

The Evergreen State College  
 Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2008  
 Responses of First-time, First-year Students

### Expectations

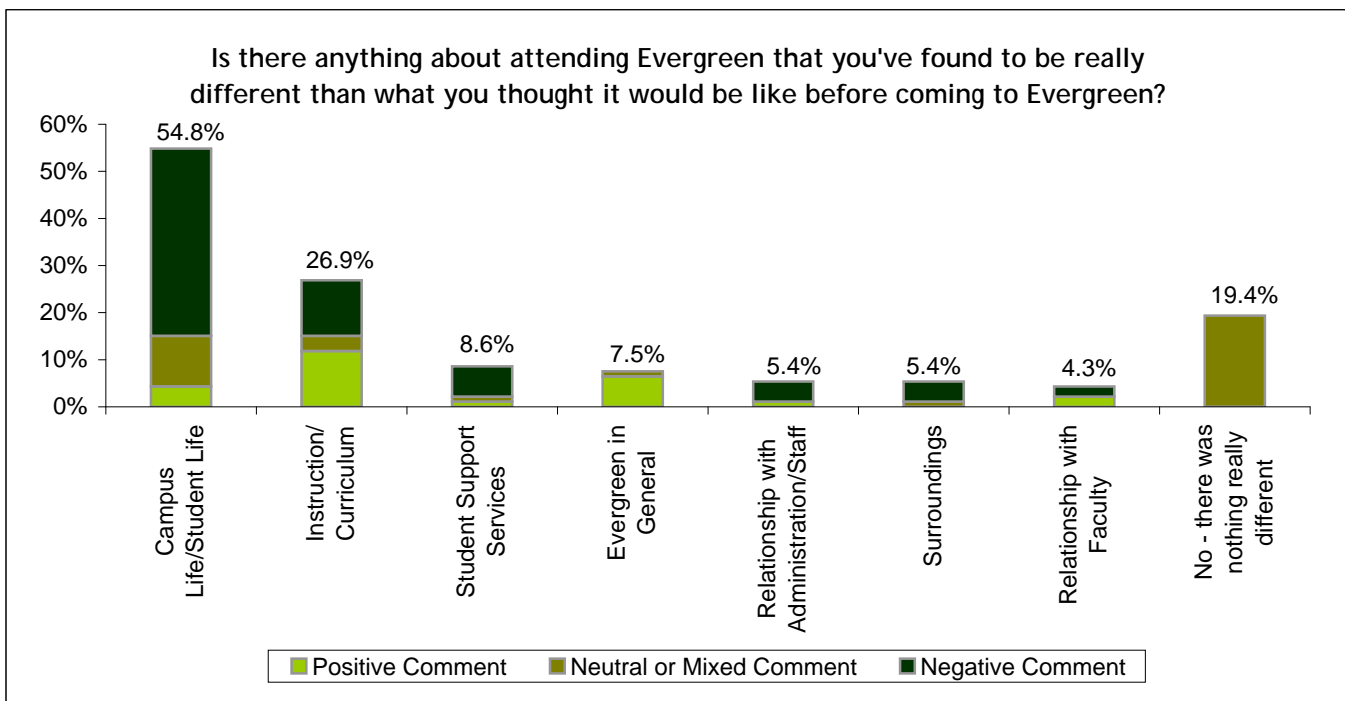
Students were asked the open-ended question "Is there anything about attending Evergreen that you've found to be really different than what you thought it would be like before coming to Evergreen? (Good or bad)."

Responses were grouped into general categories and by whether the response was positive, negative, mixed, or neutral. The distribution of comments is summarized below in descending order of frequency.

