

To: The Evergreen Community

From: The Academic Advising DTF

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Subject: Revised Final Report

In our two extended conversations, we and most people we talked to--deans, staff, agenda committee, other faculty members--the broad understanding was that the faculty, in the main, endorsed our recommendations. They concurred in the vision of advising as a web of support, connection, and planning, as a structure visible to and usable by students.

Advising has to be integrated into such a unified, systematic and seamless web of teaching and learning. We recognize that the self-directed learning we prize is not synonymous with good intentions and serendipity. Therefore, making the structure work for our students, requires self reflection, academic planning, connected knowing, conscious review and summation.

In addition, people liked some of our new ideas, and took much of what we proposed as reinforcing Evergreen's academic values. The reinstatement of the developmental academic portfolio (an old custom that we've allowed to lapse over time) is an outstanding example. The formation of a clear but flexible academic plan is another. Fresh thinking about helping faculty learn about each other and new curricular developments and possibilities is yet a third well supported example.

At the same time, despite generally positive conversations, it is clear that we have some critically important issues still to resolve. The purpose and function of this document is to reconcile our different views into an acceptable and workable policy. First, we need formal ratification of the basic outline and of most of the specific elements in the report of Nov. 26.

We propose dealing with the remaining items individually.

### 1. Portfolio

We should reclaim the practice of teaching students to build and maintain a developmental academic portfolio. The portfolio should include samples of their work, evidence of significant academic achievements, and all kinds of evaluations. This includes self evaluations which should be mandatory and required to appear in the student's transcript. We regard the reflective learning and connected knowing that result from writing self evaluations as a cornerstone of the teaching-learning system that we propose.

Over the years, we have let slip the expectation, and therefore the importance, of regular student self evaluation. We suggest returning to that practice, and making the production of the self evaluation dearly a student's responsibility, and instruction and encouragement toward that end a faculty responsibility'. While we would not require faculty to sign or keep track of these documents or portfolios, we hope the faculty will teach students how to do them; we expect

students to do them and maintain them; the Registrar's staff has the capacity to monitor inclusion of student self evaluations in the transcript; and the vice-president for Student Affairs and the Provost have offered monetary support to make this do-able.

## 2. Academic Planning Course and Document

We heard considerable support for these ideas, but there were some unknowns and some unclear details. There was a variety of opinion about the best ways to approach and help students generate clear, flexible academic plans--in-program or external planning courses, independent/individual planning processes, mandatory or voluntary plans, and methods of assessment. We need to help students think broadly about their education and simultaneously, to plan intelligent next steps.

We see current, usable information as one of the first things necessary for good planning. Getting the faculty acquainted with each other, their interests and expertise, and with current and future curricular offerings is fundamental to this process. Since those last discussions, we have learned that the vice-president for Student Affairs and the Provost can fund some pilot projects and training opportunities. These might include piloting work in specific programs, summer training sessions, and ventures we have not yet even imagined, but can depend upon you to provide. Please, we invite you to teach each other about what you do and what we all could do for the benefit of students. This is one strand in our "seamless web".

Next, we propose the institution of a four credit academic planning course that would follow the model in the November 26 proposal from the DTF and result in each student completing a written academic plan. As we originally proposed, the course could be

- embedded in programs, or
- taught separately at intervals during the academic year and summer.

This course would be available to students at any level, including the first year. We would strongly encourage students to complete it by the end of their sophomore year. Transfer students should complete it as soon as possible.

The second way for students to do focused critical reflection on their educational future is for the faculty in sophomore and entry level programs to spend some advising time helping students devise academic plans to guide their remaining study toward their degree. This planning work could also help students prepare themselves to write a summative self evaluation before they graduate from Evergreen. This approach could link the production of a plan directly to disciplinary thinking, and would not necessitate the award of academic credit for the plan itself.

The third option is for the Advising Offices to provide students with information and advice through workshops, handouts, or conferences that assist students in thinking independently about this element in their learning.

## 3. Summative Self Evaluations

Many of the issues the DTF worked with came from the suggestions, of alumni who told us often how much they wished they had tied things together, how difficult it was to make the transition to "life after Evergreen". And even though they acknowledged their own resistance to doing such a thing at the time they were here, they now see the value of something like a summative self evaluation. We can understand this need as at Evergreen many of the traditional

rites of passage and "stamps of completion" or "approval" are non-existent. The summative self evaluation as a tool in the advising structure serves to assist in creating the connected knowing for the entire educational experience and to make, some closure to the undergraduate dimension of student's education.

All students will be required to write a comprehensive and summative self evaluation articulating and culminating their liberal arts career, before they graduate. It probably will be combined with, or serve as, that final quarter's self-evaluation.

Names of students needing to write the summative self evaluation will appear on a list of potential graduates prepared by Registration and Records and sent to faculty. Working with their current faculty member, along with staff members in APEL, students should reflect upon their academic plan, and the five foci of an Evergreen education, as well as specific skills developed. This whole effort should result in an effective and accurate document that distills the students' experience at Evergreen. This statement should be the most thoughtful and carefully composed evaluation a student develops here, a piece that is simultaneously full enough to contain breadth and depth, and brief enough to be easily read and comprehended.

This required statement and the Record of Academic Achievement (listing credit equivalencies) comprise the centerpiece of the student's Evergreen transcript.

Registration and Records will not certify students as eligible for degrees without receipt of this summative self evaluation so designated on an evaluation form. For this to work, Registration and Records must receive funds necessary to pay for help to perform this added function.

Any remaining details for implementing this policy comprise a small portion of the work to be taken up by the newly charged Narrative Evaluation DTF.

We suggest that all of the models and proposals regarding the Academic Plan and the Summative Self Evaluation be tested and evaluated, beginning in the coming year. Further, we think these studies ought to be joint ventures involving faculty, staff, students. To initiate the process of pilot projects, we invite faculty to send proposals about innovative ways to do academic plans and/or summative self evaluations to the provost to get started.

The Advising DTF has worked long and hard to create an advising system that would work for all constituents. At this time, it seems reasonable to us that the faculty select from among the following options:

- Vote to accept the final plan proposed at the December 4 faculty meeting (plan dated November. 26).
- Vote to accept the final plan proposed at the December 4 faculty meeting (plan dated November. 26) -- AS MODIFIED by the three items outlined above.
- Vote to accept the final plan proposed at the December 4 faculty meeting (plan dated November. 26) -- HOLDING ASIDE the three items outlined above.
- Vote to accept: Portfolio

- Vote to accept: Academic Planning Course and Document
- Vote to accept: Summative Self Evaluations