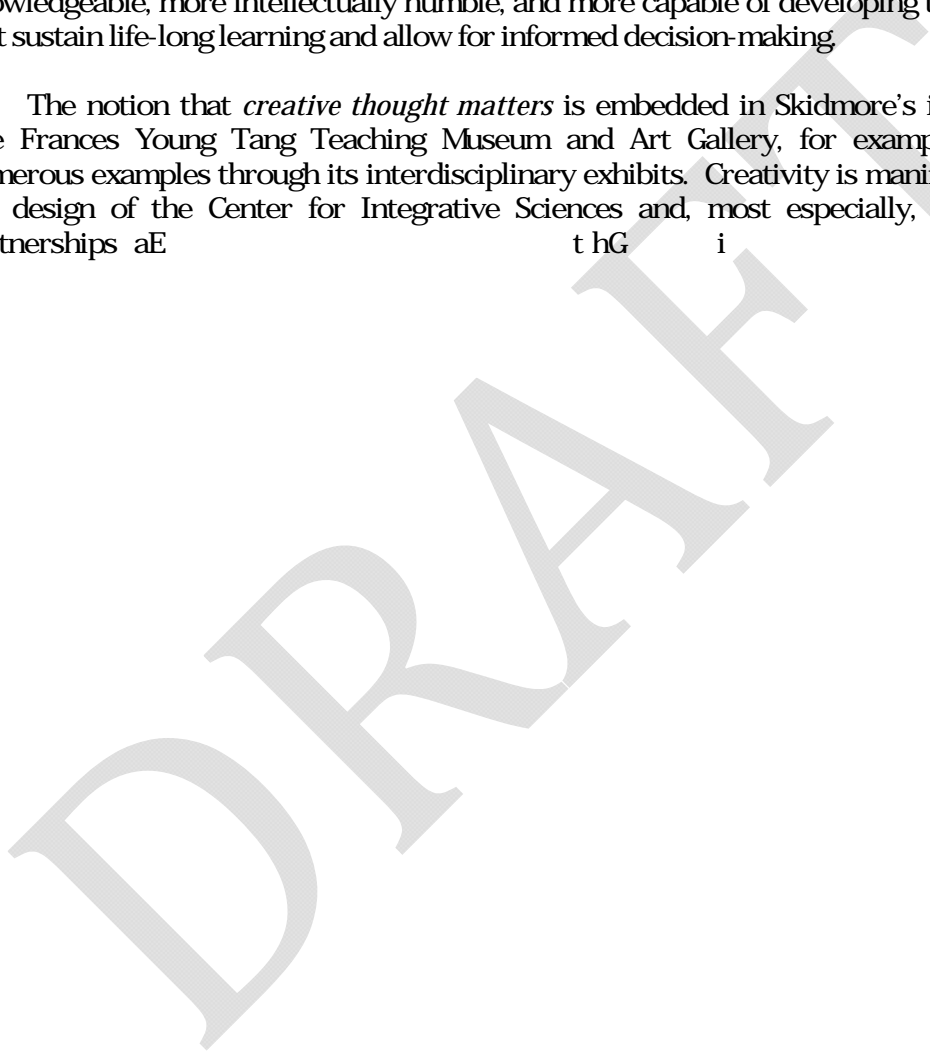
Our Institutional Imperative: Creativity

We define *creativity* as the capacity to deploy imagination and originality in posing questions, investigating ideas, identifying problems, and inventing solutions. This conception is at once inspirational and utilitarian, combining both pragmatism and hope. It entails envisioning new possibilities and then mapping a path to realize them. The assertion that *Creative Thought Matters* encompasses both these dimensions – declaring not only that creative thought is important but also that ideas, if they are to “count,” must be made material and have an effect in the world. Creativity is linked inescapably with the independence of mind required to formulate a new approach to a particular problem or to reimagine an entire domain of knowledge. It is equally important to help our students see that creativity involves discipline, persistence, improvisation, and the ability to draw collaboratively upon the wisdom of the past

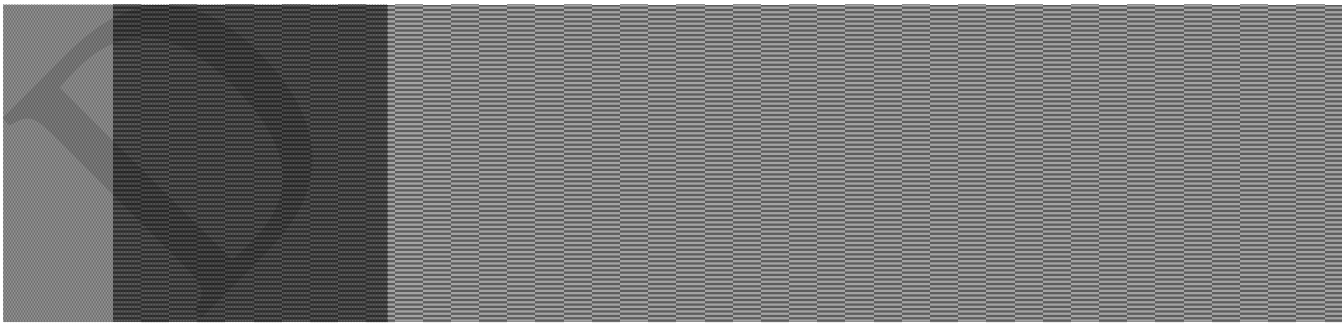
GOAL I: TO DEVELOP OUR STUDENTS’ CAPACITIES TO CREATE, IMAGINE, AND AFFECT THE WORLD: *WE WILL INVEST IN PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES THAT DEVELOP OUR STUDENTS’ CAPACITIES TO ACHIEVE AND DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENCE AS ENGAGED, CREATIVE, AND INTEGRATIVE LEARNERS.*

As we embark on the next decade of Skidmore’s journey, we steadfastly continue to believe in the intellectually rigorous and transformative potential of a Skidmore education. We are committed to creating a distinctive educational environment in which students encounter varying ways of thinking and knowing, and novel ways of relating to one another and to the world. If we are successful, students will emerge from their Skidmore experience more knowledgeable, more intellectually humble, and more capable of developing the habits of mind that sustain life-long learning and allow for informed decision-making.

The notion that *creative thought matters* is embedded in Skidmore’s institutional DNA. The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, for example, has provided numerous examples through its interdisciplinary exhibits. Creativity is manifested throughout the design of the Center for Integrative Sciences and, most especially, in the curricular partnerships aE t hG i p h a hi h



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decision-making processes themselves. Visibly modeling how to make such institutional decisions will demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and complex considerations necessary for making enlightened decisions and help promote more sustainability-oriented behavior in people's lives, most especially our students' lives. In other words, we have a significant opportunity to leverage our efforts to create a deep living and learning environment around sustainability on campus; the changes we – students, staff, faculty, administrators, and alumni – help make on our campus will be carried forward to the various communities in which we live.

Sustainability-related efforts already permeate the curriculum as well, and, as we have already experienced, there is a rich feedback loop inherent in our sustainability work. Often ideas that are developed in our sustainability-related courses feed changes to our campus operations, and modifications to our campus often serve as case studies and research opportunities for our courses, hence fostering curricular and pedagogical innovation. It should come as no surprise that the lines between student experiences related to sustainability—

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⁴ AAC&U definition. See also “Interrogating Integrative Learning” in *Peer Review*, vol. 16, no. 4 (Fall 2014-Winter 2015).

⁵ See, for example, Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) and *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁶ As part of our Creative Community Conversations, we will also create opportunities for members of our community. b Q b

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