*Is there anything about attending Evergreen that you've found to be really different than what you thought it would be like before coming to Evergreen?*

(N=93, 47 skipped the question)

	Positive	Mixed/Neutral	Negative	Total
Campus Life/Student Life	4.3%	10.8%	39.8%	54.8%
Instruction/ Curriculum	11.8%	3.2%	11.8%	26.9%
Student Support Services	1.1%	1.1%	6.5%	8.6%
Evergreen in General	6.5%	1.1%	-	7.5%
Relationship with Administration/Staff	1.1%	-	4.3%	5.4%
Surroundings	-	1.1%	4.3%	5.4%
Relationship with Faculty	2.2%	-	2.2%	4.3%
No - there was nothing really different	-	19.4%	-	19.4%



Is there anything about attending Evergreen that you've found to be really different than what you thought it would be like before coming to Evergreen?\*

#### Campus Life/ Student Life

*Includes issues pertaining to housing, food service, life outside of the classroom, diversity issues, tolerance and acceptance*

#### POSITIVE COMMENTS

More work than I expected. Wasn't aware how removed the campus was from down town. I have been surprised at all the on campus activities and speakers.

yes, I didn't expect the rain to get me down so much and didn't expect to question and redefine my ideas of Reality so often.

I was surprised by the openness of the people, everyone was so nice.

I was not expecting the radicalism. But now I feel it's a rare opportunity to learn in an environment like that. Sounds weird, I know, but it's good to live a young life you can tell stories about.

#### MIXED AND NEUTRAL COMMENTS (N=10)

People are much more respectful and friendly than I expected. The food and housing departments seem to be formed for the sole purpose of squeezing money from the kids that can barely afford to go to college than to actually give them a GOOD place to live and DECENT food to eat.

Not that I can properly think of at the moment, but I remember thinking at first that it wasn't quite as progressive in some areas I wanted, but that it also had some areas in which it felt too radical... but I've gotten used to all that in the intervening months, and can't remember.

I'd heard drug use was a lot more widespread than it turned out to be.

I only have class two times a week which is amazing because I have more time to study. There is also a lot more hippies than expected.

I knew people would be different that what I was used to, but I wasn't expecting them to be so extreme. I have met a lot of extreme people but I've also met a lot who aren't so it's mixed up.

Although I somewhat expected it, the level of ideological activism is unbelievable. The most shocking thing for me is that most of the people who protest things like police brutality are white, and possibly come from well off families.

I'm honestly not sure what I thought Evergreen would be like before coming here, so it's hard to say how it might have been really different. I guess I thought that as freshmen, more people would live on campus. I also would have expected the food to be better since you supposedly use all sorts of organic produce.

it's what i refer to as dr. seuss culture... i don't think it makes sense unless you're wrapped up in it

I found a number of students who say they want equality for issues, but instead don't want to listen to your issue equally for whatever reason, instead only wanting to promote their own; and slight all others while they can. (Bad) I found none of my friends or social groups to be those students. (Good)

I found it was less liberal in some areas and much more in others - sometimes less has been more, sometimes more has been less.

#### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (N=37)

I didn't realize that Evergreen was a school for white people, much less cop-haters [...]. I thought I'd be happy and welcome here. I thought I'd actually be learning things, that I could use the education I was going to get to realize my goal of working in [the field I am going into]. I thought there would be student groups that I'd have a lot of fun being in; that I'd have friends and perhaps a mate.

+I'm better able to manage the work than I feared. +There are lots of support services (writing center etc.). -"Quiet" dorms they ain't. -Not all programs are quite as interdisciplinary as I expected.

I thought I would see more actions and hear less talk. A lot of students seem to represent a personal philosophy, a lifestyle, but then do not show it through actions. This was a surprise, but then again it could just be our generation and the fact that 'green' is "in."

I thought there would be more narrative film making courses offered, or at least that it would be available; instead, I have found that it is purposely avoided. I am quite disappointed in this. I thought that downtown Olympia was closer, and more integrated into the campus community. I thought there would be more black people, or at least more people of color in general. I dislike how white the campus is.

*\*Comments were redacted as necessary to protect student identities*

## Campus Life/ Student Life

*Includes issues pertaining to housing, food service, life outside of the classroom, diversity issues, tolerance and acceptance*

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (cont'd)

I don't know the mandatory meal plan ( for freshman) would be mostly wasted money I lost meals or declining balance at the end of each quarter.

