

## SKIDMORE COLLEGE PEER OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines were developed by the Office of the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Departments and programs are strongly encouraged to utilize these guidelines to guide peer observations in their units.

### *Developmental versus Evaluative Peer Observation*

There are two goals of peer observations: **developmental** (intended to provide feedback for ongoing improvement, enhanced effectiveness, and innovation in classroom instruction) and **evaluative** (observations made for the purpose of personnel decisions). Developmental peer observation should be conducted in the context of a collaborative and trusting professional relationship whose primary goal is to assist with professional development. While each form of observation complements one another, developmental observation is ongoing, and evaluative assessment occurs during specific windows during the reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes.

Skidmore College faculty have a wide variety of skill levels and approaches to the craft of teaching. Therefore, an individualized approach to developmental peer observation to best meet the needs of individual faculty is warranted. While all faculty can gain from regular feedback about their teaching, pre-tenure and newer non-tenure track faculty could potentially benefit the most from a structured plan of developmental peer observation. Therefore,

### *Peer Observation Process:*

cus of the post-observation discussion. During this post-observation discussion, the faculty member who was observed would take notes and then write a reflection on the observation that summarizes the discussion. This reflection would be shared with the observer for any additionTi fo

4. Post-observation meeting occurs where observed and session are discussed. The faculty member who was observed takes notes on reflection on the session that is shared with the observer within two weeks of observation meeting

Some may not be able to separate developmental from performance feedback if the candidate is in the same department. If this is the case, developmental performance should be conducted solely by faculty outside of the department. If a department feels that all faculty in the department/program who are eligible to participate in the process observe the candidate, the department could consider having more than one viewer observe or videotaping class sessions (capturing both professor and student comments) should be viewed by all faculty in the department. Ultimately, who conducts the developmental performance should be under the control of the faculty member being observed.

***Promising Practice Guidelines:***

The following are suggestions for pre-tenure faculty and AIRs and (e)an3 ( )0.8 (c)12( )0.

Post-tenure faculty, full-time non-tenure track faculty in positions longer than 6 years, and part-time faculty:

- Full-time non-tenure track faculty who have been in their positions longer than six years and have never been formally observed could engage in at least one evaluative observation process before a new contract or renewal is issued. If the new contract period is two years or more, at least one developmental peer observation process could occur sometime during the contract period and ideally prior to the evaluative observation. Full-time non-tenure track faculty may develop a plan for observations in consultation with the C/PD.
- All part-time faculty are encouraged to participate in developmental peer observation and can develop a plan with their department chair(s) and/or program directors.
- Associate Professors should consider engaging in developmental observations in order to promote high-quality teaching, and evaluative observations if they will stand for promotion. Ideally, post-tenure faculty (including both Associate and Full Professors) could engage in at least one developmental observation every six years. All faculty are encouraged to develop an Individual Faculty Development Plan and incorporate observations into a holistic professional development plan.