

**NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES**

**THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE**

**FULL-SCALE EVALUATION  
October 18-21, 1998**

**“A confidential report prepared for the Commission on Colleges that represents the views  
of the Evaluation Committee.”**

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The Evergreen State College  
Olympia, Washington  
October 18 - 21, 1998

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## INTRODUCTION

The Evergreen State College made elaborate, considerate, and very thorough preparations for the visit of the evaluation committee, which consisted of 14 members and one staff member. The committee is unanimous and enthusiastic in expressing its gratitude and appreciation to the president, provost, administration, faculty and staff, students, and especially to the team that prepared the self-study and planned and facilitated our visit of review.

More than 80 people attended the exit interview session at which the committee presented its general commendations and recommendations. As we did on this occasion, the committee wishes to express its unanimous belief that the TESC self-study is among the best that any member of this experienced team has seen. It is especially thorough and insightful, well substantiated, and characterized by penetrating self-judgements. This self-study summarized, of course, a much more voluminous compendium of data and backup materials that were well provided in a working-conference facility well equipped with computers, printers, and copying and other services.

The Evergreen Self-Study amply fulfills the major purpose of these reviews, namely, a full-scale assessment of the institution's current status, achievements, problems and directions. The committee is assured that the entire college community involved itself in the self-study process, and the administrators, faculty, staff, students, and others to whom we spoke seemed fully engaged in the process.

TESC's positive approach to the Self-Study reflects the vibrant personality of the campus community itself, a personality seen also in its lovely forested setting and in the activist commitment of its faculty, staff, students and alumni. All constituents of Evergreen that we met readily indicated their attachment to the place and their dedication to the collaborative, interdisciplinary, interactive educational philosophy it espouses. Similarly, the campus's envelopment in verdant forests, its seclusion from the city, its beach front and its myriad of gathering places for students and faculty all reflect its open and inclusive philosophy.

This report is organized to Commission standards. Effort has been made to regularize the sections, but this will of course vary somewhat in size and scope according to the perspectives of the individuals who prepared them.



## STANDARD ONE

### INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS, PLANNING, AND EFFECTIVENESS

Since its creation 27 years ago, The Evergreen State College has been, as it describes itself, “a square peg in a round hole” – “a nontraditional college operating in a state system of public higher education.” TESC is a liberal arts-undergraduate-teaching-focused state college, where faculty are primarily team teachers, not researchers, and where students are expected to engage directly in the educational process. Its primary focus is upon “undergraduate instruction and collaborative interdisciplinary teaching and learning.” As its mission statement clearly reveals, the primary expectation of faculty is teaching, teaching that is interdisciplinary, participatory, and focused upon community-based learning and research, the latter reinforced by community-based “public service centers.” Also defining TESC’s mission are its community-oriented programs at Tacoma and at Indian reservations in the area.

At the statewide level, planning is heavily bound up with the budgeting process. The legislature itself, and particularly its Office of Financial Management, reviews and approves budgets, and the legislatively-created Higher Education Coordinating Board not only reviews budgets as well but also produces a statewide Master Plan for higher education at five-year intervals, and mandates periodic academic program reviews. The HEC Board, and the State of Washington in general, are highly focused upon “accountability.” But primary authority for oversight of TESC lies in the hands of an eight-member Board of Trustees. Five members of the team met with several of the trustees, who evinced both a high level of commitment to and knowledge of the institution.

At the campus level, goal-setting and planning are predictably and characteristically decentralized and highly participatory. The president’s “Senior Staff” and the Academic Deans Group are joined by other typical administrative planning groups, such as an Enrollment Coordinating Committee and a Part-Time Studies Group. But the most distinctive aspects of TESC planning are the issue-specific “Disappearing Task Forces,” which are ad-hoc faculty-staff-student groups that in 1997-98 tackled such diverse issues as Benefits and Post-Retirement and the Accreditation Self-Study. The college’s formal “Long-Range Plan” or “Strategic Plan” is reviewed and revised on a five-to-seven-year basis: the current rendition was done in 1994 and is due to be revised next year. Public forums and alumni and board participation enliven the discussion and preparation of these plans, and also the Long-Range Curriculum Report, which is similarly revised on six-eight-year cycles, the current version dating from 1996. An Office of Institutional Research has functioned since 1979, and periodic short-term planning and administrative review efforts draw upon its studies.

The accreditation team is much impressed by the grass-roots enthusiasm and participation of the TESC campus community in governance and planning. However, we are also concerned that this broadly participatory approach to planning seems not to render the tight, concentrated focus that the institution clearly needs to deal with several serious matters. Among these are the key questions of growth and establishing the correct balance between student population and staff and facilities, the disturbing loss of students during and after the freshman year, and off-campus programs that seem to be somewhat disconnected from the central programs of the college. A tighter concentration upon focused planning, and the cultivation of revenue sources to support its targets, seems clearly in order.

**Recommendation:**

1. The Committee recommends that The Evergreen State College insure that all of its students acquire the competencies appropriate to general education, especially but not exclusively in Mathematics. This is called for by the college's own goals as well as Standard 2C. Whatever the means taken, given a situation in which there are no required courses/programs, and in which student choices are largely unconstrained, there is nonetheless an institutional responsibility to achieve its stated liberal and general education goals.

**STANDARD TWO**

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS TO INCLUDE  
SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY**

**(PHYSICAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES, COMPUTING, HEALTH AND  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT; APPLICATION OF COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY  
INSTITUTION WIDE**

The Scientific Inquiry Unit. The Scientific Inquiry education unit plays a vital role in the overall curriculum at Evergreen. This unique and innovative program puts emphasis on Biology, Chemistry, and Physics in a laboratory setting along with Computer Science and Mathematics. The focus of Scientific Inquiry is on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge with substantial content in each of the natural and physical sciences including Mathematics and Computer Science. It shares with the Environmental Studies Unit the important responsibility of offering to interested undergraduates both entry level and advanced interdisciplinary programs in laboratory and field problems. Students are taught to address real, substantial, and timely science issues and problems requiring inductive logic, utilizing their creative and critical thinking skills for problem solving that cuts across the traditional disciplines of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics under the careful guidance of a dedicated and well trained faculty. Mathematics and Computer Sciences are

also integrated into the problem or topic that is addressed. Therefore, each undergraduate at the college is provided a unique opportunity to see how important and necessary it is to understand how each scientific discipline contributes to the overall solution of the problem being investigated. Scientific Inquiry offers a basic two-year curriculum consisting of three entry level programs offered every year and a variety of more advanced, challenging, and innovative programs typically offered on a biennial basis.

The Scientific Inquiry Unit has a definite linkage to the Humanities, particularly to the cultural history of technology and the philosophy of science. The overall goal is to solidly ground students with a firm foundation in the sciences and how they overlap in addition to a comprehension of the cultural, ethical, historical, and philosophical aspects of scientific inquiry. The title, Scientific Inquiry, clearly states what this educational unit offers a potentially interested undergraduate at Evergreen.

The Intensive Study portion offers a comprehensive two-year program of approximately 96 quarter hours providing a solid foundation in the scientific disciplines. The same group of students is together for the entire year concentrating their educational efforts on the same topic. This provides for continuity and interdisciplinary learning and training in the sciences; so upon completion of one year of study students will have achieved a solid knowledge base and will have applied their creative and critical thinking skills to real scientific problem solving from an interdisciplinary perspective. It avoids the more common rote memory learning found in more traditional introductory science courses at other colleges where there is usually little overlap or relationship to other sciences.

Another vital component of the Scientific Inquiry Unit is the interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum. For example, the relationship of computer algorithms to important topics in discrete mathematics or comprehending essential metabolic pathways of carbohydrates to biochemistry is noteworthy in the Scientific Inquiry Program. The emphasis is on integration of different disciplines and the relevance to the cultural, ethical, and social dimensions of science.

Active learning is accomplished in a laboratory setting where students spend many hours per week working on a particular project. Many teaching techniques are utilized, but it should be noted that learning is active and not passive in this type of environment. The culmination results in student lectures, well researched oral and written reports, and even poster presentations. Small group seminar discussions contribute significantly to active learning in the Scientific Inquiry unit.

The theory and practice component offers a number of unique programs that marry theory and practice such as the Undergraduate Research option, Student Oriented Software, and the more cognitive Science of Mind module.

The Scientific Inquiry curriculum has been well established for a number of years and

been reworked and refined as much any other planning group at Evergreen. While there has been some internal criticism within Evergreen College that there is too much structure, by some faculty colleagues outside the Scientific Inquiry planning unit, the fact remains that this large corpus of knowledge in the natural and physical sciences, including Mathematics and Computer Science, mandates a necessary degree of compartmentalization and structure for student comprehension and application to complex scientific problem solving.

At the more advanced level, undergraduates in the Scientific Inquiry Unit have a choice of selecting several unique and innovative programs. Students more interested in the biological sciences may take the Molecule to Organism Program, which focuses on the molecular aspects effectively combining, Biochemistry, Biophysics and modern Molecular Genetics with applications of Computer Science for DNA sequencing. Another interesting program is the Science of the Mind Unit, which stresses Neurobiology, Biochemistry, Psychology, and even Philosophy. These are regularly repeating programs. On occasion, too, other very timely and important units have been offered such as Evolution, the most unifying principle in the Biological Sciences, and even a unit on the Philosophy of Science.

From interviews with various faculty, it is noted that faculty in the Scientific Inquiry Unit have actively participated in Core programs like, Society and the Computer, Reflections on Nature, and Water, Environment, Land and People.

In summary, the Scientific Inquiry planning unit at Evergreen has an outstanding track record of developing creative and critical thinking skills in interested undergraduates in the natural and physical sciences, including Mathematics and Computer Science, in an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scientific setting. Students are taught to see relationships between and among the sciences because solutions to most modern technological problems and in the future are extremely complex and multifactorial requiring experts to be cross-trained. Critical reasoning was the most important component of the "vision statement" set forth by the faculty in the Scientific Inquiry planning unit in the fall of 1997, and the faculty have done an outstanding job of inculcating this addition in their various pedagogical methods in all the various multidisciplinary modules examined during this evaluation.

Nevertheless, there is concern among some faculty regarding the demand to increase enrollment in the Scientific Inquiry planning unit in addition to participation in other significant assignments at Evergreen. To increase the student teacher ratio significantly above what it is now would substantially impact on the high quality educational experience undergraduates at Evergreen have enjoyed over the years. Additional faculty would need to be hired to maintain the current quality of educational experience and accomplish the mission and goals of this planning unit. Another challenge that should be addressed is the constant need to infuse new technology into this unit that is both costly

and requires additional training and knowledge on the part of these dedicated and hard working faculty in the Science Inquiry planning unit. It is apparent that for science faculty to be current and knowledgeable in their respective disciplines, a detailed plan for faculty development should be developed and implemented.