The people, on the whole, here are only open minded and accepting as long as you agree with them. There is no free flow of ideas and faculty mold and rephrase your words if they do not agree with your statements.

i feel restrained and limited in what i want to learn. the students are hard to make friends and are especially cliquey as well as extremely disrespectful. the classes are not as diverse as i expected

I thought Evergreen would be a place full of intelligence, understanding and insight but instead it's full of people who can't even handle writing a simple essay. The quality of students at Evergreen is horrendously poor in both intellect and demeanor. Many nights have I seen glass bottles dropped from high windows near unsuspecting victims below. Many times have I heard that someone feels that they have been sexually harassed. Many times have I heard drunk Greeners screaming at the top of their lungs in the early hours of the morning. Any institution that truly cares for its students would do more to insure that their peers are intellectually stimulating and safe to be around.

The level of political and societal tension is much higher than I thought it would be, especially after the Feb. 14th incident.

Sure, actual experiences are always a bit different than our expectations of them. I thought that this campus would be a bit more alternative and less mainstream. I know that these are vague terms, but I feel that a lot more students than I was expecting (perhaps I'm not exception to this, as well) are more conventional, moderate, and not as open-minded as I was hoping and expecting them to be. Curricular-wise, I'm very satisfied with Evergreen, although I imagined a bit more cross program activity and collaboration.

I didn't realize how much a "need to feel involved" translated to "pointless whiny crap"

There are really a only a few different types of people here, the weather sucks, the classes do not cater to the student, living on campus has been a bad experience, and I really feel that Evergreen contradicts itself. I think Evergreen likes to give the impression that there is a lot of student input, but it feels like all the decisions are made by the faculty and administration.

The EQA seems a bit not welcoming unless you look like them. Its a bummer, would have loved to join but I think I might feel uncomfortable which is strange because they're not there to make anyone feel uncomfortable. Anyways, yeah.

everyone is all talk and no game. Just a bunch of bullshitters

Not very connected to the real world...living on campus, I feel like I live in this weird forest-bubble of academia.

People are violent, careless, and destructive. It's embarrassing and it worries me.

I really like the classrooms and I didn't think the students would be like they are but I survived.

I thought the administration wouldn't fight against the values of evergreen I thought it would be more appreciative of the arts I thought it wouldn't be hypocritically controlled by Aramark and Bank of America I didn't expect it to be crawling with armed police officers I didn't expect murals in the dorms to be painted over

I really just wish I had more friends but the school's doing well and I really like the classes. Some of the people are a little eccentric.

Violence is endorsed a lot more than I expected and slight racism and classism towards upper-class, white, and male. Thought it would be more effectively interdisciplinary/more ride share.

There are more parties than I thought there would be. In addition, I thought there would be more people who would be like me: intelligent scholars who wanted a non-traditional education. Instead there are a number of people who seem to be here just because it was the only college they could get in to. I have heard that most of those people drop out though.

Social life is so boring, but the school itself is amazing.

food I thought would be more sustainable

There is more drug use than I expected, but that is because I am naive, haha. I'm told it's like this at every college, so I'm not THAT worried. Although it makes me sad for the people who partake in such activities.

too many cop lovers.

Yes, I thought the food would be better.

I thought the food was going to be better and the corner store would be cheaper.

## Campus Life/ Student Life

*Includes issues pertaining to housing, food service, life outside of the classroom, diversity issues, tolerance and acceptance*

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (cont'd)

Coming from a right-wing town, I was looking forward for an accepting place of different viewpoints. However, I have found that most people are just as ignorant in the other direction than from my origin. The unwillingness to accept another point of view is very disturbing. Also, that riot was embarrassing. Violent reactions against authority are just as bad, if not worse than authoritarian violence.

I thought there would be more acceptance for diversity and ideas. I thought my teacher would be less flakey and ridiculous.

Very little sustainability learning or understanding.

