

for immediate release

for further information

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Judy Annis, 866-6128

The Evergreen State College has been placing students in private businesses, governmental agencies and social service organizations for credit-generating internships since the college opened in the fall of 1971.

Now, in a cooperative effort between the Evergreen Office of Cooperative Education and the Thurston County Probation Office, TESC will help place persons found guilty of minor legal offenses in those same agencies to work out their sentences --- not to earn college credit but to provide a community service.

Ken Donohue, director of Evergreen Co-Op program, said his office is contacting more than 300 public and private agencies throughout the state to gather names of those organizations which are willing to cooperate in the newly created Thurston County Minor Offender Program.

"The idea," Donohue says, "is for those persons found guilty of a minor offense to serve their time helping in their local community, rather than behind bars.

"Co-Op is helping locate those agencies which are willing to accept the unpaid aid of the offenders for an amount of time determined at their sentencing."

The offenders --- often youthful violators of laws regulating marijuana, alcoholism or traffic --- serve at the agencies in lieu of a short jail term. Their service has to be in their home area, which is often outside of Thurston County, so agencies need to be identified throughout the state.

"We sometimes have offenders from as far away as Spokane County," Valerie Shewp, Thurston County probation officer explains. "Our office doesn't have the resources to locate positions that far away, so we looked to Evergreen for help."

TESC has placed more than 1800 interns in 800 agencies in the past three and a half years, Donohue adds. "And," he says, "we're delighted to have this chance to share our resources with the county in this way."