Student assessment of the content, teaching, independent and collaborative research opportunities and development for creative and critical thinking skills provides both qualitative and quantitative evidence that the Scientific Inquiry planning unit meets and exceeds Standard Two-Educational Program and Its Effectiveness. The "five foci" of Interdisciplinary Study, Personal Engagement in Learning, Linking Theoretical Principles with Practice, Collaborative-Cooperative Learning, and Teaching Across Significant Differences are all achieved in a statistically significant way. There is excellent goodness of fit between theory and practice in the Scientific Inquiry planning unit. The faculty deserve high marks for their conscientiousness, dedication, and hard work. The Scientific Inquiry Self-Study document was extremely informative, insightful, and well constructed. It carefully delineates how each educational program fits into the central matrix of the Scientific Inquiry planning unit.

Health and Human Development. In Health and Human Development undergraduates at Evergreen investigate the biological, cultural, spiritual, and social forces that impact and influence health and human development. This knowledge base is utilized to create strong foundations for further work in Anthropology, Human Services, Health, and Education. This year-long offering is based upon two strong principles. First, health and development are mutually influenced by biological and social forces. Second, culture defines and influences our understanding and facilitation of health.

There are 16 credits each quarter and this program is preparatory for careers and graduate work in the health professions, human services, and in education. Emphasis in this program is on cognitive and physical development, interpersonal and intercultural communication, and mind-body interactions and the effects of nutrition, environment, gender, culture, and world view on human health.

There is a strong commitment to integration of knowledge from the biological and social sciences. The emphasis in this program is on health and human development in all stages of life in a multicultural environment and educating undergraduates on disease prevention and inculcating in each student a healthy life style. Faculty interviews have stressed the necessity of teaching the philosophy of wellness, that wellness is not the absence of illness, but rather a mind-body dimension that is holistic in nature.

The faculty in this important year-long program is dedicated, well trained and hard working, committed to the mission and objectives delineated in the program syllabus. Various pedagogical methods are utilized in this three quarter Health and Human Development program. There is a fall-quarter retreat where students form a learning



community. In addition, there are important lectures, professional guest presentations, and individual and group projects. A most important constituent of this program is a spring quarter project or internship in an area of interest.

In the areas of health, it is imperative that undergraduates at Evergreen be well grounded in the qualitative and quantitative epidemiological parameters of holistic health care from a global perspective. There are presently excellent computer databases in the areas of health for applied, basic, and clinical research.

Student assessments of the Health and Human Development program give the faculty high marks for the development and application of creative and critical thinking skills to practical problem solving in the health and human development area. For students who wish to pursue a career in the health professions, allied health, or in human services, it is suggested that there be measurable parameters of quantitative performance in the biological and social sciences. A computer competency based software program might be informative and helpful to the undergraduates in this three-quarter Health and Human Development program at Evergreen.

Computing and Technology. One of the most informative and insightful documents about the nature and state of administrative and academic computing at Evergreen was the Peer Review document compiled by three outside consultants on 24-26 February 1997. The observations made here since that time confirm and reinforce those conclusions although progress has been made in several areas in the year and a half since that study.

The bottom line is that computing, networking, and support infrastructure are essentially sound at Evergreen. A multi-year plan should be developed for computer equipment acquisition. Computing hardware and software are a fixed variable cost and the college must budget accordingly each year if the institution is to keep abreast of the most recent developments in administrative and academic computer technology. An architectural plan needs to be developed by Computing and Communications and put forward to the greater campus community at Evergreen for input, modifications, and approval. This plan would then become a regular component of the annual budget request in this important and expanding area. Without doubt e-mail is the most used and probably the most important system provided by Computing and Communications at Evergreen. It should be expanded and offered in areas where it does not presently exist.

At Evergreen computing technology has been integrated into the curriculum in most of the academic offerings to a considerable degree although it varies somewhat from unit-to-unit. The college administration has realized the need to continually integrate advances in computer technology and has made a commitment to do so now in and the future. For example, three laboratories are scheduled to be upgraded with new computers and the most recent software programs relevant to the academic

programs.

A technology plan exists for Evergreen, but like most colleges computer hardware is expensive and software systems need to be continually upgraded every few years as new options become available for faculty and students. While it was most essential in the sciences to keep abreast with new software programs and academic databases, that is now the case also for the humanities, social sciences, and graphic arts as well. These academic areas are dependent more and more on computer technology in teaching, creativity, and research for the faculty and undergraduates.

Within Computer Science there are three separate programs. The Data to Information Unit offers an excellent liberal-arts-oriented computer concentration that is academically challenging for students and places maximum demands upon the present Computer Science faculty. Some constructive criticism of The Data to Information Unit is that it is too intense and compact and the mission and content should be re-examined.

Another challenge is that some undergraduates are only interested in the Computer Science programs without a strong background in the liberal arts. Special seminars have been helpful. The unit, Computability and Cognition has included a philosophy of mind academic unit to address this challenge and need. The Concepts of Computing program can give students an opportunity to test their interest. The permanent part-time position filled this year which emphasizes computing applications and social issues of technology should help.

In summary, Evergreen must continually examine its commitment to computer technology and how that technology can best be integrated into the overall curriculum in a cost-effective manner while staying at the forefront of new educational opportunities. There should be an expectation that new faculty hires will be knowledgeable about integrating computer technology into their teaching and research regardless of their academic expertise. It may well be that a modest computer fee should be instituted for all students in the future to accommodate the need of computer technology at Evergreen.

## **STANDARD TWO**

### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS CULTURE, TEXT AND LANGUAGE (CTL)**

This recently formed Planning Unit views itself in large part to be at the core of the college. There appear to be some ample justifications for this self-perception: the Unit seems to be involved in more Core programs than any of the other Planning Units; it also appears to be involved in more "programs" than any of the other units. At least some members of this faculty group see CTL in part as the keepers and guarantors of "the

Evergreen Way,” that is, the philosophy and ideals upon which the college was founded. Some CTL faculty expressed the concern that faculty in other planning units were not (or are no longer) as committed to the principle of cooperative/interdisciplinary education as they are. This, they continue, is especially problematical at a time when Evergreen will be hiring a considerable number of faculty to replace retirees. This issue, some claim, needs to be discussed openly because it is in fact a question of what type of institution Evergreen will be.

Whatever the merits of such self-perceptions (CTL is at the “core” and the “heart” of the special nature of Evergreen), and there is bound to be some disagreement about them, even within CTL, the faculty in the unit, in spite of their voiced differences of opinions over matters such as the need for stable foundation courses or sequencing of certain kinds of programs, modules, and courses, appear remarkably united in their commitment to energetic and innovative teaching and to their commitment both to the interdisciplinary and collaborative work as well as to working closely with and conscientious mentoring of their students. What at first glance appears to be a rather unstable curriculum with no evident design or plan other than that which resulted from the desires of the individual or collaborating faculty members to offer programs and courses of their own making turns out to have more of a design and plan, therefore even predictability, than is at first discernible. The unit faculty offer and participate in more Core programs than any other area, and even though some members have presented an “alternative Core” proposal, they seem to take seriously their responsibility of dedicating some of their curriculum to incoming, freshman students; regardless of the precise topic or set of topics and issues of a given “program,” they concentrate on “the interpretation of texts” (understood broadly); they emphasize writing and intensive discussion in their seminar style formats; even though the titles and precise content of the “programs” change, the general emphasis in many cases is repeated, often on an alternate year basis. In certain areas, in fact, especially in those involving language and culture (Spanish/Latin American Studies; French and Francophone Culture; Japanese Language and Culture; Russian Language, History, Culture) the faculty involved are committed to offering those programs on a regular basis: in the case of Spanish/Latin American Studies each year; in the others every other year. This method of planning and curriculum implementation seems to offer sufficient continuity while at the same time allowing for dynamic innovation and creativity in the development of exciting new collaborative, inter- and multidisciplinary programs and courses. The presence of Part-time Studies courses/programs, that can be developed and offered with a quicker timeline, and the extensive number of “individual” or “group” contracts in Spring Quarter, do allow the students (as claimed) the real possibility of engaging in educational experiences, even formal “courses/programs,” which they initiate and/or suggest. Along with some faculty in other planning units, numerous CTL faculty support the college’s laudable efforts to enable students to benefit from study, research, and internship opportunities abroad. These opportunities, often tailor-fitted to individual students through intensive advising and mentoring, add a significant educational component to the experiences open to Evergreen students, one that



is even necessary for students interested in languages, area study, and other fields.

Yet, some problems or challenges are still apparent in the curriculum area. The Accreditation Visitor's Report from 1994 points to a "lingering dilemma between curricular flexibility, which helps keep the instruction vibrant and current, and curricular predictability, which helps students plan toward personal learning goals..." and goes on to suggest that this dilemma "probably can never be resolved; it may be enough simply to avoid excesses in either direction." The observations about actual planning made above indicate that the faculty in this unit (CTL) are aware of that tension and make a genuine effort to address it and avoid "the excesses." Whether those planning efforts and the resulting plans are communicated to students in a consistent and timely fashion, which would afford them the chance to plan their "curricular pathways" in a coherent manner, remains unclear. In any case, this is an issue that will continue to require considerable attention, discussion, and willingness to balance the admirable desires of the faculty to engage new material, new approaches and new teaching configurations with the need of the students to have some curricular stability, predictability, and breadth.

In another section of this report, the recommendation is made that a solution be sought to address a problem in the area of general education that arises from the fact that no mechanisms exist to ensure that students engage in educational experiences that cover the breadth of disciplinary areas including "the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, mathematics, and the social sciences." From the evidence studied, it appears that students whose main interest or concentration is in the programs of CTL (the humanities, understood broadly) represent the group of students least likely to engage in those experiences across the spectrum; namely, it appears many tend to avoid programs/courses with significant mathematics and/or natural science components altogether. Consequently, if the problem is to be addressed, for instance, by more effective advising, then faculty in this unit have a significant responsibility here.

Faculty Specific Issues. Some issues, concerns, and commendations regarding the CTL faculty are addressed above, but a few remain that deserve comment. First and most importantly, the CTL faculty should be commended for the energy and imagination with which they create programs and courses and teach them. Their commitment to collaborative, team-teaching and to providing their students with exciting, challenging, and vibrant learning experiences shows that the claim that students are the first priority at Evergreen is not only rhetoric, but impressive reality.

Second: even though the faculty in CTL (and elsewhere in the college) remain genuinely committed to what are very time-consuming course- and student-related activities, there appears to be a good deal of frustration regarding the lack of time to devote to scholarly and research activities that are more than affective and that are not related to teaching. Frequent complaints are heard that without at least a minimum of time for such scholarly activities, faculty run the risk of losing touch with their special fields of interest and with

professional peers elsewhere. This appears to be a growing concern among the newer, younger faculty, who express fears about becoming professionally isolated and out-of-date, even while they emphasize their commitment to the general teaching mission of the college. This issue will most likely become more serious rather than less, as the turnover of faculty accelerates in the near future, and it deserves some serious attention. Perhaps those faculty members who have been successful in maintaining a scholarly agenda and significant external professional contacts have a special responsibility toward helping newer faculty develop strategies to do the same.

