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SUGGESTED RELEASE

Remarks of Dean Donald G. Humphrey, The Evergreen State College

" A major problem faced by those attempting to develop curricula in environmental studies is the current academic environment itself." Dean Donald G. Humphrey of The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Wash., today told participants at the American Institute of Biological Sciences conferance at Colorado State University.

"Colleges and universities are departmentalized, compartmentalized and organized for specialization," Humphrey, Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Washington's newest state college, said. Evergreen, created by 1967 legislative action, opens to 1,000 students this fall.

Humphrey said Evergreen's planners, concerned about the academic departmental and course structures and emphasizing integrated, interdisciplinary programs."

"A number of our Coordinated Studies Programs focus on the environment," Humphrey said. "The Political Ecology program, coordinated by ecologist Ed Kormondy (Executive Director of the Commission on Undergraduate Education in the Biological Sciences and Director of the Office of Biological Education, American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1968-71), will allow students and faculty to devote their full time for a year to the study of plant, animal and human communities as well as the processes whereby governmental decisions can reflect environmental concerns.

"This group will center much of its work on the Nisqually River drainage and the Nisqually Delta, near Olympia. The approach is problem-centered and the program has been planned by ecologists, political scientists, sociologists and a lawyer. Special expertise will be developed within the program as needed, rather than in separate, unconnected courses."

Turning to another facet of the ecological problem, Humphrey described Evergreen's advanced program in Environmental Design, developed through the efforts of a biologist, architect, urban planner, artist, engineer and historian.

"This interdisciplinary approach will use the campus and its community environment as a laboratory," he said. "The group will solve design problems such as how to best

utilize the college salt waterfront shoreline to meet the educational and recreational needs of the school."

Humphrey said that the combination of total involvement, small groups, truly interdisciplinary faculty, real problems and the search for real solutions "adds up to a unique undergraduate approach to the study of the environment."

He added that still another small group of students and faculty will spend the next academic year producing an inventory of the Evergreen environment--a comprehensive look at past and future land use decisions impacting the college's 1,000-acre rural campus, which contains wooded areas, rolling hills, swamp conditions and a 3,300-foot undeveloped section of shoreline on Ed Inlet of Lower Puget Sound.

"Another unique aspect of Evergreen's environmental studies programs will be the use of self-paced learning modules for much of the concept and skills development traditionally bound up in courses," Humphrey remarked.

"For example," he added, "The concept of photosynthesis can be studied at various levels of complexity as needed in one of the learning resource centers on campus. Skills in computer programming can be acquired when necessary. Thus, information is available when the learner is motivated to seek it out in order to solve some problem.

"The emphasis is placed on how to obtain knowledge when it is needed and pertinent, instead of on some sort of prerequisite curricular approach."

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