My peers aren't as socially open as high school was.

as far as diversity, and multi-culturalism goes, i feel like the evergreen community has a set way of looking at issues of race, gender, etc. that if you don't 100% follow it your labeled as a racist, or sexist or whatever. I've almost constantly felt shame for being white, and a man since getting into class in the fall. i've been made to feel that no matter what i do to try to help people, or even to reverse racism, i'm white and i'm still the cause of all the problems associated with racism and i benefit from it, so it'd be totally justified for a black person to just kill me, similarly i feel guilty for being attracted to women, like i'm just a sex hungry pig, for even wanting sex, even if it's in a caring monogamous relationship. Evergreen accepts too much radicalism without at least saying, oh yeah your not necessarily a worthless person just because your white and a man.

people aren't very friendly when you see them around campus

I am surprised at the amount of people who do not take advantage of these great learning opportunities they are being given. It's frustrating.

I guess I expected a much more compassionate staff overall. My neighbors were always being harassed by the R.A's and going through her stuff, there was a constant war between students and police which had an overall hostile environment. The students and staff alike were always angry and their actions reflected that anger. I was impressed with the Grievance system however but I believe it only addressed the small problems which just fell into miscellaneous details in the big picture of what problems there were on campus. I found it was difficult to trust students or police in any matter of conflict as neither seemed to wholly understand any of the situations they were involved in. Overall, I would say there was an ongoing power struggle which in my mind seemed utterly childish on both ends.

The community is much less "open" than I would have expected, considering the type of learning here. The social atmosphere seems very 'clique-ish', and unfriendly towards "outsiders" (I'm from the east coast).

Not as many "hippies" as there are "weirdos".

## Instruction/Curriculum

*Includes comments pertaining to programs, courses, the classroom, instruction, class availability, accuracy of class descriptions*

### POSITIVE COMMENTS (N=11)

I expected it to be a lot more structured on the end of the professors, but was surprised (in a positive way) to see that it was a lot more up to the student to structure their education.

Sure, actual experiences are always a bit different than our expectations of them. I thought that this campus would be a bit more alternative and less mainstream. I know that these are vague terms, but I feel that a lot more students than I was expecting (perhaps I'm not exception to this, as well) are more conventional, moderate, and not as open-minded as I was hoping and expecting them to be. Curricular-wise, I'm very satisfied with Evergreen, although I imagined a bit more cross program activity and collaboration.

I only have class two times a week which is amazing because I have more time to study. There is also a lot more hippies than expected.

I was surprised by how comfortable students are with each other and faculty.

I really like the classrooms and I didn't think the students would be like they are but I survived.

I really just wish I had more friends but the school's doing well and I really like the classes. Some of the people are a little eccentric.

At first I was surprised by how easy Evergreen seemed to be, but now I realize there is a lot more emotional investment involved and it makes the education a very personal experience; which is, in turn more challenging than simply digesting and regurgitating knowledge. But I wish there was a stronger music program.

Not really. I felt like the way that the school is set up as far as learning in programs and interdisciplinary studies wasn't really clear before coming, but I am happy with the way it is set up.

i was surprised and glad that my coursework was/is as rigorous as it was/is.

I like the diversity and interactivity of seminar that other schools lack.

the library has fewer resources than I expected. i'm incredibly impressed by the amount of alternative opportunities (independent study, study abroad, et c.). i feel like i could make any crazy idea a reality with a little initiative.

### MIXED AND NEUTRAL COMMENTS (N=3)

+I'm better able to manage the work than I feared. +There are lots of support services (writing center etc.). -"Quiet" dorms they ain't. -Not all programs are quite as interdisciplinary as I expected.

More work than I expected. Wasn't aware how removed the campus was from down town. I have been surprised at all the on campus activities and speakers.

I thought it would be a little harder although my expectations for college were very harsh.

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (N=11)

I didn't realize that Evergreen was a school for white people, much less cop-haters [...]. I thought I'd be happy and welcome here. I thought I'd actually be learning things, that I could use the education I was going to get to realize my goal of working in [the field I am going into]. I thought there would be student groups that I'd have a lot of fun being in; that I'd have friends and perhaps a mate.

[My program]...ick

The people, on the whole, here are only open minded and accepting as long as you agree with them. There is no free flow of ideas and faculty mold and rephrase your words if they do not agree with your statements.