Thirdly: some faculty expressed concerns that the increase of numbers of students they are required to admit to their programs and courses is jeopardizing their ability to give their students the kind of attention which Evergreen's educational philosophy and approach presume and require. Many students expressed concerns over the same perception, and asserted further that the number of programs offered are not sufficient to meet their needs. The entire institution will need to pay attention to these issues as the student numbers continue to increase; otherwise that makes the educational experience at Evergreen so special and unusual--the intensive faculty-student interaction--will be compromised.

## **STANDARD TWO**

### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS**

The Expressive Arts Planning Area was established at the beginning of TESC, one of the few remaining areas from that initial period. The current faculty of 23 persons are diverse in education and experience, very committed to the arts and dedicated to offering the unique educational objectives of the institution. They serve a student group of undergraduates in excess of 240, down from the high of 450 in 1990-91, but more consistent with the number of students the faculty can properly serve. Sally Cloninger, currently serving as Coordinator, enjoys the respect and confidence of both her colleagues and the students. She listens well, is sensitive to their needs, and clearly has their interests in mind. She has been energetic in seeking new faculty hires to both increase diversity and depth of subject matter taught.

The clear, concise educational objectives that are appropriate to a program of higher education are affirmed in their covenant. This covenant, which additionally serves as their program planning tool, is reviewed each fall when the total College faculty convenes a three day planning retreat. That time is used to reaffirm the goals and establish clear, accomplishable educational objectives in the yearly revised curriculum. The faculty seem to uniformly share in and support these goals.

Program offerings at the beginning levels are thoughtfully packaged in sets of team

taught programs with faculty from other curricular areas providing interdisciplinary content to the coursework. The material is delivered through a variety of techniques of lecture, seminar, and studio situations. The offerings provide the combination of theory and practice that is carefully woven into the curriculum. The actual credit, along with the suggested course equivalencies, is determined at the end of the year in the carefully written student assessments. However, the general education component as determined by the Commission on Colleges is hard to identify but in theory is spread through the milieu of educational experiences. Intermediate and advanced coursework can become more specialized, particularly in the more advanced student generated SOS courses that establish content using covenants agreed upon by both the participating faculty member and the students before the start of the school year. The educational program appears to be uniquely organized, with faculty fully engaged in teaching. However, the class sizes are large for any arts based program (the norm described by the College Art Association is 16 students while 25 students is the usual studio enrollment at TESC). In summation, the educational programs, though large, are well structured, diverse and balanced, providing a mix of theoretical and practical course work. The student work is quite excellent and poised to meet the challenge of changing technology. The courses are built on faculty strengths and packaged in ways to vary offerings to meet student demands of availability.

The students are thoughtful, energetic and determined in the pursuit of their broad liberal arts experience. There is a good range of younger and older students, providing a balance of ideas and experiences that strengthen any interactive program. Most students are a good mix of local, statewide and out of state students providing the important educational diversity. Instructional effectiveness is very apparent in the response from students who clearly understand the intent of the program and share in its mission to provide exceptional liberal arts study. The most successful students appear to those that are confident and self-motivated.

The physical facilities of the Expressive Arts Planning Area are very impressive for a liberal arts program, with performance, studio and work spaces and technical equipment one expects to see in only in a professional school. The facilities are spread through three separate buildings and have the usual need for more teaching, practice and studio spaces. There is a wonderful relationship between the faculty and the broad range of technical support staff who often have the opportunity to teach short units of practical training. The mission of the School is shared by these very gifted staff members. The increased need for technical equipment is obvious, and especially difficult with electronic, media and computer equipment. The facilities are well maintained and the generous shops appear to be excellent facilities with good safety records.

The library, which contains the majority of the collection, is nearby and is heavily used by the students. The arts are well represented in the collection of books and journals. The internal slide collection of 80,000 is good and growing in size, providing a proper

coverage of many art topics. Plans are already underway for digitizing the collection for computer use.

The faculty are appropriately educated with experience in both research and creative practice. They constitute a good mix of mature and new faculty, with a high percentage of minorities and women strongly represented. Teaching is done with seriousness of purpose, with faculty seeking to stay on the leading edge of contemporary thought. However, salaries for the faculty are below national norm, clearly less than is needed for effective and competitive faculty recruitment in the future. The Expressive Arts Planning Area has asked for and received support from the School for five new faculty hires which may ease the often expressed faculty burn-out with little time for individual creative work. The burden of faculty teaching, while enjoyed, was echoed throughout the faculty as a difficult issue. Some limits are needed, particular for newer, younger faculty who need to build careers on necessary research and practice.

The Expressive Arts Planning Area is healthy and the faculty is increasing in quality and creative potential, though heavily overworked. The curriculum is well integrated enjoying a strong theoretical and technical base. Emerging issues related to multi-cultural education have long been a part of the curriculum and new hires have added to their strength in those areas. The student body is bright, excited about their education and involved in their pursuit.

**Commendations:**

- 1) The Expressive Arts Planning Areas commitment to providing a rich array of performing arts, visual arts and media at a professional level quality is impressive.
- 2) The facilities, equipment and technical staff support for the Expressive Arts programs are remarkable for a liberal arts college.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Faculty support, in terms of increased salaries, must be addressed to maintain the quality of educational mission and compete on a national level.
- 2) The Expressive Arts Planning Area needs to have the institutional mechanism for solutions to provide time for the creative endeavors, avoid faculty burn-out and encourage the advancement of scholarly work.
- 3) Continued commitment to technological support, in trained staff, equipment purchase, and space, is needed to insure the educational quality of the expressive arts area.

## STANDARD TWO

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PLANNING UNIT

One of the key elements of the environmental planning unit is the integration of natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities around environmental themes. This is not especially unique, as many institutions view this integration as a critical part of environmental studies. The results at many institutions however, are often the presentation of both natural science and social science course content with very little true integration. Evergreen, on the other hand, offers students opportunities for development of environmental interests in each of these areas but in addition many of its programs fulfill the promise of integration. Although the nature of curriculum planning at Evergreen results in a somewhat eclectic array of programs, the Environmental Studies Planning Unit makes an earnest attempt at coherent offerings. It succeeds in some areas better than others. During the yearly all-faculty program planning retreats the core programs are the first to be discussed and the resultant programs meet the goal of twenty percent faculty participation. Many of these programs usually involve faculty with expertise in both the natural sciences and the social sciences or the humanities.

Because of the obvious links with the Scientific Inquiry Planning Unit cross unit programs are frequent. Both the planning of the programs and their delivery in the classroom maintains the spirit of interdisciplinarity and the mission of the institution, including collaborative shared learning, connected learning, and active learning in real world situations. Some areas of expertise represented within both these planning units are especially good at coordination leading to a rational progression of courses for students who wish to pursue these areas. Geology and perhaps Chemistry are such examples. Further discussion between faculty with expertise in other areas, especially Biology, might be beneficial in creating a more logical sequence of courses for students.

Several students expressed their frustration about being unable to take modules which would have provided needed supplements to their academic programs because programs and modules frequently have time conflicts. Although time conflict problems can never be eliminated, perhaps future discussion of ways to increase a student's option to enroll in modules should be revisited by faculty in this planning unit. The number of students who reported that they "missed" the opportunity to take calculus in their first years and realized this deficiency in their third or fourth year, and who could not find a way to make this up was particularly striking.

Work in the classroom and the field appears to fulfill both high standards for teaching and learning. Students interviewed were extremely impressive in recounting how they fared in jobs, internships, etc. even when measured against students from some of the most prestigious institutions in the country. Faculty with teaching experience at other



institutions also provide testimony regarding the level of expectations and achievement at Evergreen. A review of program portfolios reinforces the view that a great deal is being asked of students and they respond with significant effort. The planning unit, and perhaps the institution as a whole, would be well served to collect other data to document what appear to be excellent outcomes of teaching. Evidence such as GRE scores of recent graduates, acceptance rates to graduate schools, and other similar measures would be useful.

Although Evergreen may be an institution where student work is non-graded, evaluation is an intensive part of everything that happens here. The narrative evaluation of student work is a cornerstone of the academic program, but one that takes great deal of time and energy from faculty if it is to be done well. Although virtually every individual on campus praised the methodology, some students expressed concern that due to heavy time pressures some faculty were taking shortcuts with evaluations and relying too much on “boilerplate” of formulaic evaluations. Review of a small sample of such evaluations demonstrated substantial variation. All reviews surveyed did a good job at describing of the work undertaken by the student, but there was much more variability in specific analysis of student’s strengths and weaknesses. Clearly, there is a trade-off being too brief and writing an evaluation so detailed that the resultant student record becomes too long for a graduate school to read. However, efforts on the part of faculty to maintain the richness of these evaluations is essential to the Evergreen experience.

Because of the commitment of faculty to their students, advising succeeds well when the student seeks it. It appears that about as many students use individual faculty with whom they have had a relationship for advising as use the Academic Planning and Experiential Learning Center. Students report very positive results when either method is utilized; a receptive listener and a helpful advisor are always available for the asking. Perhaps the biggest problem in every institution is the beginning student who really does not know where he/she wishes to go. This problem is exacerbated at Evergreen because of its integrated programs and its extremely high proportion of transfer students. Some additional thought should be given about how to insure students, especially transfer students, in their first few quarters at the institution do not fall through the slats of the advising system. In the words of one student, “Advising should be more proactive”.

While most in the planning unit felt that the laboratory and field equipment was adequate for undergraduate teaching a recurring concern was expressed that much of the equipment was aging. There is no long range capital plan in effect that leads to faculty confidence in the timely replacement of equipment. While the realities of tight budgets will constrain equipment replacement at a pace desired by faculty a plan should be developed where priorities are set for whatever monies are available. This plan should also give serious weight to the needs of new faculty hires. The only issue raised by students in regard to facilities was the lack of accessible computers. Too many of the computers for student use are housed in a room where classes frequently meet. Student work is continually

interrupted by the needs of classes. Perhaps more computers, housed in other locations could be added over time.

### **Commendations:**

The dedication and effort of the faculty resulting in these high standards is obvious to even a casual observer. This institution clearly possesses one of the most imaginative, innovative, and dedicated faculties in the country. Students praise their faculty in being extremely unselfish with their time. Faculty who have worked to develop new programs very frequently leave those programs after a few offerings, not because the programs are not successful, but rather because most faculty highly value new interactions with new colleagues over new program content. This creates a very exciting atmosphere of continual curriculum renewal but it may also lead to increased uncertainty in planning for students and a very tired faculty. The benefit of this institutional renewal appears to significantly outweigh the potential problems of student planning their course of study (although these will be discussed under advising).

### **Recommendations:**

The continued ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty needs to be addressed. The salary of faculty continues to be an issue and a source of demoralization. From discussions with faculty in the Environmental Studies planning unit, there is evidence it may also be affecting the ability to recruit new faculty. Faculty recounted numerous recent searches where candidates on the "short list" withdrew after hearing about the salary. It was noted that in one search the person hired was well down on the list of preferred candidates and that other searches have been closed one year and reopened the next all due to rejections of offers based on salary. At least one member of the planning unit has left because of salary. While retention may also be a significant issue, it is the difficulties associated with faculty recruitment that offers the best evidence of the seriousness of this issue.

