

S K I D M O R E

SCOPE

AN ANNUAL SHOWCASE OF SKIDMORE COLLEGE AND PROGRAMS 2016

Crafting the new economy

Alumni innovate social and commercial enterprises in art, science, and more. **PAGE 28**



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New documentary studies connect students of every major and faculty from every field with storytelling in every medium

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With LED grow-lights and electronic controls, Dan Marino '06 helps update "container gardening" for the space age.



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From the editor

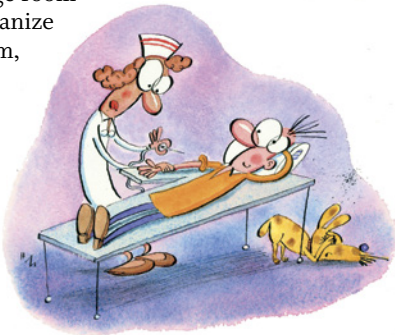
Skidmore has reach. A lifeguard at the Saratoga Y helps host and mentor a few Skidmore international students, taking them shopping, asking about their academic work, and crying at their graduations. For her, these interactions—including “welcoming Muslims at our dinner table”—greatly enrich her own family’s life. For the students, she’s somebody in town whom they can laughingly, lovingly call “mom.”

Once each semester Skidmore’s Williamson Sports Center gives over a large room to a Red Cross blood drive. There’s always a Skidmore professor willing to organize these community efforts, where, lying on their backs with an outstretched arm, a librarian may be chatting with a biochemist next to a groundskeeper talking with a business major.

When the campus Wellness Center invites therapy dogs during final-exam study week, my big poodle and I join the campus post-office director and her Newfoundland, an English professor with her shepherd, an Albany resident and his retriever mix, and another dozen dogs and humans of every stripe. Students flock to these pat-pat sessions for lots of hands-on joy and relaxation.

The Skidmore experience depends on such synergies, and this annual *Scope* is just one more: a sharing of Skidmore news and ideas with community members who are now off campus. Along with a year in review, we highlight the new documentary studies initiative, portraits of alums in “the new economy,” and some alumni-and-student connections. There’s even a link to class notes, at right.

We hope these pages remind you what a vibrant community you belong to. We’re glad you’re part of it.



CLASS NOTES



A fresh batch of alumni news, from travels to jobs to new babies, can be viewed now on the class notes site at alumni.skidmore.edu/classnotes

SKIDMORE
COLLEGE

SCOPE 2 0 1 6

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About the cover:
Helena Sanders '05 founded a new-media art series in one of the hottest new-media art centers on the planet: Amsterdam. Photo by Jeroen Boum. *See page 30.*

YEAR IN REVIEW 2016

SCIENCE PROJECT

Over the past several years at Skidmore, research funding quadrupled and the number of students applying to med schools or other health programs tripled. President Philip Glotzbach has asserted, "Our intensely interdisciplinary, relentlessly creative approach offers not simply a welcome but a necessary contribution to our national conversations" on science-related issues from climate to health care to energy.

Given such growth in Skidmore's needs and capabilities, this year the administration and board have assigned top priority to realizing the planned Center for Integrated Sciences. The goal is to raise, redirect, and husband enough funding to break ground for the facility as soon as possible.

In the fall a campus Science Summit brought alumni experts in technology and science to discuss not only their fast-paced fields but how they may affect crucial world issues and industries. And this summer, extensive geothermal drilling around Dana Science Center has prepared the new CIS's heating and cooling system.

Center for Integrated Sciences **FACTS**



200,000 total square feet | **15** class/meeting rooms

90 faculty offices | **69** teaching and research labs

27 technology/instrument rooms | **41** project and prep spaces | **1** idea lab

\$90 million in construction

\$27 million in fees, furnishing, etc.

\$117 million total project cost

(August 2016 estimates)

Saada Mohammed Legesse '15



WET LAB
Zebra-fish eggs are used at Skidmore for biochemistry research into fetal alcohol syndrome.



● Pine Cottage



● Waring House



● Eissner House



● Surrey-Williamson Inn



● Colton Alumni Welcome Center



● Scribner House

Google

ON BROADWAY

Skidmore is embracing its Broadway address lately. Not only is the Surrey-Williamson Inn being thoroughly renovated, but the admissions office now occupies Waring House, communications and marketing is slated to move into Eissner House (the former admissions center), and special programs will move into the recently acquired Pine Cottage. They join Broadway's Colton Alumni Welcome Center, which opened in 1995, as well as Scribner House, the residence of founder Lucy Skidmore Scribner and now the home to Skidmore presidents.



COMING TOGETHER
helps students and others
cope with loss and grief in
the campus community.

FRIENDS IN NEED

The strength of the Skidmore community was tested and confirmed by three tragedies.

On Halloween night, three freshmen walking on Clinton Street were struck by a car; Toby Freeman and Oban Galbraith were seriously injured, and Michael Hedges died. Other students at the scene were greatly upset and distressed.

Students of all classes mourned the loss, the administration extended counseling services, deans consoled parents, and a busload of Hedges's high-school friends came to join a candlelight vigil that overflowed the Zankel Center's Ladd Concert Hall. A classmate remembered him as "the most selfless person," adding, "If anybody else was in a bad mood, he'd give them a smile or a joke." His first-year seminar professor said, "His presence in class was uplifting."

At the vigil, President Philip Glotzbach said, "We come together to share our sorrow but also to do what genuine communities do: to care for and support one another in our difficult hour." The *Skidmore News* wrote, "At such a small school, we all feel a sense of solidarity. . . . In times of unthinkable tragedy like this, it is that sense of solidarity and community at Skidmore that can be so valuable."

Over spring break, another freshman, Will Golden, died in an accidental fall while visiting friends in Delaware. At his campus service, Skidmore's spiritual-life

director Parker Diggory pointed out the Skidmore colors worn by many, especially Golden's hockey teammates. Golden was described as "a fun-loving friend," "a supportive teammate," and "a personality as bright as his surname." His hockey coach called him "incredibly coachable, just a positive presence to have in the locker room." Nigel Smith '19, president of the first-year class, added, "Tonight I urge you to make your hugs a bit tighter, your handshakes a bit firmer, and your smiles a bit brighter."

Just a few days later, another sudden loss: the death of President Emeritus David Porter. He was president from 1987 to 1999 and remained a productive scholar and a lively presence on campus, teaching classics courses and expanding the minds of each new freshman class with his signature lecture and music demonstration "The Well-Tempered Clavier." Porter's campus memorial service brought together family members, Skidmore faculty and staff past and present, Skidmore alumni, Saratogians, and others. For weeks, warm wishes—and gifts to the Porter Scholarship fund—flooded in from alumni and others across the nation.