I thought there would be more narrative film making courses offered, or at least that it would be available; instead, I have found that it is purposely avoided. I am quite disappointed in this. I thought that downtown Olympia was closer, and more integrated into the campus community. I thought there would be more black people, or at least more people of color in general. I dislike how white the campus is.

i feel restrained and limited in what i want to learn. the students are hard to make friends and are especially cliquey as well as extremely disrespectful. the classes are not as diverse as i expected

## Instruction/Curriculum

*Includes comments pertaining to programs, courses, the classroom, instruction, class availability, accuracy of class descriptions*

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (cont'd)

I thought Evergreen would be a place full of intelligence, understanding and insight but instead it's full of people who can't even handle writing a simple essay. The quality of students at Evergreen is horrendously poor in both intellect and demeanor. Many nights have I seen glass bottles dropped from high windows near unsuspecting victims below. Many times have I heard that someone feels that they have been sexually harassed. Many times have I heard drunk Greeners screaming at the top of their lungs in the early hours of the morning. Any institution that truly cares for its students would do more to insure that their peers are intellectually stimulating and safe to be around.

There are really a only a few different types of people here, the weather sucks, the classes do not cater to the student, living on campus has been a bad experience, and I really feel that Evergreen contradicts itself. I think Evergreen likes to give the impression that there is a lot of student input, but it feels like all the decisions are made by the faculty and administration.

The options are extremely limiting - the program I wanted to take Spring quarter was the most popular Spring program, and if I hadn't gotten into that class there were no other programs out there that matched up with anything I'm very passionate about.

Violence is endorsed a lot more than I expected and slight racism and classism towards upper-class, white, and male. Thought it would be more effectively interdisciplinary/more ride share.

There is a fair bit more forced social interaction and busy work than I had expected. (I view both things as bad.)

Very little sustainability learning or understanding.

## Student Support Services

*Includes all support offices such as advising, financial aid, police services, health center, counseling, tutoring, writing center*

### POSITIVE COMMENTS (N=1)

+I'm better able to manage the work than I feared. +There are lots of support services (writing center etc.). -"Quiet" dorms they ain't. -Not all programs are quite as interdisciplinary as I expected.

### MIXED AND NEUTRAL COMMENTS (N=1)

I guess I expected a much more compassionate staff overall. My neighbors were always being harassed by the R.A's and going through her stuff, there was a constant war between students and police which had an overall hostile environment. The students and staff alike were always angry and their actions reflected that anger. I was impressed with the Grievance system however but I believe it only addressed the small problems which just fell into miscellaneous details in the big picture of what problems there were on campus. I found it was difficult to trust students or police in any matter of conflict as neither seemed to wholly understand any of the situations they were involved in. Overall, I would say there was an ongoing power struggle which in my mind seemed utterly childish on both ends.

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (N=6)

I didn't think that Evergreen (being the accepting, caring community I thought it was) would have such as aggressive armed police force that regularly harasses and physically attacks students. For example, [one of the police officers] routinely racially profiles students and has physically attacked students for no real reason and is now possibly being promoted instead of being fired as any fair and just college would do.

The bureaucracy of this being a state school. -Bad The atmosphere of holier-than-thou hippie-dom - Bad I didn't realize the campus was so isolated before coming here - Mixed I also did not expect a police presence on campus - Mostly Bad

The only is that I expected more career opportunities and opportunities for financial assistance. Buying anything on campus is very expensive!

I thought the administration wouldn't fight against the values of evergreen I thought it would be more appreciative of the arts I thought it wouldn't be hypocritically controlled by Aramark and Bank of America I didn't expect it to be crawling with armed police officers I didn't expect murals in the dorms to be painted over

Too much of a police state here. The cops need to LAY OFF of us! I expected to have a party and not have the cops come every time!!! It's college! Come on!

the library has fewer resources than I expected. i'm incredibly impressed by the amount of alternative opportunities (independent study, study abroad, et c.). i feel like i could make any crazy idea a reality with a little initiative.