The faculty student teaching ratios appear to be relatively unchanged over the last ten years. Despite this data, the faculty is virtually unanimous in their perceptions of heavier workloads. The genesis of these perceptions remained somewhat unclear. It appears that many of the faculty in the Environmental Studies planning unit, despite this heavy workload, have found a way to be productive scholars, although this continues to be viewed as very difficult to maintain. Some faculty in the unit have combined both teaching and research by collaborating with students on significant research projects. This effort is impressive and praiseworthy.

While the faculty review of performance of their colleagues might appear to outsiders to be "overkill," the faculty were very convincing in their assessment of the value of such reviews, especially the five-year review. The extent of the review, the degree of

participation of other faculty, and the numerous examples of positive outcomes from the review process is impressive.

## **STANDARD TWO**

### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS CONTINUING EDUCATION AND SPECIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

TESC offers three off-campus programs: a reservation based program, a large upper division program in Tacoma, and a small upper division program at Grays Harbor Community College. These off-site programs, which flow from the institution's mission statement and goals, support Evergreen's commitment to community based learning which focuses on issues and problems found within the students' communities. These guiding principles as well as Evergreen's desire to serve diverse place bound populations guide its community-based programs.

It is essential that off-campus program students receive the same level of support found on the main campus. The continuity of off-campus programs is dependent on the students having access to technology and library sources in order to maintain the integrity of the academic programs.

The leadership and management of TESC's off-campus programs are integral organizational components of the institution. Programs are approved, administered and evaluated under the same institutional procedures used for the main campus in Olympia. Each program is discussed further below.

The Reservation Based Community Determined Tribal Program provides educational opportunities to place bound students and is customized to meet the needs of the individual tribes. Involving the Tribal Council in the planning and implementation of the program honors the culture and traditions of Native Americans.

The institution has demonstrated its support for its Reservation Based Community Determined Tribal Programs program by locating it within the Center for Native American Studies and granting the faculty member who directs the program .5 FTE for administrative duties. Student services support for the program is strong and all involved are committed to the program's success.

The Reservation Based Community Determined Tribal Programs program is offered in the evening at the five Reservation sites in order to accommodate working adults. An innovative aspect of the program is that four times each term the five groups of students meet together on the weekend in a magnet concept. Bringing students from the different sites together enriches the curriculum, as students are able to compare the uniqueness of their tribal issues with those of the other tribes participating in the program. The magnet



meetings are held both at the main campus and rotated among the sites. When the students come to campus, they also have the opportunity to meet with Student Services personnel and use the library.

Another innovative aspect of Reservation Based Community Determined Tribal Programs is the formal partnership between Evergreen and the Northwest Indian College (NWIC) in Bellingham, Washington. This agreement insures that credit that can be transferred and allows these site bound students to fulfill their lower division degree requirements.

The Tacoma Program is theme based and focuses on meeting the needs of the communities it serves. A distinctive feature of the Tacoma program is the assigned faculty, which includes core faculty from Tacoma, a faculty member on rotation from the main campus in Olympia, and a practitioner who normally is a leader in the community. In addition, the Tacoma Program has a faculty rotation agreement with Tacoma Community College (TCC). A Tacoma Program faculty member teaches in the Tacoma Community College Bridge Program that provides the lower division core program. In exchange, a TCC faculty member rotates to the Olympia campus for one year. These unique faculty arrangements have resulted in significant professional development opportunities for Tacoma Community College faculty. Also, the Bridge students become accustomed to Evergreen faculty teaching strategies and this experience eases their transition to the upper division program.

The Tacoma Program is commended for its service to the regions it serves. The students are actively involved as change agents in their communities. The faculty have given their students a passion for learning which has resulted in the students becoming lifelong learners. The Tacoma Program initiatives of faculty and students truly have made a positive difference in the communities it serves.

The Grays Harbor program is distinctive in its use of highly dedicated part time faculty to provide place bound students in an economically distressed region the opportunity to complete their baccalaureate degrees. The administrative support provided by the Academic Dean responsible for Part Time Study, Suzan Fiksdal, is noteworthy and key to the success of this program. The Dean has implemented faculty evaluations comparable to those of the main campus.

#### **Commendations:**

- 1) Evergreen is commended for its Reservation Based Community Determined Tribal Program. Delivering educational programs to the Reservations, involving elders, and customizing the program to meet individual tribal needs demonstrates the College's sensitivity to the Native American culture and TESC service to the tribes is noteworthy.
- 2) The Tacoma Program is commended for the outstanding service and its emphasis

on community leadership and service resulting in numerous student contributions to the community. The Tacoma faculty and students live their motto "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve."

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That methods be explored to expand access to information resources as well as document delivery procedures so that off-campus students have comparable access to library instruction and support services.
- 2) That computer availability at each off-campus teaching site be reviewed to assure comparable access for students.

**STANDARD TWO  
POLICY 2.1**

**GENERAL EDUCATION**

The Evergreen State College is an "alternative" institution, but one whose educational goals are consonant with those of the Commission on Colleges. Its goals are clearly stated in its catalogue and official documents, and so are the alternative means it pursues. It has established programs of assessment to determine its effectiveness, its faculty is intensely involved in curriculum planning through planning units and frequent "Disappearing Task Forces" that address such plans. The Evaluation Committee was impressed by the dedication of faculty and students to the unique character of TESC, to the faculty's giving clear priority to teaching over research, and to the sense of a common enterprise of teaching and learning throughout students, faculty and administration.

The alternative nature of TESC as an institution of higher education is perhaps exhibited most clearly in the structure and components of its undergraduate curriculum. There are no distribution requirements, no required courses, in fact no "courses" at all. A student chooses his or her own pathway through the curriculum by enrolling in a "program" that typically (though not universally) extends over two or three quarters, has more than one teacher (indeed up to five teachers), and has a subject-matter that is addressed through an interdisciplinary approach. One such program may constitute the whole course of study of a student over an academic year of three quarters. The program description indicates the areas in which credit can be awarded (in "course equivalents"), e.g. "Credit awarded in Biology, English, basic Math, Philosophy and futuristics." The only graduation requirement is the accumulation of 180 quarter credit hours.

So, the educational goals at TESC are normally to be achieved through multi disciplinary,

team-taught courses that a student chooses to enroll in, and that aim (and largely succeed) at involving the student in the learning process through discussion seminars, integrating different perspectives, and projects that relate theory and practice. Intermediate and Advanced level programs with prerequisites allow students to concentrate their studies in something akin to traditional majors.

The programs of the curriculum aim at cultivating the basic skills and knowledges of the liberally educated person, without requiring specific courses in subjects like Mathematics, natural science, History, composition, etc. These subject matters are intended to be encountered in the interdisciplinary programs. When all goes well, they succeed (in the words of the Accreditation Handbook, Policy 2.1) in introducing “students to the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge--the humanities, the fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences--and help them develop the skills that will make them more effective learners.” Although the curriculum is restructured annually with many largely new offerings, there is little evidence that an ongoing program of assessment makes an important contribution to that restructuring.

Standard 2C (Undergraduate Program) of the Accreditation Handbook stipulates that undergraduate programs “include a substantial core of general education instruction with identifiable outcomes and require competence in (a) written and oral communication, (b) quantitative reasoning..” With respect to these goals, there are two critical components to assess in the Evergreen course of studies.

One component is whether individual programs offer a “substantial core” that requires competence in such areas of knowledge. The other component is whether the student chooses to enroll in enough courses to acquire knowledge of the content and methodology of these major areas of knowledge and competence in writing and Mathematics.

With respect to writing, there appears to be wide agreement among both teachers and students that much is achieved. Although there is no cumulative assessment (e.g. through portfolios, etc.), and there is some question about whether the development of writing skills in the early years continues, our own evaluation revealed positive evidence that competence in writing is successfully fostered at key points within the curriculum.

With respect to Mathematics, there is evidence that the goal is not being met as a part of general education, i.e. for all students. Indeed it appears that there is weakness on both sides: not enough programs that include mathematical requirements, and too many students who do not elect programs that do.

The Core Self Study (1998) quotes an earlier Long Range Curriculum Disappearing Task Force that all Core programs “should provide opportunity and support to develop facility in writing, reading, seminar, library use and accepting responsibility for one’s own academic decisions.” It then adds, “These goals have not changed and indeed have been

augmented to include quantitative reasoning and technological skill.” But in fact in the current catalogue, eight of the ten Core programs being offered have no mathematical component (i.e. no mathematical course equivalents are listed), and in non-Core courses only about 20 percent of the programs require Mathematics or offer Math credit.

With respect to student selection of programs, a study of the 1996 alumni done by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning revealed that 53 percent of Evergreen natives had no credits in Math at all.

One conclusion at least seems warranted: Evergreen is not succeeding in meeting either its own goals, or those of the Commission on Colleges, for liberal education, at least with respect to Mathematics. (The study mentioned shows that some, though many fewer, Evergreen natives also took zero credits in the Arts and Natural Science -- 12 and 18 percent respectively.)

The College is not unaware of these problems (see the Core Self Study, pp. 7, 53, 55, 57). Last summer, under a grant from the ACLS, there was a two-week workshop in integrating Mathematics into programs attended by 19 faculty members. Perhaps there is another aspect of the problem that could be explored. The advising of students could help to play a mediating role between the student and the selection of programs. Either the program teacher who is assigned a student to evaluate and who typically has a one-on-one meeting with that student at the end of the quarter/year, or the APEL adviser to whom a student turns for counsel, could be in a better position to advise if he or she were informed of the student's course selections thus far. It would not be difficult to print out a transcript-in-progress which showed not only programs taken but course equivalences, which help the adviser get a better sense of where the student has been.

**Recommendation:**

- 1) The Committee recommends that The Evergreen State College insure that all of its students acquire the competencies appropriate to general education, especially but not exclusively in Mathematics. This is called for by the college's own goals as well as Standard 2C. Whatever the means taken, given a situation in which there are no required courses/programs, and in which student choices are largely unconstrained, there is nonetheless an institutional responsibility to achieve its stated liberal and general education goals.

## STANDARD TWO POLICY 2.2

### POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Evergreen probably has more at stake in assessment than more traditional programs, both because their mission calls for a clear focus on teaching and learning and because they have deliberately chosen to pursue an experimental educational program. Therefore they are under more pressure than most colleges to demonstrate the validity of their educational program in terms of student learning outcomes. They have risen to this challenge remarkably well.

Assessment programs today are complex undertakings, and a complete and comprehensive program of assessment might be described and evaluated using the following elements: 1) Timing, including data for entering students, students at mid-program, graduates, and alumni. 2) Measures, including measures of cognitive skills, attitudes and values, college experiences and satisfactions, and aggregated statistics such as time to degree; 3) Leadership, 4) Involvement of faculty, administration, and students. 5) Use of data to diagnose problems, assist in the planning process, implement changes, and continually evaluate progress.