In citing Porter's "deep and personal bond with Skidmore's students, faculty, and alumni," President Glotzbach was also underscoring a more universal truth about Skidmore and its relationships.



DAVID PORTER
— president and professor, musician and scholar, mentor and punster—helped shape the Skidmore experience for students, faculty, and staff over three decades.

The new Class of 2020

Applications:

 **9,181**

Selectivity: **29%**

Enrolled:

719  **59%**  **41%**

40% 

Getting Skidmore financial aid



1230/1860

SAT median scores



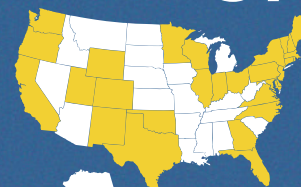
International students:

11%

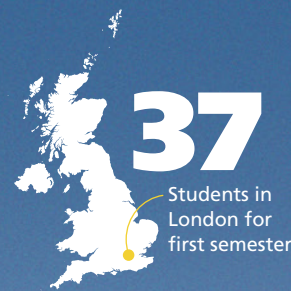
54 Foreign countries represented

- Aaland Islands
- Angola
- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Burundi
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- El Salvador
- Eritrea
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece
- Guinea
- Hong Kong, CN People Republic
- Hungary Republic
- India
- Indonesia
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Madagascar
- Mexico
- Mozambique
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Oman
- Philippines
- Poland
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Spain
- Swaziland
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Taiwan
- Turkey
- Uganda
- United Kingdom

States represented: **31**



Domestic students of color: **24%**



Languages spoken at home: **30**



CIVICS, ON CAMPUS AND OFF

Skidmore grappled with some social issues that have been challenging society at large.

Building on last year's racial-justice activism sparked by police shootings, the campus community engaged with legal scholar Charles Ogletree (Skidmore's 2015 Fiscus Lecturer in Constitutional Law) and with Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza. Ogletree directs Harvard's Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice and has been honored by the National Bar Association, the Museum of Afro-American History in Boston, and others. Garza, the keynoter for a New York 6 college-consortium meeting at Skidmore, is a director at the National Domestic Workers Alliance and remains active in the Black Lives Matter movement.

President Philip Glotzbach joined students and others in a weekday "walk-out," as part of protests across the country demanding improved race relations and inclusivity on campuses. Race was also on the agenda in some Skidmore committees, including consideration of a student petition for more faculty diversity, more diversity training, and other measures.

Skidmore's Wellness Center reopened as an expanded incarnation of the Center for Sex and Gender Relations, which began in 2001. The Health Promotion Office continues to lead the training of students as peer health educators, and now, along with its sexuality lending library, condoms, pregnancy tests, and other supplies, the center offers resources related to nutrition, alcohol and drugs, stress, and other wellness issues.

Also, as part of Skidmore's work to prevent and address sexual misconduct, this year a staff member from Wellspring, Saratoga's sexual-violence resource center, was available on campus three days a week. The college also created a full-time position for Title IX compliance, and new hires have been made in student diversity programs.

Another guest speaker was media scholar Sut Jhally, director of the documentary *Tough Guise: Media, Violence & Masculinity*. Using footage from the likes of Marlon Brando and James Caan to Dylan Klebold and Tupac Shakur, it shows how dominance and violence often help define manhood and explores how males can live outside those definitions.

Student calls for improved mental-health services, reflecting a national movement on campuses, led Skidmore to expanded Counseling Center hours and offerings.

Hunger, climate change, and other hot topics kept the campus buzzing with talk, learning, and action.



ADVOCACY

In the spirit of activism around the country (like this rally), Skidmore engaged with social issues from racial justice to gender equity.



TOUGH GUISE
filmmaker and media scholar Sut Jhally explores images and perceptions of masculinity and other social constructs.





Being a Sport

➤ BIG AND GREEN: From Big Green Scream and Fill the Rink events to alumni-vs-student matches at team reunions, the Thoroughbreds rallied the campus community indoors and out.



Anna Sand '16

Sports equipment: Shutterstock; Wachenheim Field: Vickie Riley; Food pantry: Jem Plourde



SCORECARD ▶



FIELD OF GLORY: After a summer of excavation for drainage upgrades, the Wachenheim Field playing surface is all-new and ready for another season.



AMBASSADORS: All Thoroughbreds engaged in community service, from food-pantry help by the baseball team (above) to cancer-research fundraising to coaching youngsters.



BRAINS AND BRAWN: Out of 363 student-athletes, 38% were in the Thoroughbred Society, honoring those earning grade-point averages of 3.67 (B+) or better.

National nods

Skidmore athletes have won a range of All-America citations. Last year the honors went to eight players in five sports.

All-America honors went to new grads Dani DeGregory '16 (twice! in softball and in field hockey), Nick Tong '16 (tennis), and Jenn Hanks '16 (field hockey) and current athletes Madeline Benn '17 (tennis), Kelly Donnelly '18 (basketball), Kai Yuen Leung '17 (tennis), Rachel Talanian '17 (lacrosse), and Michelle Fuca '18 (tennis).



DANI DEGREGORY '16
Softball and
Field Hockey
Greenwich, N.Y.



NICK TONG '16
Tennis
Rancho Palos
Verdes, Calif.



JENN HANKS '16
Field Hockey
Schenectady, N.Y.

KELLY DONNELLY
Junior
Basketball
Wynantskill, N.Y.

KAI YUEN LEUNG
Senior
Tennis
Hong Kong

MADELEINE BENN
Senior
Tennis
Miami, Fla.

RACHEL TALANIAN
Senior
Lacrosse
Norwell, Mass.

MICHELLE FUCA
Junior
Tennis
Manchester, Mass.

