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An effort like this can tap just a fraction of the significant work on evaluation being done at Evergreen. We hope our colleagues forgive us when they find ideas and examples here to be less interesting, effective or valid than their own. We'll consider the guide successful only if it opens conversation and brings more good practices to the fore.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	i
Summary.....	iv
I. Why This Guide?.....	1
II. Clearing the Ground.....	2
Reaching the Audience.....	3
Faculty and Student Authority.....	5
III. Evaluations of Students.....	6
Narrative Strategies.....	7
Skills narrative.....	7
Developmental narrative.....	8
Project narrative.....	8
Length.....	9
Some Tips for Preparing.....	10
Experiments.....	11
Blended narrative.....	11
Response narrative.....	12
Support for experiment.....	13
IV. Student Self-Evaluations.....	14
Creating Space for Reflection.....	14
Senior Self-Evaluations.....	18
Summative self-evaluation.....	19
Senior project.....	19
Integrative paragraph.....	20
V. Program Descriptions.....	20
VI. Credit Equivalencies.....	21
Clarifying Equivalencies.....	21
Designating Upper-Division Credit.....	22
VII. Internship and Independent Study Contracts.....	24
VIII. Evening and Weekend Studies Evaluations.....	26
IX. Future Directions.....	28
Appendices	
A. Skills-based evaluations.....	32

B. Developmental-based evaluations.....	39
C. Project-based evaluations.....	43
D. Blended evaluations.....	47
E. Response evaluations.....	50
F. Grids.....	55
G. Internship evaluations.....	59
H. Evening-Weekend descriptions/evaluations.....	63
I. Why Narrative Evaluations?.....	65

SUMMARY

The Narrative Evaluation Study Group, charged by provost Don Bantz to "provide a critical commentary on the various narrative evaluation approaches and identify some best practices," and thence to develop a guide for faculty, reached these main conclusions:

- The health of evaluation at Evergreen depends above all on exercise of both faculty and student authority. For faculty, this means commitment to making judgments about student work. For students, it means writing well-considered self-evaluations.
- The key step faculty can take to make their transcript evaluations serve students is to write succinctly. Concise evaluations and program descriptions are more readable and persuasive for graduate admissions committees and employers. Suggested limits for evaluations and program descriptions are a page each for yearlong full-time programs, 1/2-1 page for quarter-long ones. Part-time studies descriptions/evaluations must be proportionately shorter.
- Program descriptions should compactly note the inquiry's nature and content, activities involved, and materials studied, avoiding redundancy with other parts of the evaluation.
- Faculty's transcript evaluations should have a single author who integrates contributions from teammates and synthesizes (rather than strings together) multi-quarter work. Good evaluations have a narrative strategy, which typically focuses either on the student's (1) skills, or (2) development, or (3) major projects. Focused evaluations take less effort to compose and help free up conferences for in-depth discussion of student learning
- Student voice in transcripts has dwindled, weakening the documents and the climate of evaluation at the College. Faculty should require (or urge) students to cross the threshold of including self-evaluations in their transcripts. The key steps faculty can take to support student self-evaluation are to create space for reflection and to give guidance. If they do, most students can write creditable, concise accounts of their learning.
- Senior projects provide strong evidence for students to describe the culmination of their education in self-evaluations. Summative self-evaluations are worthwhile for some. Most can reflect well on their undergraduate careers as one part of their final self-evaluation.
- Credit equivalencies should use disciplinary, sub-field, and interdisciplinary terms that will be clear to graduate schools.
- Two matters call for faculty deliberation and action: deciding on a consistent policy for indicating upper-division credit in transcripts; and dropping the cover sheets for internship and independent study contracts from transcripts.
- If interest warrants, an ongoing group should be set up to further collegial discussion and innovative thinking about narrative evaluations.