#### **Overview:**

It should be said at the outset that evergreen has established a True "program" of assessment. There is an unusually high degree of faculty participation and an exceptional concern about making use of the data collected. Since these are perhaps the most difficult aspects of an assessment program to accomplish, Evergreen's performance in these areas might serve as a model for other colleges.

#### 1. Timing

The college has good information about the characteristics of entering freshmen, and they have also made a good and conscientious effort to collect information from alumni and compare the data with prospective employers. They have not made the same level of effort to collect information about transfer students, nor do they have good information about graduating seniors. Since transfers constitute the majority of Evergreen students, it would appear desirable to know something about the characteristics of this "entering" class. It is also important to know what graduating seniors have learned from their experiences at Evergreen, both in terms of academic performance and attitudes about education and lifelong learning.

#### 2. Measures

The 1989 Accreditation team found that the college had not been as innovative in its approach to assessment as it had been in curriculum design. The 1994 interim accreditation review noted considerable progress, and we find that this progress continues. Evergreen uses a wide variety of creative approaches to assessment. Not content to leave assessment to "measurement professionals," they seek to create and use measures that will reflect their distinctive educational mission and goals. Data from measures such as the ACE Freshman Survey, CSEQ, and the College Student Survey permit comparison with appropriate normative groups, and they are strongly supportive of the values and emphases that undergird the Evergreen philosophy.

There is, however, greater emphasis on student self-report and student attitudes and experiences than on cognitive measures of academic performance. This is probably due, in part, to the lack of agreement nationwide on appropriate and reliable measures of cognitive growth, and, in part, due to the nature of the Evergreen philosophy and mission. But institution-wide cognitive measures such as writing ability and quantitative skills would be helpful to "outsiders," as well as to staunch defenders of the Evergreen pedagogy, who need to know the areas of weaknesses and strengths in their own curriculum.

### 3. Leadership

The president of the institution has communicated that student assessment is an institutional priority; that assessment should help shape the direction of the institution; and that assessment must be included in the long-range planning process. In addition, academic leadership has been provided in every aspect of the assessment program by the provost, academic deans, and the faculty.

Although the institution has struggled with the state-wide mandates, the institution has been proactive in using assessment to improve their educational programming.

### 4. Involvement

Since its inception Evergreen has been committed to a detailed evaluation of both students and faculty in the form of narrative evaluations. Although this is not usually thought of as "assessment," students and faculty at Evergreen are deeply involved in this form of continuous self- and peer- evaluation.

With the national emphasis on assessment and state mandates regarding accountability, Evergreen has sought to involve faculty in the assessment of the academic areas. For the most part, the self-studies done by the academic areas are impressive. The Academic Dean and Director of Institutional Research & Planning provided excellent guidelines and offers of assistance in collecting data, but the faculty groups carried out their self-studies in a self-reflective, self-critical, and constructive manner.



## 5. Use of Assessment Results

There is encouraging strong evidence that the college uses assessment information to define problem areas, collect relevant data, and apply it for improving program areas and services. Examples of the use of assessment results to improve education include curricular revisions, freshman retention, and improving services in the Registrar's Office, the Financial Aid Office, and the Academic Advising Office.

Evergreen should be encouraged to develop a more holistic use of Planning Unit Coordination (PUC) assessment data that can be shared on a campus-wide basis.

### **Conclusion:**

In general, the visiting committee found the assessment program at Evergreen to be strong, multi-faceted and appropriate to its educational program and goals. They do, however, need to give attention to the development of some measures of academic performance, especially in writing and quantitative skills. While the broadly decentralized program of assessment has the powerful advantage of involving faculty extensively in assessment, it has the disadvantage of unevenness and lack of an overall institutional perspective.

Evergreen is especially strong and is to be highly commended on 1) the extent to which they involve faculty in assessment, 2) the leadership that makes assessment an important and ongoing activity and 3) the uses made of assessment to diagnose, evaluate, and plan programs.

## **STANDARD 2.D**

### **GRADUATE PROGRAM**

The Evergreen State College Offers three graduate program master's degrees: Master of Environmental Sciences (MES), a Master of Teaching (MIT), and Master of Public Administration (MPA). Each program is designed to provide advanced education for current or future practitioners. A review of degree requirements, course outlines, student projects, faculty portfolios and conversation with program directors, faculty, current students and recent graduates supports the conclusion that all three graduate programs are consistent with the mission and goals of TESC. Each has a well defined set of objectives and learning outcomes appropriate to the degree level and area of study.

## **STANDARD 2.E**

### **GRADUATE PROGRAM GRADUATE FACULTY AND RELATED RESOURCES**

The Evergreen State College makes no provision for a separate graduate faculty. Consistent with the institution's curricular design, faculty teach in several areas and across several levels (e.g., core, electives and graduate where appropriate).

A review of faculty portfolios currently teaching in the graduate program supports the contention that they provide an acceptable level of instruction for graduate students. They are involved with the application of current knowledge through ongoing projects with area practitioners or organizations.

A review of the applied computer laboratory, faculty offices and meeting spaces, the library and computing facilities suggests that each program enjoys institutional support appropriate to the program. Library and technology needs appear stressed and attention does need to be given to the unique needs that graduate students place on such resources.

The graduate programs are organized and conducted in a manner consistent with the overall institutional model. Central to this arrangement is the use of interdisciplinary teams--giving these master's degree programs unique strength and coherence.

The limited amount of financial aid available to support graduate students is cited as a limiting dimension in future graduate student recruitment.

## **STANDARD 2.F**

### **GRADUATE PROGRAM GRADUATE RECORDS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT**

A review of graduate admission materials, handbooks, discussion with program admission personnel and directors, as well as review of actual records supports the conclusion that graduate admission and retention policies and practices support both program and College goals and objectives. Evidence was presented in support of strong faculty involvement in both establishing general and specific program admission criteria. (2F1; 2F2).

An area of concern for each program is the apparent "level of disconnect" between the individual program offices and the college admission office. Absent is a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations for each other. It is suggested that TESC examine the current and desired relationship between the admission office and



each graduate program office; clarify mutual expectations in support of an effective graduate recruitment, admission, retention and graduation process. (2F3)

A review of curricula and student materials, program policies and conversation with faculty, staff and students demonstrates that each degree program requirement is consistent with the applicable standard (2F4). Transcript credit is appropriately evaluated in each program (2F5).

Master of Environmental Studies (MES): This program builds on the successful environmental studies area of the undergraduate curricula. The graduate program is designed for practitioners serving in the many agencies and organizations that focus on environmental issues, both scientific and policy oriented.

Concern was expressed regarding the “disconnect” between the program’s recruitment and admissions efforts and the college admissions office as discussed above.

Attention to those items identified by the faculty through the self study (p 95) is encouraged.

Master of Teaching (MIT): This program offers a unique curriculum for future teachers designed and managed consistent with the “Evergreen model” yet consistent with the demands of the Washington State Board of Education, thus assuring graduates will receive state certification to practice in the public schools.

The organizational structure, a distinctive student teaching arrangement, and a student project appropriate to both graduate work and public school teaching, give this program several unique characteristics. Again, the “disconnect” between the program and the admissions office is identified as an area of concern. Attention to the self study items identified on page 98 is encouraged.

Master of Public Administration (MPA): The MPA program is a practitioner oriented program designed to strengthen the knowledge and skills of current or future public administrators. The program makes significant and appropriate use of area agencies in support of program goals, through the use of adjunct faculty, internships and field experiences. Many of the students are currently employed. As discussed before, the “disconnect” between the admissions office and the program is an area of concern. The faculty identified areas for further study (p 96) appear appropriate.

Social Sciences: The social sciences area is the result of a recent merger (1997) of several former specialty areas. Thus the area is in a period of rapid transition and unusual opportunity. Conversations with faculty and examination of current materials argue that the area is developing those knowledges and skills appropriate for an interdisciplinary view of the social sciences. The very real tensions among general versus more

professional curriculum pathways, single versus diverse understanding of philosophies -- both substantive and pedagogical -- and relations to appropriate graduate programs must be addressed in future months if the area is to reach full potential. The faculty developed list of needed actions appears a most logical and comprehensive agenda for immediate attention.

Center for Native American and World Indigenous Populations Studies: This new Center brings together the on-campus Native Americans Studies programs, the off-campus programs as well as the outreach and cultural heritage activities of the Longhouse. The Center builds on longstanding TESC commitment to Native American populations both surrounding the institution and from beyond. Strong, constructive ties with the elders of area tribes provide additional evidence of institutional commitment to build and maintain programs that support the cultural heritage of area tribes.

The Evergreen State College should be commended for its sustained programs and activities that enhance the collegiate experience for individuals of color. Of particular merit is the development Center for Native American and World Indigenous Population Studies, and the Longhouse Educational and Cultural Centers and their commitment to both on-campus and outreach programming. The extensive involvement with tribal elders and the tribal determined curricula is outstanding.

#### **Commendations:**

- 1) The team wishes to recognize the exceptional quality of the self-study. The report was not only carefully organized and well written, but it demonstrated the value of sincere inquiry and reflection in the interest of self-improvement.
- 2) The mission for which TESC was founded is fulfilled by an institution-wide climate of engagement, involvement and intellectual curiosity. We find the degree to which the attributes are met to be almost unparalleled in higher education.
- 3) The Evergreen State College is commended for its longstanding programs in support of students of color. The success of minority students on the campus reflects the creation and maintenance of a nurturing, caring supportive and academically responsive environment. Of particular merit are the activities and programs that support Native American students and communities. The Reservation Based Community Determined Tribal Program, the Longhouse and its programs, and the Center for Native American and World Indigenous Populations are of significant importance.
- 4) The committee commends Evergreen on its imaginative, dedicated and innovative faculty. They have selflessly given to their time to students. We further commend Evergreen on its system wide team teaching approach to classroom instruction. The high degree of collaboration builds on individual strengths, provides multiple approaches to

meeting individual student learning preferences, and promotes the development of new faculty.

### STANDARD THREE

#### STUDENTS

Effective Services. The college and its students enjoy a quality set of student services. The services and the ways they are organized and carried out fit the distinctive educational ways of Evergreen. The staff are dedicated, student-centered, friendly, professional, and animated by a clear sense of their educational roles.

Special Roles of Student Affairs. It is generally recognized that the nature of a student affairs program must be shaped by the special character of the institution within which it works. Evergreen is a very special distinctive institution and those in Student Affairs Services serve well in that context; the special ways of the college really do shape how student affairs are done.

Historically and nationally faculties used to do most of what student affairs professionals do today. Evergreen, however, remains very much a “faculty” dominated college; the faculty really do feel themselves responsible for teaching the whole student rather than just some special discipline during some set class hours each day. Caring for the personal development of students is not shunted off to the side for specialists to deal with. Rather, these are matters of genuine concern to the faculty. The main student affairs practitioners at Evergreen *are* the faculty; they are backed and supported by a professional staff who are full members of the educational community. The usual non-permeable boundaries between the academic and the non-academic student matters are almost absent. That is a major strength of student affairs at Evergreen and we commend the college for that.