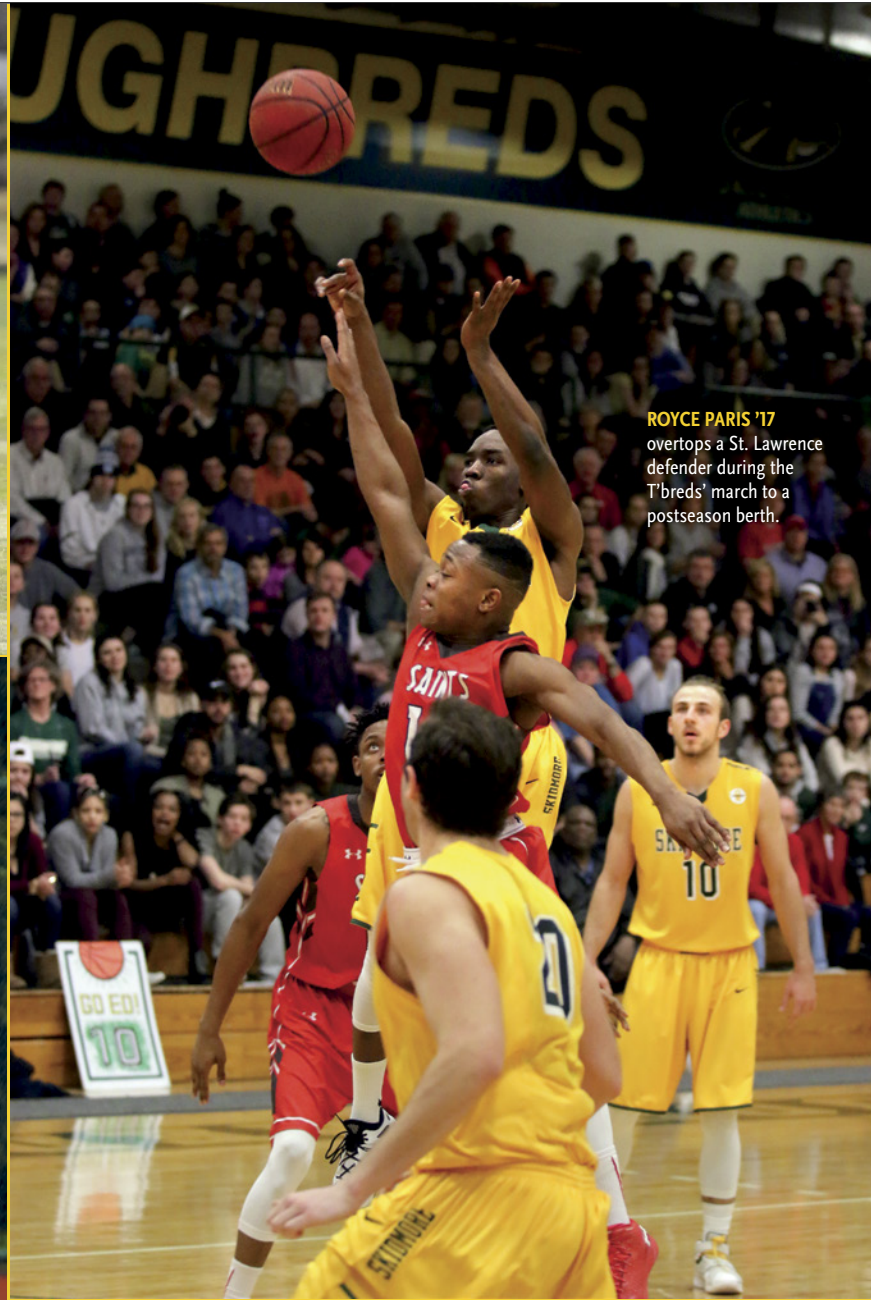




CHARLIE GOLDBERG '18 shows the finesse that got his team into national competition.



ERICA MENO '18 helps lead the women's tennis team into divisionwide play.



ROYCE PARIS '17 overtops a St. Lawrence defender during the 'T'breds' march to a postseason berth.



TED BERKOWITZ '18 contributes to his team's postseason successes.

Champions

Of Skidmore's 19 varsity teams, 14 qualified for postseason play. The golf, men's basketball, and men's and women's tennis teams took first place in the Liberty League, earning themselves a spot in the NCAA Division III championships.

Art across campus

A snapshot of the most talked-about exhibitions in 2015–16





NO PLACE TO HIDE, with three artists who explore “being watched,” plus a map of Saratoga’s own surveillance sites compiled by students in a first-year Scribner Seminar on surveillance and privacy



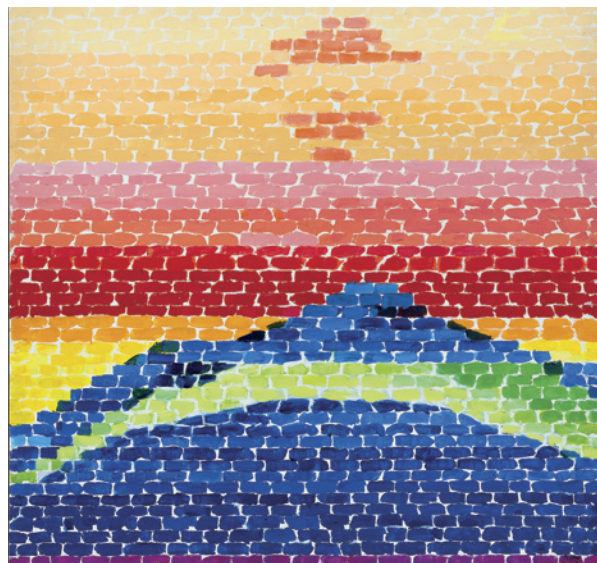
ANNUAL ALUMNI ART EXHIBITION during Reunion Weekend—and now *all* alumni artists are invited to share their works (and comment on others’) at scopedish.wordpress.com.



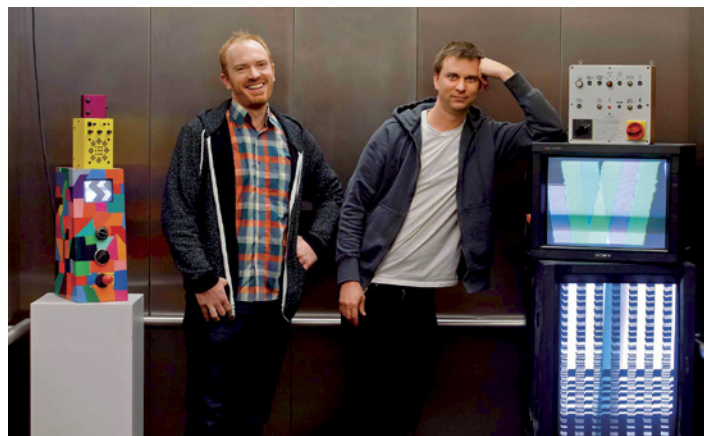
BORROWED LIGHT: SELECTIONS FROM THE JACK SHEAR GIFT, celebrating some 500 donated photos reflecting the technology and art of photography from the 1840s to the present



ANNUAL JURIED STUDENT SHOW, with guest juror Doug Dreischpoon ’76, former chief curator at Albright-Knox Museum in Buffalo



ALMA THOMAS, a comprehensive array of works by a child of the Jim Crow south who became a schoolteacher and influential artist known for her colorful, energetic abstracts



ELEVATOR MUSIC with do-it-yourself and electronically manipulated sounds by Critter & Guitari, aka Chris Kucinski ’02 and Owen Osborn ’02



Defining the “creativity imperative”

“We intend that our graduates carry with them . . . the capacity to deploy their creative imagination in ways that advantage both them and the world.”

“We will seek new ways to become the inclusive, respectful, and healthy community we must be.”

