

# EVERGREEN

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 1, 2004

TO: Enrollment Growth Disappearing Task Force  
Steve Hunter and Tom Womeldorff, co-chairs

Kristina Ackley	Phyllis Lane
Susan Aurand	Ralph Murphy
Jim Beaver	Alice Nelson
Andy Brabban	Jenna Nelson
Scott Coleman	Susan Preciso
Peter Ellis	Julie Slone
Jeanne Hahn	Tyrus Smith
Anna Kircher	

FROM: Thomas L. Purce and Don Bantz

SUBJECT: Charge to the Enrollment Growth DTF

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Enrollment Growth Disappearing Task Force (DTF). Your charge is to recommend a growth plan that will guide us as we work toward an enrollment of 5,000 (FTE) students by the 2014-15 academic year.

### **Background**

The state of Washington currently estimates that 33,500 new seats will need to be added to our public post-secondary education system by 2010 if the state is to continue serving students at current levels.<sup>1</sup> Many argue that even more seats should be added so that the state can serve a greater proportion of students in the future.

In the next few years, the legislature and other policy makers face some major decisions. They will confront questions about how to pay for this expansion of higher education, where to add seats, and what programs to support. As a public college, Evergreen will be expected to participate in these discussions and be a part of the solution. As we enter into these discussions, it is important that we have a thoughtful and inclusive campus discussion about enrollment growth. If we can be clear about our own hopes and intentions for enrollment growth, we will be

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<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Coordinating Board. *Interim Strategic Master Plan*. December 15, 2003

better able to participate in the state-wide discussion and to advocate for the college's best interests.

In 1998, the college adopted an enrollment growth plan that committed us to a long-range goal of 5,000 students. That commitment was part of the justification for the construction of Seminar II, and it remains our enrollment planning goal.

The DTF's work will be among the most significant planning activities that we engage in over the next year. The task is complicated by the fact that we can not know in advance what rate of growth the state will ultimately fund. The DTF's recommendation will need to be both specific enough to guide implementation and flexible enough to respond to the unpredictability of the external environment.

### **Preparation**

During the year just ending, the college has taken steps to lay the groundwork for the DTF's work. First, we have developed a short-term strategy for the next legislative session. We will ask the legislature to increase our *budgeted* enrollment level from 3,908 FTE to 4,058 FTE for the 2005-2007 biennium. This would provide the college with funding for the students we are already serving across the current curriculum.

Second, the Enrollment Coordinating Committee (ECC) completed substantial work to gather important background information to guide and shape the DTF's work for the coming year. They analyzed Evergreen's historical enrollment trends and investigated state-wide demographic forecasts. Among their conclusions are the following general observations:

1. The majority of the actual enrollment growth over the past five years has been in the daytime undergraduate curriculum on the Olympia campus. Enrollment in the graduate programs and in Evening/Weekend studies has remained constant during this time.
2. The state's demographic projections suggest that we can not expect to reach our goal of 5,000 FTE by simply expanding our current programs proportionately. This means that that the DTF will need to identify new programs and/or be innovative in how we expand high demand areas of the current curriculum . As part of this discussion, the DTF should become familiar with the planning work that led to the 1998 enrollment growth plan, and the work of the 2000-2001 Academic Growth DTF.
3. Our new students will come primarily from Washington. Statewide forecasts suggest that the numbers of both traditionally aged freshman and two year degree holders will increase. The portion of out-of-state students that we serve has declined. Despite comparatively lower published tuition, we are losing our ability to compete in the national marketplace against colleges with larger financial aid packages.

### **Key Questions**

Your work as a DTF will begin this summer and continue through the next academic year. It is imperative that your work be carried out in an atmosphere of consultation with the entire campus community. As you do your work I ask that you will remain vigilant in sustaining the

Evergreen's commitment to interdisciplinary team-taught liberal arts academic programs as the core of the college.

As you develop a recommendation for growing to 5,000 by 2014-15, I ask you to keep in mind the college's core values. For instance:

- How can we grow in a way that maintains institutional vitality, our distinctive curriculum, including team-taught interdisciplinary study, close student/faculty contact, bridging theory and practice, and service to the state and local communities?
- How can we grow in a way that furthers our commitment to serving diverse and underrepresented students?

The growth plan could include growth at any Evergreen site or program: undergraduate or graduate; Olympia daytime or Evening/Weekend Studies; in Tacoma, Reservation-Based/Community-Determined sites or Grays Harbor; in the Masters in Teaching, Masters in Public Administration or Masters in Environmental Studies programs. However, expanded Summer School and Extended Education proposals are not to be included in this growth planning as they are self-supporting activities that are not counted in state budgeted enrollment calculations.

To be viable, the growth plan that you recommend will also need to address some specific questions:

1. How will the growth be allocated by level (lower division, upper division, graduate)?
2. How will the growth be distributed by sites, programs, and times of day?
3. What additional services and infrastructure will be needed to support incremental growth and the addition of new programs? What are the costs?
4. How do the new programs that you propose meet the needs of the communities that we serve? How do they match with student demand?
5. How will our growth plan intersect with faculty hiring priorities?

### **Process expectations**

Your work begins this summer. This will give you an opportunity to immerse yourselves in the work that the ECC completed, identify possible areas of growth and develop a detailed work plan for the year.

In fall quarter, the DTF's effort will need to include some intensive work on identifying possible new programs and assessing student demand for those programs. By the end of fall, I will ask the you to brief me and the Board of Trustees. It will be useful for us to have a sense of the range of possibilities under consideration as we enter into the new legislative session in January. By winter quarter, the DTF should consult with staff and practitioners in all divisions to assess the costs and benefits of the plans under consideration. You should plan on presenting your fully developed enrollment growth proposals to the faculty and campus community early in Spring quarter. It is important that this work be completed by Spring 2005. Based on the DTF's

recommendation, I will recommend a final growth plan to the Board of Trustees by the end of the 2004-2005 academic year.

Throughout the process, I expect that the DTF will keep both faculty and staff informed about their work plans and progress. Your work plans should include extensive consultation with the faculty and with the staff and practitioners in all divisions.

### **Conclusion**

In the end, many factors will affect our growth over the next decade. It is very likely that we will need to revisit our plans before the decade is out to respond to changing circumstances.

Nevertheless, careful planning now will give us an opportunity to influence those circumstances, and benefit Evergreen for many years to come. Thank you for undertaking this important work.