Many student services are typically organized at Evergreen: examples include admissions, registration, counseling, health services, security, housing and placement. Student affairs professionals assume leadership in student crises and serve as a resource to students and faculty. The staff accept their share of the responsibilities to help govern and administer the college.

Some functions, however, are atypical. We were reminded that Evergreen’s model is less that of one college than it is a collection of many small ones. Each of those “small ones” is a program where students and their faculty do their scholarship together full time. This paradigm challenges student affairs to foster a limited but real sense of community that strengthens rather than weakens the independence and power of the program. This presents daunting challenges in student activities, sports, recreation, and residential life.

Salaries. As is noted elsewhere in this report many of Evergreen’s salaries are too low, so much so that attracting and recruiting professional staff has become very vexing. This is

a problem in student affairs that needs fixing.

Student Government. It was not surprising to find that the idea of a college-wide student self-governance has never gained lasting traction at Evergreen. Student government, however, is important to the health of the college and its students. We commend the students who are working so purposefully to create a student government. While students have strong voices (perhaps as strong as they wish) on DTFs and other matters, the students working to organize a student government recognize the importance of a democratically activated collective voice in college-wide matters.

Evergreen Student Affairs Excels. We applaud the professionals working in student affairs for their faith and investment in the very special missions of the college. The staff are special because of that; they are teachers in their own right.

Accreditation Standard Three is comfortably met.

The Special Problem of Retention. Students *do* drop out at an uncomfortably high level after their first taste of Evergreen: approximately 40% of the first year students fail to return for their second year. This is defined as an issue in the Self-Study “...(Improve) our ability to identify and recruit students most capable of taking advantage of Evergreen is also critical.” (p. 134) This issue is also embedded in the Accreditation Standard 3.1, the policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status. “All post secondary institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in advertising (and) student recruitment.....”(Standards p. 57) This applies to Evergreen in a very special way because of the distinctive, uncommon, and powerful expectations it has about how students must successfully engage the college and its curriculum. For Evergreen, however, the issue is not of inaccurate explanation; rather a problem of inadequate explanation.

We recommend that this nagging problem be confronted; students who fail to anticipate well the curricular and personal demands of Evergreen are at greater-than-usual risk of dropping out.

Coming for the Right Reasons. Evergreen is not for everyone; good “fit” is essential. How informed are students when choosing to apply and enroll at Evergreen? Do they make wise choices about the learning responsibilities and freedoms of Evergreen? Does the college help them to understand their readiness for Evergreen? Do they come for the right reasons?

Importance of Informed Choices. The college must constantly seek clear and imaginative ways to explain itself. It must speak not only to potential applicants, but also to those who advise them: parents, high school and college counselors, teachers, families, friends, alumni, and current students. The need to explain itself better to the uninitiated is a theme

of the self-study. Hence the college may be attracting drop-out prone students as well as failing to attract students for whom Evergreen would be a good fit. At the moment, an adequate job is not being done and that is probably an important factor in the attrition after the first year. There has been much attention to what can be done to retain students once they are here; there has been too little done to insure that prospective students make good decisions in the first place.

The College Chooses Too. Does Evergreen have some responsibility to recognize students who may be applying for the wrong reasons? For identifying applicants who will be especially prone to difficulties when engaging the college? And, for responding to such students in appropriate ways? Of course. But at the moment the college admits virtually all who apply. There is little room to screen for students who may be more prone to have difficulties at Evergreen.

The problem of high attrition will surely worsen as the college confronts higher enrollment targets. There is a risk that numbers rather than “good fit” become the driving motivation.

In short, Evergreen’s admissions processes may be missing the target; it may not be helping students make informed choices. Too many potential students may not understand Evergreen well enough.

**Recommendation:**

1) We recommend that the college begin to address its serious freshmen attrition problem by insuring that prospective students come for the right reasons and that they have a good chance to succeed. There has been much attention to what can be done to support students once they are here; there has been too little done to insure that prospective students make good decisions in the first place.

**STANDARD FOUR**

**FACULTY**

Faculty define the heart of the institution, and Evergreen is no exception. Because of the non-traditional nature of Evergreen, faculty who come to Evergreen and stay for extended periods must have a strong commitment to Evergreen and to the Evergreen way of doing things. The committee was very impressed with the quality of the faculty and their commitment to teaching and learning. All evidence, including interviews and portfolios, pointed to a faculty who were dedicated to teaching and learning, innovative and imaginative, and life-long learners themselves.

Faculty participate at all levels of the institution but are especially active in academic planning and curriculum development and review. The curriculum is controlled by the faculty and is developed and reviewed annually by them. As the self-study notes, "it is up to the faculty members in each group to work out a suitable curriculum, according to their evolving standards and understandings of what is best." (p. 212) The process begins with individual faculty members and teams, then moves to reviews by the five subject-area planning groups and ultimately the academic deans, who are considered faculty members "on leave".

Faculty have the opportunity to advise through several venues. One venue open to all faculty is to advise informally through the close on-going relationships with students in the learning communities they form during the year. In addition, the Academic Planning and Experiential Learning Center (APEL) includes one faculty member each year on rotation from teaching. An additional 6-10 faculty keep regular hours at the Center.

Faculty are expected to devote 20% of their time to governance, and each year faculty sign up for various governance activities. Much of the policy work of Evergreen is developed through DTFs (Disappearing Task Forces) where faculty are major members on those involving academic issues and participants in DTFs for other areas also. This is a process that typically works quite well. When DTFs have completed their work and the recommendations have been passed by the faculty as a whole, steps are taken to make their recommendations the policy of the institution. There are numerous examples of policies developed by DTFs throughout the self-study.

As a governance concept, the unique process of rotating deans from faculty into administration and back to faculty also works well from the faculty point of view. Deans expressed the belief that this keeps them in touch with faculty perspectives. Faculty who were interviewed typically viewed deans as one of "us" rather than as one of "them."

Monthly faculty meetings appear not to be working as well as some other forms of governance. Though not a new phenomenon, it has been difficult to obtain quorums (25% of all faculty) at the monthly meetings. It is further noted in the self-study that only 18% of faculty expressed satisfaction with faculty meetings while 42% were dissatisfied. Faculty and administrators are encouraged to continue to find ways to improve this form of faculty participation in governance.

The committee finds that the evaluation of faculty is consistent to Commission Policy 4.1. Indeed, the process is unusually public and based on first-hand information. Both full- and part-time faculty are evaluated at Evergreen. As noted in the self study ( p. 214) and verified in interviews and documentation, "Frequent, direct evaluation of faculty work by teaching colleagues and students is a cornerstone of Evergreen practice. At Evergreen faculty evaluation is substantive, peer-based, and annual." All faculty are required to maintain a portfolio. One component is an annual self-evaluation. A second



is an annual evaluation from each faculty team member who worked with the faculty member (and most teaching is done in teams). A third is a set of student evaluations which are narrative; students who receive faculty evaluations or who may be taught by the faculty member in team programs are solicited for them.

In addition, every five years a thorough review also is conducted. This review consists of a meeting of the reviewer with all of his/her teaching partners from the past five years and an academic dean. Data provided for the meeting include a five-year retrospective self-evaluation, a prospective 3-5 year teaching and learning plan, and the reviewer's portfolio. The focus is developmental and no formal report is produced. Interviews with those who have been involved in the process indicate that the process has been very successful in providing an opportunity for self-reflection and celebration of past successes. In addition, in almost all cases where difficult issues needed to be addressed, they typically were, often by the reviewer first.

The evaluation system relies upon the willingness of all parties to communicate honestly about strengths *and* weaknesses observed during the teaching situation. To a large extent, it appears that the climate of Evergreen has fostered an openness and willingness to honestly critique one another in a variety of forums. In addition, to help students in this process, students may choose to turn in their faculty evaluations after they receive their narrative evaluations from faculty. Faculty evaluation of each other's teaching is actually on-going throughout the program as they plan and interact. This culminates in an evaluation of each team member at the end of the program or course. This evaluation is carried forward to the end-of-term faculty conference and to the five-year reviews.

Continuous professional growth is encouraged in conjunction with faculty evaluation process. Rather than having explicit faculty development programs, much of the faculty development at Evergreen is expected to occur during the ongoing activity of teaching, especially since Evergreen's model supports faculty learning simultaneous with student learning. In addition, the faculty evaluation model is developmental in nature and encourages faculty to address areas of interest or weakness. New faculty have their portfolios reviewed annually by the process previously mentioned. In addition, the orientation program is expanding and includes "buddies" for new faculty.

A professional leave policy outlines the accrual of professional leave according to length of service. Unfortunately, however, the money allotted only allows for faculty to have sabbaticals about every ten years. The professional travel budget allows up to \$1500 per faculty member. A sponsored research program supports summer release time, seed grants, and grants-in-aid for well-developed professional agendas. Other developmental activity has occurred during the summer through brief faculty development workshops and institutes.

The college has identified faculty development as an issue, recommending that the

college find ways to expand current faculty development approaches and to clarify goals and identify unmet needs. Since so many new faculty are currently being hired, developmental activities for new faculty are an especially important area of needed improvement. While the committee agrees that faculty development is an important area to address and urges the institution to continue to address needs in this area, the committee finds that level of faculty development activity is already quite good.

Academic security provisions include academic freedom, competitive salaries, and benefits. Academic freedom seems secure at Evergreen with alternatives to mainstream views even encouraged. Compensation, however, is a statewide concern. In the self-study it is noted that Evergreen falls well below average salaries nationally. New faculty indicate that they often must take pay-cuts to come to Evergreen and have to weigh the low salary against the benefits of teaching in such an institution. Because salaries for faculty are uniform across program areas, attracting faculty into some areas such as computer science and public administration will be increasingly difficult. So far, however, few faculty have left Evergreen because of salary and the institution continues to attract new faculty, though an increasing number are refusing Evergreen because of salary. Evergreen is at a critical point where it may lose its distinctive character because faculty must sacrifice too much to be employed there.

Workload is another area where a critical point may soon be reached. The major work of faculty at Evergreen is teaching—teaching that requires a high level of time, effort, and imagination. Currently an average of 19.8 students per faculty enroll each quarter. While this is only slightly larger than past ratios, there is a widespread perception among faculty that workload has increased for a variety of reasons. While it is a firm practice not to allow planning ratios above 25 to 1, there is no faculty-wide guideline on hours or types of student contact, no mandated or contractual workload quotas. In addition, there is no current formal system for recognizing extensive governance work. Faculty workloads are considered equalized, however, and where they are not, it is due to agreements made by the individual faculty member. Faculty indicate that they can be their own worst enemies, unable to say “no” to students, governance commitments, or planning new courses and programs.