## Evergreen in General

*All comments that mentioned Evergreen without specifically mentioning faculty, staff, admin., offices, etc.*

### POSITIVE COMMENTS (N=14)

I really wasn't sure how it was going to work here at all, but I am glad I checked it out, I love Evergreen.

Paradoxical. There are so many contradictories to preconceptions I make in my head about Evergreen. I think it's a great thing because there is always something new to learn if I'm willing to put myself into different situations. Exploring the ins and outs of Evergreen has proved to me that this school truly cannot be marginalized and that it is in a constant state of change. It's an ongoing process/experience.

I had heard many things about Evergreen before coming, especially on how TESC works to bringing about changes (i.e. Environmental Issues). I was glad to see how much work was being done to improve the quality of the world we live in, and am proud to call myself a Greener.

it was fun

it turned out to better than i expected.

Social life is so boring, but the school itself is amazing.

### MIXED OR NEUTRAL COMMENTS (N=1)

How supportive Evergreen is of their students.

## Relationship with Administration or Staff

*All comments that mentioned Evergreen staff or administration*

### POSITIVE COMMENTS (N=1)

It's pretty much what I expected. I've been more impressed with staff than I assumed I would be.

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (N=4)

There are really a only a few different types of people here, the weather sucks, the classes do not cater to the student, living on campus has been a bad experience, and I really feel that Evergreen contradicts itself. I think Evergreen likes to give the impression that there is a lot of student input, but it feels like all the decisions are made by the faculty and administration.

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The surveys are not as fun as promised.

I guess I expected a much more compassionate staff overall. My neighbors were always being harassed by the R.A's and going through her stuff, there was a constant war between students and police which had an overall hostile environment. The students and staff alike were always angry and their actions reflected that anger. I was impressed with the Grievance system however but I believe it only addressed the small problems which just fell into miscellaneous details in the big picture of what problems there were on campus. I found it was difficult to trust students or police in any matter of conflict as neither seemed to wholly understand any of the situations they were involved in. Overall, I would say there was an ongoing power struggle which in my mind seemed utterly childish on both ends.



## Campus Surroundings

*Includes general surroundings, surrounding community*

### NEUTRAL OR MIXED COMMENTS (N=1)

The beuraucracy of this being a state school. -Bad The atmosphere of holier-than-thou hippie-dom - Bad I didn't realize the campus was so isolated before coming here - Mixed I also did not expect a police presence on campus - Mostly Bad

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (N=4)

I thought there would be more narrative film making courses offered, or at least that it would be available; instead, I have found that it is purposely avoided. I am quite disappointed in this. I thought that downtown Olympia was closer, and more integrated into the campus community. I thought there would be more black people, or at least more people of color in general. I dislike how white the campus is.

More work than I expected. Wasn't aware how removed the campus was from down town. I have been surprised at all the on campus activities and speakers.

yes, I didn't expect the rain to get me down so much and didn't expect to question and redefine my ideas of Reality so often.

There are really a only a few different types of people here, the weather sucks, the classes do not cater to the student, living on campus has been a bad experience, and I really feel that Evergreen contradicts itself. I think Evergreen likes to give the impression that there is a lot of student input, but it feels like all the decisions are made by the faculty and administration.

## Relationship with faculty

*All comments that mentioned faculty in general or outside of the classroom*

### POSITIVE COMMENTS (N=2)

Faculty are caring, fun, and approachable.

I was surprised by how comfortable students are with each other and faculty.

### NEGATIVE COMMENTS (N=2)

The people, on the whole, here are only open minded and accepting as long as you agree with them. There is no free flow of ideas and faculty mold and rephrase your words if they do not agree with your statements.

I thought there would be more acceptance for diversity and ideas. I thought my teacher would be less flakey and ridiculous.

## No, there was nothing really different (N=18)

No (7)

not rly

I really had no expectations, and so far my experience has been a very positive one.

Not Really

Not especially.

coming here is actually pretty much what I expected but saying that I didn't really have that many expectations, I just knew it would be different form home.

No, I was pretty spot on.

none

No, Evergreen is perfect.

nope

No, not really.

what I expected.