“We will encourage our professors to take pedagogical risks that empower students to reach even higher levels of awareness and learning.”

So says *Creating Pathways to Excellence: The Plan for Skidmore College, 2015–2025*. The new strategic plan, guided by President Philip Glotzbach (above, with international students) and drafted by a collegewide task force with extensive input from all constituencies, was approved by faculty, alumni, and trustees last spring.

With creative thought and action as its “primary lens,” the strategic plan states, “To succeed in realizing this commitment to creativity requires the College to be a special kind of supportive community—one in which the broadest possible range of ideas is explored and critically interrogated, comprising persons who bring the broadest possible range of personal experiences to their interactions.” Another key motif in the plan (and in Skidmore’s concurrent re-accreditation process last year) is integrative learning, a comprehensive process that engages each student across disciplines, across all four years, and across modes of learning.

For Glotzbach and other college leaders, the new plan is already shaping every decision they consider.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES



Skidmore parent **W. Scott McGraw**, a trustee since 2011, is the new chair of the board. A longtime advertising executive for the Discovery Networks and CBS Sports, he lives in Florida. He and wife Cathy served on the Parents Council when daughter Carolyn was a student, and they led several parent fundraising efforts. McGraw succeeds Linda Toohey, who stepped down after four years as board chair.



Cerri Banks is the new dean of students and vice president for student affairs. Formerly Mount Holyoke’s VP for student affairs and dean of the college, she replaces Gail Cummings-Danson, Skidmore’s athletics director who served as interim VP. With a B.A., M.S., and Ph.D. from Syracuse University, Banks is a scholar of multiculturalism and diversity in education. Her books and articles address culturally relevant teaching and related topics.



Joshua Woodfork, previously coordinator of strategic initiatives in the president’s office, was named to the new vice presidency for strategic planning and diversity. President Philip Glotzbach says that as Skidmore’s chief diversity officer, Woodfork will help the college address “the ongoing challenges that we must face to become the inclusive and affirming campus community that we want to be.” Earlier, at Trinity College, Woodfork taught American studies and directed the Consortium on High Achievement and Success.



The communications and marketing office is now led by a vice president. Consultant **Debra Townsend** is filling that post in an interim capacity. She has worked on several Skidmore projects since 2001 and has helped lead communications at scores of institutions from Colgate and Bates to Washington State and Rensselaer Polytechnic. The new vice presidency was created to help guide Skidmore in “an increasingly competitive environment that demands even more effective communications and marketing,” says Glotzbach.

COMMENCEMENT & REUNION

'16



FIREWORKS
draw oohs and aahs from the Reunion crowd.



WARM & SUNNY
applies to reunion-goers' spirits as well as the weather.



SAY CHEESE!
Free souvenirs of Reunion's fun and friendship



SKIDMORE'S NEWEST
grads celebrate the moment at Commencement.

Another sizzler

Summer at Skidmore was as hot as ever this year, with programs that drew a guest roster from renowned public artists to local pee-wee athletes.

This year's Dance Workshop included an alum: Casey Loomis '08 is part of Doug Varone and Dancers, whose June residency featured classes, demonstrations, and performances. In July the Skidmore Jazz Institute brought top performers and mounted its own faculty and student concerts, and then the Skidmore Chamber Music Institute, led by the Decoda ensemble, took its coaching beyond campus to museums and hospitals. Meanwhile, the venerable New York State Writers Institute convened top-shelf authors from Banks and Beatty to Pinsky and Prose.

Summer programs also brought theater artists for intensive Suzuki-method workshops and demonstrations, gifted high school students for precollege learning, youngsters in day camp and sports clinics, studio artists of all ages, and the Saratoga Shakespeare Company's production and acting seminars.

With the Tang Museum's Upbeat on the Roof series of al fresco concerts, the Storytellers' Institute in media studies, and myriad other performances and readings, the summer was a campuswide festival of public events.



EXPRESSIONS

Saxophonist and composer Jimmy Greene played and worked with Jazz Institute students, while memoirist, reporter, and essayist Margo Jefferson debuted at the Writers Institute.

**LEG UP!**

Casey Loomis '08, who studied with Doug Varone and Dancers in their campus residency the summer before she enrolled at Skidmore, gets another lift from the troupe, which she joined as a professional after she graduated.





From

TriBeCa to Mashable

Documentary and media studies are going places. 🎬 by Susan Rosenberg



“Plumb the archives, conduct some interviews, and cover six decades’ worth of history—our assignment was simple,” quips Phoebe Radcliffe ’17. It was part of the Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project, an arm of the Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative. As MDOCS has blossomed since its launch in 2014, the Memory Project has quickly developed a cache of oral histories from alumni, retired faculty, influential Saratogians, and others. For her project, Radcliffe worked with four other students and two professors to create a video and exhibition for the Saratoga Adult and Senior Center’s 60th anniversary.

“One semester’s worth of work turned to two,” she says, as the researchers collected box after box of news clippings, photos, and office paperwork. The students’ favorite documents included handwritten memos and schedules, the center’s inaugural newsletter, and other artifacts from the 1950s and ’60s. Interviews with staff and regulars brought to life “the story of a progressive center that was one of the first in a national movement to grow from a ‘Golden Age Club’ in 1955 to the active, engaging center it is today,” says Radcliffe. As one interviewee explains in the video, “It’s a place to learn, a place to teach, a place to meet people.”

Radcliffe, a social work and Spanish major, joined Eli Ruben ’17, a business major, to present the group’s work at Academic Festival last spring. Along with social work professor Crystal Moore, they were mentored by MDOCS’s director Jordana Dym, a historian and scholar of maps as cultural and political documents. Dym says the *60 Years Young* documentary was just one of the MDOCS-fostered projects “that students have really poured their hearts into.” It was they who asked to extend the project, she notes, and “even to devote time over their breaks to make sure the story came through.” Documentary work seems to inspire “an ethos of sticking with it and digging deeper,” she observes.

Another high point was MDOCS's second Storytellers' Institute, this time with an inaugural "Festosium" component. The institute is an intensive, month-long summer workshop to help students, faculty, and community members tell important stories through documentary arts such as film, sound, multimedia, and exhibition. The 2016 program included guest artists known for testing the aesthetic and ethical boundaries of fact and fiction: Iranian American filmmaker Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz, exhibition director Courtney Reid-Eaton from North Carolina, and interdisciplinary artists Amanda Dawn Christie from Canada and Brooklyn-based Jake Nussbaum. They worked alongside professors Rik Scarce (sociology) and Erika Schielke (biology) as well as eight students majoring in American studies, anthropology, art, dance, English, and social work. The institute's Festosium offered a weekend of public events with acclaimed documentary artists spanning audio, photography, virtual reality, film, and curation.