Nevertheless, faculty morale remains high. As a unique institution, Evergreen attracts unique faculty who are unusually committed to teaching and students. Turnover is low. Promotion, tenure and pay discrepancies are not issues because of the way the system is set up. Most professional development is built into the instructional setting and in the hands of individual faculty. Sabbatical leave policies appear to be uniformly administered.

The committee was impressed with how Evergreen deals with its adjunct faculty (currently 17.44 FTE of the total 139.76 FTE for 1996-97 committed teaching faculty). The committee confirmed that adjunct faculty are qualified for their teaching



assignments, and are informed of the conditions of employment to include work assignment, rights and responsibilities and compensation provisions. Recently (1997-98), the college appointed the first regular part-time faculty, who will eventually be eligible for continuing appointments of the same kind available to regular faculty. Adjunct faculty can vote on college policy and sit on committees. They have yearly contracts and participate in an evaluation process which includes a teaching portfolio, observation of their teaching by the dean, a conversation with the dean about that teaching and portfolio, and the dean's written evaluation. The portfolio includes the same information as the regular faculty's portfolio. Half-time adjunct faculty receive an unusual amount of support, including office, computer, telephone, support staff, travel funds, and access to faculty development opportunities. Their conditions of reappointment are included in the faculty reappointment document (exhibit 4-6).

All faculty engage in various forms of scholarship, research, and artistic creation. Much of this is done through interdisciplinary work with other faculty. Many faculty also work with their students on community projects and research.

#### **Commendations:**

- 1) The committee commends Evergreen on its imaginative, dedicated, and innovative faculty. They have selflessly given of their time to students. We further commend Evergreen on its system-wide team-teaching approach to classroom instruction. The high degree of collaboration builds on individual strengths, provides multiple approaches to meeting individual student learning preferences, and fosters the development of new faculty.
- 2) The committee commends Evergreen in the development and implementation of its five-year review of regular faculty. This process has brought the opportunity to celebrate past achievements, develop a perspective that includes the past and the future, provide needed developmental feedback, and form connections and obtain information needed for proposed future work.
- 3) The committee commends Evergreen in the collegial handling of its adjunct faculty. Qualifications, employment practices, and evaluation policies are all exemplary.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1) The committee finds that the College's ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty in the long term is an issue at Evergreen and urges the institution to continue to seek ways to improve salaries for all faculty.
- 2) The committee finds that the workload issue is a critical one given the intensive nature of the faculty experience at Evergreen. It urges faculty and administrators to find

ways to decrease workloads and burn-out.

## STANDARD FIVE

### LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Purpose and Scope: The Library, Media Services, and the Computing & Communications units support TESC's mission and goals and these resources are adequate to support the curriculum at the main campus. The faculty and staff from these units are committed to instruction, providing current and prospective users with a variety of resources. The self-study for this Standard is thorough and reflective.

Resources & Services: Materials are selected, acquired, organized and adequately maintained, although audio and visual holdings are modest in relation to the focus of some of the curriculum. The monographic and serial holdings are generally sufficient to support the curricular offerings. Web based resources have been introduced and are readily available on the home page. Equipment in the areas provided by both Media Services and Computing & Communications is in heavy demand but is aging rapidly and replacement funds do not exist. An issue suggested for study and resolution is planned replacement of such equipment.

Policies, regulations, and procedures for systematic development and management of information resources, in all formats, are documented, periodically updated, and available on the home page. Both units offer training opportunities, so that students can utilize information resources, software and equipment.

Faculty, staff and students can participate in the planning and development of Library information resources and services. Computing & Communications has used advisory committees and also has recently undergone a Peer Review. This latter process identified some internal areas for further integration of operations as well as technical enhancements that should be considered.

Facilities and Access: Resources are readily accessible to all students and faculty on the main campus. Media Services provides training and proficiency testing so that equipment can be used independently. Cooperative agreements are in place to tap some of the other information resources in the region, and formal documented agreements for these arrangements are in place. A twice a week courier service provides materials from the collection of the Washington State Library. Students and faculty at the Tacoma campus have access to a small regional center managed by U of Washington, to TESC's home page and thus to some full text resources as well as a document delivery service. In addition, librarians provide regular instructional sessions at the Tacoma center.

The Library provides 85 hours per week of access to the collections, with slightly less

access to Media Services, though additional scheduled use of those facilities is available upon reservation. Computer labs are open a total 115 hpw and usage has increased by 50% in the past two years. Some students and staff suggest that considerably more workstations should be made available during the most heavily used daytime hours. Space constraints are becoming evident throughout the Library as well as within Computing & Communications. Shelves are full and additional media and computer facilities are needed. Both units have been engaged in planning for a possible remodel/renovation project which would permit a refocus of service points as well as an integration of services, where appropriate.

Personnel and Management: The number of staff available in these units, especially Media Services and Computing & Communications, has remained constant though enrollment has increased. Consequently their ability to immediately respond to requests for instruction and assistance is somewhat constrained. Technical and support staff are qualified and responsive but opportunities for professional development and growth opportunities are limited by a scarcity of funds. In addition, compensation for technical staff is often inadequate.

A strength of TESC is the collaboration whereby library faculty regularly teach in a full-time program (at least one out of every nine academic quarters). In addition regular teaching faculty also rotate into the Library. These practices, along with the traditional liaison assignments, further enhance the ties between the curriculum and the growth of library materials. Computing and Communications also utilizes liaisons to the academic programs to enhance outreach activities with teaching faculty.

Computing and Communications services, while administered by another administrative unit, are located nearby and cooperation and consultation routinely occurs between these units.

Planning and Evaluation: Library leadership acknowledges the need to regularly and systematically evaluate the quality, accessibility and use of librarians as well as information repositories in order to determine the level of quality and effectiveness. Use statistics are available for Library/Media, and Computing services and a detailed analysis of the library collections has been made. However a careful assessment of the learning outcomes has not been undertaken in order to determine what students are actually learning from their experiences.

#### **Commendations:**

- 1) The ongoing, informal commitment to collaboration between the Library and Computing & Communications
- 2) The innovative model of college wide faculty collaboration whereby regular

teaching faculty can join library faculty in providing library instructional services, and vice versa

- 3) A thorough and reflective self study

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Expansion and increase of audio and visual materials into the traditional library collection so that selection focuses on content not format
- 2) Renovation of the existing C wing to allow more space for the integration of services, as appropriate, between Library & Media Services and Computing & Communications
- 3) Library undertake an assessment of what students are actually learning from their experiences with information and library services

**STANDARD SIX**

**GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The governance structure of The Evergreen State College (TESC) is capped by a not-unusual board structure, while on campus a very “loosely woven fabric of shared responsibility and authority” prevails “in a constant state of flux, growth, and development.”

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board is a legislatively created body that is empowered to review budgets and to approve programs and develop performance standards, but it is not a governing body. Rather, like its sister state institutions, TESC has its own Board of Trustees, whose eight members are gubernatorially appointed. Our meeting with several members of the board found them to be highly committed, well informed, and engaged closely in the governance of the campus. Its meetings are open, and students and faculty regularly show up and make their views known. The board is fully empowered and regularly reviews both its own performance and that of the president. As part of this process, the board and the president collaborate in annual goal setting. The board delegates heavily to the president and does not involve itself in routine matters, even such important ones as salary reviews.

President Jane Jervis enjoys the strong support of this board and is well respected on campus. Hired in 1992 following a period of intense turmoil, she is widely viewed as a “healer” and a very competent administrator. The central administrative structure consists of three vice presidents – for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Finance and Administration – and an Executive Director of College Advancement that is being re-

upgraded to vice-presidential status. This group meets regularly and closely as the president's "Senior Staff." The College Advancement Office is now once again in transition, namely back to vice-presidential status, which seems a good idea. In charge of College Relations, Alumni, and Development-Foundation, this office is intrinsically important, naturally, and its modest levels of fund-raising success seem an obvious area for turnaround and improvement.

Below this central level, the administrative structure at TESC is highly unusual and distinctive. In particular, the academic administration of the college is handled by five deans who rotate regularly out of and back into faculty ranks for fixed periods of time. The deans preside over "desks," not colleges or divisions, and there are no formally constituted departments at TESC. Predictably, this system makes for close bonding between faculty and administration, but it also seems to make for instability and a diminishment of long-term vision and building. In addition to the deans, the directors of four of the service centers, the Tacoma Campus, and the three graduate programs also report directly to the Provost-Academic Vice President.

TESC's distinctive "DTF's" (Disappearing Task Forces) are most interesting. They bring a collaborative dynamism to campus life and governance and make for lively and fruitful interchanges, but they seem again less constructive in the perspective of long-term planning and conceptualization.

Both faculty and students are heavily empowered in the governance of this very self-consciously open and democratic campus. Twenty percent of regular faculty workload at TESC is reserved for governance. A formal Faculty Agenda Committee arranges monthly faculty meetings that are highly democratic. This participatory system of faculty governance does not seem to be working very well. While it clearly meets accreditation standards, the level of attendance at the meetings is low, and only 18 percent of faculty polled last year expressed satisfaction with it. Given the institution's high level of investment in faculty worktime for governance, it would seem that a revamping may be in order.

Students' role in campus governance is anomalous, a study in contrasts. One of the positive distinctions of TESC is the remarkable extent of student empowerment and the successful cultivation of community involvement – community defined both as campus and broader communities. The students truly are engaged and enthusiastically involved, as even a brief stroll across campus will demonstrate; students are very visible at meetings of all kinds, including the DTF's. Yet TESC is strikingly unusual in its absence of any formal structure of student governance. Increasingly, this is causing problems, as exemplified by the fact that the students recently could not, or at least did not, have any mechanism to vote in or out a technology fee that is now in place on many of the other four-year campuses in Washington. However, graduate students are now evolving a governance structure of their own, and the broader student population is exploring

options. As Washington, like other states, seems headed toward more special fees, and thus toward greater formal student participation in the process, events may speed up this trend.

In sum, while the formal structures of administration are in some cases weak and in many cases distinctive, there can be no doubt that the informal structures of mass commitment and participation are strong and productive. This is a truly remarkable campus in its lively culture of engagement.

## STANDARD SEVEN

### FINANCE

Financial planning at The Evergreen State College is a well refined process within the state budgetary guidelines. Staff also understand the state political process and plan accordingly. Strategic planning for future budgetary needs is a state requirement, and Evergreen regularly submits a ten-year capital projects budget to the legislature. The annual budget is developed by a budget committee that first develops the request sent to the legislature, and then later allocates to divisions the funds provided by the state. Over the years it appears that this committee has developed a level of trust within the college.

As a state institution Evergreen does not issue debt for academic or administrative capital needs. The institution does carry a modest level of debt (\$5,209,000 as of June 30, 1998) for student housing. However, due to a \$398,000 operating loss in the housing program the College met its debt service ration covenant by a minimal amount (\$36,000 in FY 1998). Staff is aware of the problem and has identified plans to improve profitability.