Having added video to his last book project, about sustainability efforts in the Hudson River region, Rik Scarce used the Storytellers' Institute to advance his next documentary film: a study of barefoot running as a lifestyle movement. His 50-plus video interviews needed to be shaped into a compelling and informative package, and he says consulting with the institute's "brilliant fellows, expert documentarians, and creative students was a challenge and a gift." A biologist with a public-radio background, Schielke got advice for her on-location podcasts with rattlesnake surveyors, moose trackers, and other field researchers in the Adirondacks. The arc of a riveting story, the technology and tricks of presenting it, and the insights that a narrative can awaken in its audience—all stock-in-trade of the Storyteller's Institute.

Both professors saw how the skills honed in the institute could be used to help students in their classrooms. And the students' own projects included reflections on the personal (accounts of first-time sex, a family history in film, a kaleidoscopic animation of hallucination) and the societal (a podcast on a civil-rights moment, a film on dance and gender in Spain).

As one arm of Project VIS, which also includes Skidmore's new minor in media and film studies, MDOCS prides itself on reaching out to aspiring documentarians in all disciplines. For Dym, "It's fascinating how people are incorporating documentary and bringing research projects to life in such different ways. One terrific dividend is to have a range of faculty and staff sitting in on MDOCS classes. I really like that holistic, communitywide scope." MDOCS courses range from one to four credits, with titles like "Principles of Documentary," "Production Fundamentals" and "Storytelling Radio," as well as art history's "Museum Worlds" and music's "Interviewing Musicians" (all cross-listed with the media and film minor).

VIS- and MDOCS-sponsored events are just as panoramic. During the academic year, Graham Roberts, a

senior graphics editor at the *New York Times*, discussed visual journalism in the form of multimedia tours, data visualization, motion graphics, and more. Filmmaker Iva Radivojevic screened her award-winning *Evaporating Borders*, which has been called "a sweeping visual essay" on xenophobia and belonging. A networking night, organized with the arts administration program, included a reception with employers that put some students into internships. As Skidmore's Carr Distinguished Interdisciplinary Lecturer, Jocelyn Arend '04, who compiled an acclaimed multimedia history of Saratoga's famed Caffè Lena folk-music venue, led workshops on archival research, oral histories, and other skills. And MDOCS mounted a New York City road trip for over 30 Skidmoreites when it was learned that English and film professor Cecilia Aldarondo's *Memories of a Penitent Heart* was to be screened at the prestigious TriBeCa Film Festival.

Still in its early days, MDOCS has already fostered some remarkable outcomes. Last year Lisa Fierstein '16 documented an art student's project to paint portraits of local dementia patients, and the video won entry into a San Francisco film festival on aging. Fierstein is now at a National Public Radio station in Michigan, producing both audio and video documentaries. Evian Pan '17 worked on an oral history of Saratoga's Chinese population during last year's Storytellers' Institute and had a paper published by the New York Folklore Society. This year as a Tang Museum intern, she created an exhibition that opened at the Festosium. Noah Throop '14, who studied with English professor and documentary maker Tom Lewis and also made videos for Skidmore's communications office, now works at the online news and media company Mashable. Jake DeNicola '16 attended last year's institute to work with Eleuterio Ramirez '18 and sociology professor Bernardo Rios on their video about Saratoga's Triqui Mexican population, and now a spinoff focusing on Ramirez's experience as a Triqui Saratogian is on track for the February entry deadline in 2017's international Oaxaca Film Fest.

Next for MDOCS? New courses this term include a four-credit English workshop for creating archive-based media stories inspired by Skidmore's *Salmagundi* magazine, celebrating 50 years of publishing work by the foremost writers, critics, and thinkers. The class is co-taught by *Salmagundi* editor and English faculty member Marc Woodworth '84 along with media-services staffer and MDOCS instructor Ron Taylor. The Memory Project will keep expanding its accounts of college and county. And another wide array of public screenings, talks, and workshops will pepper the events calendar all year.

"The trajectory," asserts Dym, "is distinctly upward and outward." 🍷



Visualizing VIS

Project VIS, with initial support from a three-year Mellon Foundation grant, works to enhance visual literacy across the campus, including the funding of two fellows to teach and mentor students, faculty, and staff.

MDOCS is the John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative, offering:

- classes and workshops
- internships
- Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project
- Storytellers' Institute

Visual Literacy Forum sponsors events and experiences to advance visual literacy, especially helping faculty members learn web design, video, and other skills to incorporate them into their teaching.

Media and Film Studies is an academic minor for developing understanding and critical analysis skills in interpreting media, as well as facility in the use of current and emerging media communications.

Scribner Library 113 is a shared media center and lab with hardware, software, and coaching services to support video, audio, and related projects.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Retired IT staffer Leo Geoffrion tells tales of Skidmore past; the *60 Years Young* crew presents its work for the senior center; here's lookin' at you lookin' at me lookin' at you; doughty documentarians work in the great outdoors; radio specialist Ann Hepperman guests at the Storytellers' Institute.



Lighting the Path

“If you pursue great footsteps, you leave great footprints,” said one Ghanaian thinker. Something like that is clearly at work in Skidmore’s alumni and student community.

From the Freirich Business Plan Competition to in-class guest appearances, from internships and jobs to events mounted by the Career Development Center, Opportunity Programs, Alumni Relations, and other offices, alumni in every field and era are role-modeling, mentoring, and networking with current students. And when those graduates light a path for students, the students often make great strides—footsteps that benefit their own lives and that they can illuminate for the next generation. A few examples of alumni extending a hand to students:

Scoring big

Sharing African backgrounds was just the start. Now they're sharing careers in high finance.

They met in the gym three years ago. Former Thoroughbred Melvis Langyintuo '12 was playing hoops during a campus visit; Thabang Maphothoane '17 was a new freshman. That casual introduction eventually brought them together at one of the top financial institutions in the world.

"Thabang reminded me of myself in college," says Langyintuo. "He was interested in student government, and I had been class president at Skidmore. As we talked, I sensed that he needed support and guidance. I said I was open to helping out, and he was proactive enough to reach out."

The two started talking about coursework, with Langyintuo giving advice and posing questions. "Where do you see yourself in five years?" he would ask. Maphothoane says, "He was always challenging me, prodding

me, posing those kinds of questions."

Langyintuo, a global macro trader at Goldman Sachs, helped Maphothoane recognize his computer science and math majors as advantages in the financial industry. Langyintuo shared his mentee's resume with the Goldman internship division and coached the nervous Maphothoane during a late-night call before the interview.

That was a year ago. This summer Maphothoane wrapped up his second internship at Goldman, analyzing algorithms on suspicious trades. And he's begun his senior year knowing that his much-admired mentor still plays a critical role in his future. For him, "Isaac Newton summed it up when he said, 'If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.'"