In part a reflection of its unique mission, auxiliary services are not as integral to campus life as they are on other campuses. Even if the culture does not want auxiliaries to be a source of net revenue to fund other academic programs, Evergreen needs to be concerned about operating deficits. For Fiscal 1998 the combination of housing, food service, bookstore, parking, conferences, copy center and motor pool lost a total of \$260,000.

In Washington, like many other states, the rising cost of public higher education is being shifted. There is no funding for inflation and over time this erosion is being felt throughout campus. Students now pay 35% of the cost of instruction compared to 25% a few years ago, and the trend continues to increase. Evergreen's financial planning is based on a state funding model that provides all funds. A few members of the college community realize this model will have to change, but this concept needs to be more widely understood throughout campus so the implications the changes will bring to Evergreen can be fully considered. The college has relied on annual student enrollment growth to fund rising costs, but dependence upon growth can be dangerous when it stops.



Pressure will likely grow for college advancement to raise monies that can relieve state reductions. At this point, The Evergreen State College Foundation is not particularly successful in communicating the college's financial needs to their alumni or the public. The level of cash given to the college is quite low. A search is underway to hire a new vice president for this division, which offers an opportunity to give the effort new priority. The foundation board's recent decision to fund some of the compensation expense for professional development staff should be a helpful step.

Both state and independent audits take place annually, although there is no comprehensive independent audit looking at the entire financial operation. Due to other priorities the college discontinued its internal auditor position. Multiple improvements in cash controls for satellite operations have been suggested in the most recent management letter.

The college is currently evaluating new administrative software to replace its homegrown student information system. Staff realize this decision will set a precedent for selecting other administrative software, which will soon need to be updated. It is important to link the administrative functions either through purchasing an integrated system or making sure that the internal information or technology department has sufficient technical staff to maintain the frequent upgrades.

**Recommendation:**

- 1) As the percentage of the budget provided by state funding decreases, it is recommended that the college consider various alternative sources of revenue. Without additional contributions and support from auxiliary services, the college may be eroding funding for core academic programs. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the role that auxiliary services play in campus financing.

**STANDARD EIGHT**

**PHYSICAL RESOURCES**

Even after 27 years the physical condition of the original buildings is impressive. The original design for the campus anticipated a much larger student populations than the current 3,700 or even the 5,000 enrollment forecast for year 2010. The planning for campus growth provided a solid infrastructure which assists a limited physical plant staff. This is even more noteworthy following the reduction-in-force that took place several years ago. The appearance of the campus is remarkable considering the small number of

custodians and grounds crew. According to comparative staffing levels at other public institutions, Evergreen custodians clean around twice the average square footage and grounds crew maintains triple the average acres per FTE. The college appears to have succeeded in turning a negative situation into a positive by stressing the tradeoffs that come with budget reductions.

In February 1996, Evergreen received a Facilities Management Evaluation Report conducted by APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers. The report was developed at the request of the previous vice president for finance and administration. Now that there is a new chief financial officer and a new director of facilities, it will be important to review the 77 separate recommendations and develop an implementation strategy. One of the most critical may be staffing at the central utility plant. Two and one half years after receiving the report the college continues to leave chillers and high pressure boilers unattended at night.

Currently Evergreen is preplanning its first major new academic building since its original formation. The study for the building to be called Seminar II suggests that the college needs another 151,000 square feet to meet laboratory, classroom and office needs to accommodate the anticipated enrollment growth previously identified. Planning appears to be working its way through the required state process, but there is no guarantee the state will be able and willing to fund the estimated \$45 million cost in year 2001. The college is also looking to replace its leased space used by the Tacoma campus beginning fall semester 2000.

Attention to issues of disabled access and environmental health and safety seem well under control. Deferred maintenance is an increasing concern both on campus and in the legislature. Because the majority of buildings were constructed in the early 1970s, all of these structures will soon be requiring major capital improvements. Although future ten-year capital requests have been submitted to the legislature, the college previously has not conducted annual physical plant audits that identify detailed preventative and deferred maintenance needs. This task is expected to be implemented in the coming year.

Additional funding for equipment has not been a high priority for the college, but is still beginning to become more important. Physical plant and other departments are still using many items of original equipment purchased at the college's inception. The budget line item for all college equipment has not increased for at least ten years. In fact, this annual allocation of \$423,000 has been used as a reserve account to absorb deficits in other accounts. In recent years considerable investments in equipment have been made from divisional reserves. Technology costs are quickly exceeding this annual state allocation and the college is looking to identify new ways to be able to meet an ever increasing demand. Student housing has added a \$40 per month fee to be able to add data connectivity, cable tv and local phone access to each housing unit.

With its environmental emphasis, Evergreen is particularly concerned with the use of hazardous chemicals. Absolutely minimal chemicals are used by facilities in the cleaning of buildings and the care of grounds. The few chemicals that are permitted appear to be used, stored and disposed in accordance with environmental health and safety regulations.

Evergreen faculty, students and staff are all protective of their thousand acre campus. At this point only 221 acres have any type of development, and new construction is to be limited to previously developed clusters. The original master plan has been updated three times, most recently in the current year. The 1998 edition of the campus master plan is an exemplary comprehensive model for campus planning. It is particularly sensitive to the ecological aspects of maintaining undeveloped green space, but it also addresses in detail: buildings, utilities, circulation, landscaping, services and activities. The creation of this edition without outside planning assistance is indicative of the high quality work of faculty, students and staff.

#### **Commendations:**

- 1) Despite significant budget cuts over the years, the limited number of physical plant staff are doing an exceptional job of addressing facilities needs on campus. Staff have responsibility for cleaning buildings and maintaining grounds of significantly larger areas at Evergreen than do their counterparts elsewhere.
- 2) Evergreen's 1998 Campus Master Plan is a comprehensive document that reflects the best of the Evergreen community. Dedicated to the college's original mission, the plan carefully considers the many conflicting issues awaiting the institution as it continues to grow its student population. Its focus on environmental sustainability could be a model for organizations throughout the country.

## **STANDARD NINE**

### **INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY**

The Evergreen State College nicely elucidates its "expectations and aspirations" in a so-called "Social Contract," which is yearly circulated to all faculty, staff, and students, by direction of the Board of Trustees. This is a commendable procedure which other campuses could well emulate, and it underscores the institution's commitment to the unimpeded pursuit of knowledge by all members of the campus community.

In truth, TESC's commitment to the "Free Pursuit of Knowledge" is considerably more than merely rhetorical, as collaborative and interdisciplinary learning lies at the core of its mission and at the core of the expectation of every faculty member. The Faculty Handbook explicitly guarantees the First Amendment rights of all faculty and endorses

the statement of principles regarding academic freedom by the American Association of University Professors.

The State of Washington has far-reaching ethics laws, adopted in 1994, that include both an executive and a legislative ethics panel and the requirement that all state institutions and agencies produce their own sets of standards and educational programs for their employees. TESC trustees, management personnel, and faculty have been provided with ethics programs, and a formal ethics policy is in print.

The college and its faculty and students obviously take seriously their publications and how accurately they portray reality as an ethical integrity issue. This is especially true of the Faculty Handbook, the Policy and Procedures Manual, and the TESC website. Also, the campus has well developed grievance procedures, sexual harassment policies, affirmative action-equal opportunity policies, and standards regarding conflict of interest as well as a campus mediation center. It reviews its standards and publications regularly.

In sum, it is obvious that The Evergreen State College takes matters of integrity and communication seriously.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Committee recommends that The Evergreen State College insure that all of its students acquire the competencies appropriate to general education, especially but not exclusively in Mathematics. This is called for by the college's own goals as well as Standard 2C. Whatever the means taken, given a situation in which there are no required courses/programs, and in which student choices are largely unconstrained, there is nonetheless an institutional responsibility to achieve its stated liberal and general education goals and the goals for general education and related instruction set forth in Standard 2.1.
2. As the percentage of the budget provided by state funding decreases, it is recommended that the college consider various alternative sources of revenue. Without additional contributions and support from auxiliary services, the college may be eroding, in violation of Standards 7.B.1 and 7.A.4, eroding financial funding for its core academic programs. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the role of auxiliary services in campus finances, as required in Standard 7.B.9.
3. It is recommended that the institution, in order to manage effectively future growth and expansion, develop and implement a comprehensive enrollment management strategy that conforms with Standards 1.A.5, 7.A.2, and 7.B.5. In light of the pressures to increase enrollment, such a strategy is necessary to insure that the college will be able to continue to fulfill its unique mission of close student-faculty collaboration and educational interaction.

4. We recommend that the College expand its efforts to address its serious attrition problem by insuring, in accordance with Standard 3.B.5, 3.B.6 and 3.1, that prospective students come for the right reasons and that they have a good chance to succeed. There has been much attention to what can be done to support students once they are here; there has been too little done to insure that prospective students make the right choice in the first place.

5. Standards 4.A, 4.A.1, 4.A.4, 5.A.1, and 6.C.9 give clear guidance to the institution regarding the absolute necessity that the College's ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty, administrators, and instructional technology personnel be developed and maintained. The Committee strongly recommends that the institution review all of the components that impact its ability to meet these standards and to insure compliance into the future.

### COMMENDATIONS

1. The accreditation team wishes to recognize the exceptional quality of the self-study. The report was not only carefully organized and well-written, but it demonstrated the value of sincere inquiry and reflection in the interest of self-improvement.

2. The mission for which The Evergreen State College was founded is fulfilled by an institution-wide climate of engagement, improvement and intellectual curiosity. We find these achievements to be almost unparalleled anywhere in higher education.

3. The committee commends The Evergreen State College for its imaginative, dedicated and innovative faculty. The faculty selflessly give of their time to students. We further commend The Evergreen State College for its college-wide team-teaching approach to classroom instruction. The high degree of collaboration builds on individual strengths, provides multiple approaches to meeting individual student learning needs, and promotes the development of new faculty.

4. The Evergreen State College is commended for its programs of long-standing support of students of color. The success of minority students on the campus reflects the creation and maintenance of a nurturing, friendly, caring, supportive and academically responsive environment. Of particular merit are the activities and programs that support Native American students and their communities. The Reservations Based Community Determined Tribal Program, the Longhouse and its programs, and the Center for Native American World Indigenous Populations are of significant import.

5. We commend The Evergreen State College for the beauty of the campus and the care of its facilities. Despite significant budget cuts over the years, the limited number of physical plant staff are doing an exceptional job of addressing facilities needs on campus.

Staff have responsibility for cleaning buildings and maintaining grounds of significantly larger areas at Evergreen than do their counterparts elsewhere.

6. The Evergreen State College is commended for its service to its regions. Of particular merit are the activities and programs that support Native American students and their communities. This is evidenced by delivery of educational programs to the reservations, establishment of the Center for Native American Studies, involvement of elders, bringing different Native American artists together, and teaching them how to market their crafts. Further examples are the use of the Longhouse to promote understanding of Native American culture, and the Tacoma Program. The Tacoma faculty and students live their motto, "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve." They are change agents and lifelong learners in their communities. These initiatives truly have made a positive difference in the region.