Langyintuo encourages other alumni to get involved in mentoring Skidmore students, saying it's a rewarding experience for the mentor as well as the mentee. He says, "I feel happy giving a student candid advice and guidance on achieving his goals. I'm also giving back to my college, where the community came together to launch me on an incredible career trajectory." Like a soaring three-pointer. —*Jon Wurtmann '78*

Melvis Langyintuo '12 and Thabang Maphothoane '17 on Wall Street



Business-world role model

Empowering women who “ask the most interesting questions”

At their first meeting, Lyssa Jackson '16 recalls, Ceci Zak '87 asked, “What are your dreams? What are your goals?” and urged her to think big.

That encouragement culminated a year later in a milestone event for a student club that Jackson co-founded, Skidmore Women in Business. And the mentoring relationship hasn't slowed down.

Chief operating officer for health care for Omnicom's DAS marketing companies, Zak asked Skidmore staff member Joe Porter how she might give back to her alma mater, especially in a way that could use “my passion for development of leadership skills,” she says. Porter connected her with Jackson.

The pair clicked almost immediately. Jackson says Zak “matched my 120-miles-per-hour kind of thinking” and proved a fantastic listener, and for her part, Zak was “dazzled” by Jackson's enthusiasm and leadership ability.

After an evening of what Jackson calls “very intense conversation, in the best way possible,” she and Zak stayed in touch via scheduled emails and phone calls. That's how the COO helped the student shape a crowning event for the WIB club.

WIB members had benefited greatly from conferences at institutions such as Harvard Business School and the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. “At these events, you could always tell where the Skidmore women were, because they were always asking the most interesting questions,” Jackson says. Now it was Jackson's turn, with Zak's encouragement, to spearhead WIB's first conference of its own. Speakers at the daylong event, Creative Thought Leads: Liberal Arts and Business Smarts, included marketer and working-mom advocate Catherine Merritt '03, wedding and event planner Rebecca Shenkman '03, Center for American Progress exec Emily Tisch Sussman '04, Elle Décor design editor Mieke ten Have '05, and Bravo network social-media director Abigail Cusick '04.

Zak found the theme apt, noting that in her day Skidmore “grounded me in a wide breadth of industries and services. It helped me find what I was passionate about in different aspects of my career.”

Today Jackson is an executive team leader for Target Corp., a role in which she takes great pride though she sometimes finds herself striving to show all she can do. She reports, “I'm having lots of small successes and making lots of mistakes.” At times, “it can be hard, but then I hear Ceci in my head, saying, “You can do it.”” —*Jim Akin '84*



Lyssa Jackson '16



Ceci Zak '87

Envisioning a future

Law? Military? Both? Neither? A little real-world advice helps clarify the options.

Zach Stiller '17 and Rob Resnick '88 are decades apart and had never met face to face, but they have shared an important journey, exploring Stiller's post-Skidmore options.

Resnick, who recently retired as an attorney in the Army's Judge Advocate General Corps, calls his military career "an incredible public service opportunity and an adventure." He says, "Skidmore academics set me up for the success, especially the emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving."

Stiller says, "My history classes have been pivotal in synthesizing what I've learned in both the history and political science departments. Beyond the classes, professors taught me how to think and look at the world and the opportunities out there." He also studied in Copenhagen, Denmark, where his professors were professionals in their fields. "Skidmore gave me the academic base to make the most of that opportunity while I was abroad," he says.

When Stiller was seeking "real-world advice," political science professor Bob Turner gave him Resnick's contact information and recommended that he ask him about the pros and cons of a military career, which Stiller had been weighing. What followed were email and phone exchanges to help focus Stiller's vision of his future.

"It has been extremely useful for me," Stiller says, "to brainstorm ideas with someone who has followed a similar path to what I may also like to accomplish. The decisions are mine to make, but it is so important to make well-educated decisions." He says he would "absolutely" encourage other students to forge partnerships with alumni.

Even as a law student and a new law-school grad, Resnick had helped Skidmore students to "navigate options." During his four terms on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, he often came to campus meetings early specifically to speak with students, both in classes and individually. He says many alumni enjoy speaking with students and fellow alumni. "I'm not only happy but proud when professors provide my name to students and the students reach out to me." He realizes, "Students may be hesitant 'cold-calling' alumni, but if the Career Development Center or a professor provides the name of an alum, they should know that the alum is truly willing. And we can be an excellent resource." —*Helen Edelman '74*

Zach Stiller '17 and
Rob Resnick '88





Sara Arnel '82

Charlie Samuels

Dogged entrepreneur

For a fledgling business, rounding out the plan brings in crucial funding.

It was a mentoring relationship between Alexander Nassief '16 and Sara Arnell '82 that boosted his startup, Rum Dogs, into the top spot in the 2016 Kenneth A. Freirich Business Plan Competition, after he had fallen just short in previous years.

The first prize included \$20,000 to help implement his groundbreaking process for aging rum. He has reduced the time from five years to just six months by maturing it in the ocean. As of this summer, Nassief reports, Rum Dogs “is going quite well”; the funding enabled his company to triple production.

Arnell, a public relations professional based in New York City, has volunteered in the Freirich contest for several years. Watching this year’s competitors make their pitches, she felt, “I wanted to work with Alex. I had watched him for the past three years and had a good understanding of what he needed to break through.”

Nassief says her guidance helped him win, filling a gap with “her expertise in branding, marketing, packaging, and selling.” He adds, “I always felt that the cash prize was very enabling but would be squandered without proper guidance.”

All along, he worked with professors, peers, and alumni, including competition founder Ken Freirich '90—all of them exceedingly generous with their time and experience, says the determined young entrepreneur, a native of Dominica. That “diverse group of mentors,” he says, “made what Rum Dogs accomplished far more possible. Each mentor of mine had a distinct style, but also incredible wisdom to offer.”

It’s a “two-way street,” Arnell emphasizes. “The openness of the students to listen, learn, and refine their work is critical to the process. It’s a real effort in coming together over a short time period to achieve a shared goal.” The two communicated via texting, email, phone, and FaceTime.

Nassief credits Skidmore’s “absolutely nurturing environment and community full of eclectic ideas” with exposing him to enriching resources that “made a world of difference” in his academic, personal, and professional trajectory. Arnell adds that the college’s “great liberal arts foundation allows graduates to pivot and pursue anything they want.”

For Nassief, the mentorship “validated a business idea”; for Arnell, the teaming was an opportunity to “drive with a very singular purpose to win.” She concludes, “If you have had success in your career and have knowledge and expertise to share, pay it forward.” —Helen Edelman '74



Alex Nassief '16

Zak Bagot



It's the economy, smarty

The virtual-reality immersion created to market the Curry One athletic shoe? A Skidmore alumna was behind it. ¶ A hybrid microfinance and health-care venture capital business in China? A young Skidmore grad works there. ¶ The Klipmart and DoubleClick veteran supporting a nonprofit for LGBT entrepreneurs? A bitcoin expert and consultant? The Edison Nation exec who hosted an invention-contest TV show? Yep, all from Skidmore. ¶ In fact, legions of alumni from all academic disciplines are diving into “the new economy,” spurring innovation in IT and communications, marketing and direct sales, crowd-sourcing, sustainable and progressive enterprise, and novel combinations of these and other avenues for doing business and reshaping society. For example: >>>>>>>>>>



Driving tomorrow's trends

“At Skidmore I suffered FOMO—fear of missing out—when my friends talked about their study abroad. So I quit the basketball team and studied in China,” recalls Eli Johnston ’14. Now it’s FOMO no more: Johnston is back in Asia, where he’d vowed to return, and he’s a very marketable professional in a very exciting economy.

In China, he studied international business and interned at the Ogilvy Mather ad firm. Upon graduation he chose a job with AlphaSights—“a very cool, forward-looking ‘knowledge brokerage’ company,” he says—and then moved to another such firm, the Futures Company, which studies social and marketing trends and provides the information to help businesses plan their strategies.

“When I wrote a paper on women in India and ways for business to tap into them as a market while also helping them progress socially,” he recounts, the director of Futures’ Asia region got him a posting at the fast-growing Singapore office. Since then Johnston’s travel and research in the region have included giving a keynote address at a Facebook conference in Jakarta and meeting with staff in Honda’s innovation lab in Tokyo.

Futures’ survey research has taught Johnston that “consumers are more and more conscious of supply chain, sustainable production, and other corporate responsibility factors. I see this as a huge opportunity for businesses to boost their profits while promoting social innovation.” Another lesson: “Artificial intelligence is already more advanced than you might think. I mean, there are robots that can decipher the emotions conveyed by a painting—pretty crazy!” He says AI-controlled driverless cars could be in circulation within a year or so.

Meanwhile, Johnston revels in Asia’s vibrancy and promise. He’s befriended fellow expats and had roommates from Singapore as well as Germany, India, France, and Indonesia. He says, “It’s estimated that two-thirds of the global middle class will be in the Asia Pacific by 2030. So many economies are growing, and societies are changing so fast.”

Recently change again came to his career, as he switched jobs to become head of corporate innovation for Impact Hub’s Singapore office. He says, “My job is to help link big brands like Coca-Cola and JP Morgan with the techies and entrepreneurs who use Impact Hub’s shared spaces for startups.” Budweiser,



for example, seeking help with its brewery in China, invited young innovators “to hack it out” and pitch their solutions to Bud executives.

On the side Johnson runs Own Your Brilliance, a firm he created to engage college students in devising market solutions that also address social issues. Working with Professor Cathy Hill and the Career Development Center at Skidmore, he organized an “Impactathon” on campus in September; more are planned for universities in the Philippines, South Africa, and Australia. First OYB asks participants which of the United Nations’ sustainable-development goals are most important to them. Next it forms them into teams that mix majors and skills, and then leads them through “ideation exercises” and other coaching. After two and a half intensive days, they present their ideas to a panel of investors and entrepreneurs.

Johnston says OYB’s business model involves “charging a small fee to participants, sharing in the percentage taken by a crowdfunding company that our innovators work with, and taking a small stake in each new company that emerges.” In the US this year, crowdfunding just might raise more money than venture capital does, so Johnston asserts, “it’s not a fad; it’s a new, democratized business paradigm.”

OYB’s seven employees include Josh Chaco ’16 and Rachel Dance ’16. “We’re on three continents in four time zones,” Johnston says, “but we meet weekly on Skype.” Good thing he’s as quick and nimble as his industry. —Susan Rosenberg

Trend tracker
Eli Johnston '14
helps businesses
innovate.

© Benjamin Chia



New arts encounters

Media from electronics to sugar fuel the Amsterdam arts scene of Helena Sanders '05.

📷 Jeroen Bouman

Collaborate, celebrate, co-create! That's the spirit of the AV Club, a series of experimental video, film, and music events founded by Helena Sanders '05. A Skidmore art major and WSPN radio director, she now lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

A painter who has worked as an album cover designer, exhibition curator and installer, musicians' booking agent, and musician herself, Sanders says, "We each work hard to see our own creations thrive out in the world. But the benefits of collaborating, working across fields and comfort zones, can far outweigh any cons. It's energizing and produces more ideas and solutions than one person could act on in a lifetime."

At times Sanders withdraws to work solo in her studio, but then she is pulled back to the "refreshing current among contemporary artists to share information openly and merge projects and ideas," which she attributes in part to the open-source ethos of the Internet.

When Sanders launched AV Club more than five years ago, her vision was to bring experimental video to a wide audience in a casual environment: "less pressure on the artists, less pressure on the audience." She explains, "We are all accustomed to acting our roles in gallery spaces. I want people to

shake that off a bit and feel comfortable when they encounter something new. It's OK not to get it."

AV Club, she emphasizes, is a concept and not just a physical space. One event ran "from the back of a bicycle outfitted with a sound system and projector, at outdoor locations across the city, in the dead cold of February." She also cites "a night of artists who brought instruments sculpted from sugar, which they played into disintegration." And Oregon artists MSHR performed on "a beautiful, self-invented compound of light-sensitive instruments and touch-reactive electronics, so their music literally arose from contact between humans and the distribution of light waves."

Sanders's own art was influenced by her study of textiles at Skidmore. She recalls textile instructors encouraging her in "exploring contemporary theory and new technologies, with nothing off-limits." She was impressed by art professor Margo Mensing's interest in both technical execution and aesthetics. When Mensing and physics professor Mary Crone Odekon cocurated the Tang Museum show *A Very Liquid Heaven*, it was one of Sanders's "favorite examples of stimulating all the senses and inspiring an interest in the world beyond the front of my face. It connected seemingly disparate dots into something beautiful and cohesive."

Inside and outside higher ed, Sanders notes, arts are reorganizing based on theme, rather than medium. She approves. "The question for artists becomes: Here is a problem to solve, and here is the context and the audience; now how do you address and communicate your solution?" —Helen Edelman '74



Marketing when milliseconds matter

If you shop at a store's website, you're likely to see an ad for that store on your Facebook feed the next day. But did you know that many targeted online ads were bid-winners in near-instantaneous auctions? Based on your browsing, searches, and other information, customized ads can be vied for and posted within milliseconds of your clicking on a webpage.

A leader in this growing industry is entrepreneur Alan Osetek '91, who was recently named global CEO of Digilant, a Boston-based digital ad firm. Working with ad agencies and brands (clients include Estee Lauder, Prudential, and Uber), Digilant uses real-time bidding technology to win placement of ads on websites, in videos, on mobile apps, and on social media like Facebook, Google, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp.

Osetek explains, "The auction format for buying advertising inventory is very similar to the way Wall Street traders go online to buy stocks, bidding to purchase at a particular market price." To get relevant marketing messages placed on a user's device screen, "there's often someone behind the scenes at a company like mine bidding to serve those ads to that user." When staff at Digilant use the Facebook ad platform, for instance, they can set up ad campaigns targeted to a user's interests, age, income, sex, and location. Such geotargeting and other data may be bought from third-party providers. According to one report, digital ad revenues in the US totaled \$60 billion in 2015, up more than 20% from 2014.

A natural entrepreneur, Osetek ran his own house-painting company as a Skidmore economics student. After graduating he spent a summer teaching English and coaching an expat high school baseball team in Taipei, Taiwan. With his MBA from Babson University, he has worked for database and marketing startups. In the 1990s he raised \$1 million and founded Vizium, one of the first email marketing companies, which he later sold to the Aegis group, for which he then launched a digital advertising program. He was also global president of Resolution Media, guiding the growth of Omnicom Media Group's search, social, and digital unit. He still serves on advisory boards for several ad-tech startups.

As Digilant CEO, Osetek says the industry's speed of change can be daunting. With Google, Facebook, and other channels revising their platforms frequently, "you have to quickly figure out what they've changed and how you can better utilize these tech-



nologies to reach people," he says. Another challenge is finding and retaining key talent such as data scientists, who must analyze and glean insights from vast seas of marketing information across many platforms.

Often, Osetek says, he tries to hire people much like himself: "It's people who have right-brain and left-brain skills, who can think creatively but also have a technical mindset." —*Pamela Babcock*

Alan Osetek '91 is a leader in the instant-tailored-ad industry.

Mark Morelli



Mission: farm anywhere

In a high-tech container, Dan Marino '06 shares pink grow-lights with chard plants.

📷 Mark Morelli

Suppose you could grow crops in a big metal cargo container. You'd rig it with a closed-loop hydroponic system, broad-spectrum LED lights, and climate controls interfaced with a smartphone app. Such a farm would operate on just a little electricity, in any climate, regardless of available land—heck, regardless of atmosphere.

That's the mission of Freight Farms, founded in 2010 as a pioneer in containerized farming. The idea is to bring sustainable, year-round food production closer to consumers, particularly in areas that can't support more traditional methods. It's drawn great interest from the US space agency NASA, but for Dan Marino '06, the name caught his eye first.

After working at Burton Snowboards and at a Yale University psychiatry lab, Marino was looking for startup companies. He discovered Freight Farms, determined that he would "do whatever it took to get a job there," and within two weeks became part of mission control for a fleet of shipping containers outfitted to grow lettuce, herbs, and other greens.

He's now head of operations, a job that offers "a taste of almost everything," from overseeing farm-building teams and managing inventory to tending vendor relationships to coordinating logistics and transportation of the 40-foot steel boxes—called Leafy Green Machines—throughout North America. So far, the firm has sold 85 LGMs to small urban farmers, restaurant suppliers, educational institutions such as Clark University, and eco-conscious companies like Google. He says, "The job keeps me on my toes; no two days are ever the same."

In April NASA awarded Freight Farms a small-business technology transfer grant to work alongside Clemson University in developing a "self-sustaining crop production unit" that could have applications in deep space as well as in commerce, disaster relief, the military, and remote living in harsh climates.

Shipping-container farming may ultimately help humans boldly go where no man has gone before, but for now, Marino notes, it's tapping into a much older and earthier agricultural model: growing food where it's consumed. With its space-age technology, Freight Farms "is bringing a new concept to an old economy."

Marino is also using time-honored skills. "What's surprised me is how all business boils down to the same fundamental principle no matter the size of the company," he says. "Whether you are trying to build a farm, create a search engine, source cheaper aluminum, or get a haircut—it's one individual coming to an agreement with another over a need or want."

By supplying fresh, healthy produce in any environment, Leafy Green Machines may well find a niche in every corner of the globe. In fact, even the sky's no limit. —Kathryn Gallien



Ask more, talk less

How does a teacher get students to lean in, think deeply, ask questions and make connections? There's an app for that!

Kimberly Mitchell '91 is working on it. Though she took no education courses at Skidmore, majoring instead in philosophy and history, she says it was her freshman liberal-studies course "The Human Experience" that "set the foundation for who I am as a teacher: someone who looks for the connections between disciplines."

Her career in education has included teaching fifth grade for Teach for America, bilingual kindergarten in Ecuador, middle-school science in Los Angeles, and "Teaching as a Profession" at the University of Washington, as well as serving as principal at the American Community Schools in Athens, Greece, and senior programming officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

A co-founder of Seattle-based Inquiry Partners, she has helped create an innovative tool to help teachers promote creative, active learning. The goal is to ask more and talk less, encourage questions, and get students to connect what they are learning to the real world. She and her partners recently won a Small Business Innovation Research grant from the National Science Foundation to support further development of Earshot, their user-friendly app that builds on technological advancements in language processing and voice analysis to provide real-time data for teachers on their talk time, wait time, and frequency and complexity of questioning. The developers plan to launch next summer, marketing directly to teachers through unions and professional organizations and offering subscriptions for about \$5 per month. Mitchell describes it as a sort of FitBit for teachers.

"We've done focus groups and the response was huge," says Mitchell. Before they use the app, "teachers don't realize how much they are talking, or that the questions they are asking are low-level, not those seeking analysis." Of the 3.5 million K-12 teachers in the US, Mitchell and crew hope even 5 to 10% will become early adopters, particularly at middle and high schools.

Too often, she says, "you see students passively listening to the teacher and following instructions," whereas in an inquiry-based classroom "you see students leaning in, taking control, and doing the majority of the talking and questioning." It's the way she



learned at Skidmore, and the way she wishes she had learned in grade school.

While you might call Mitchell an "education reformer," she prefers to talk about improving the classroom experience for both students and teachers, using inquiry-based instruction—a model as old as Socrates but wired for the 21st century. "The new economy is predicated less on a model of industry and goods and more on a model of creativity and ideas," she explains. "We are creators. That's what makes us human. We connect things. That's what I am trying to nurture in the classroom." She adds, "I give credit to Skidmore for the abilities to go beyond, make connections, and not be afraid of change." —Kathryn Gallien

Kimberly Mitchell '91 has a FitBit-like app to help teachers hone their communications with pupils.

 Joel Levin

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▶ Bright leaves and an even brighter student body are gathering again on the Skidmore campus. Inside: updates and features about everything from new buildings to the new economy.