

**Self-Evaluation  
for  
Thomas L. Purce**

**2001-2002**

We started the year with the tragedy of September 11 weighing on students and staff alike. Like most other communities, we were initially numbed by the attack and the ensuing war. We struggled to find ways to talk about the event within the Evergreen community. We worked quickly to find ways to support our community members directly affected by the tragedy, and the community recognized the need to try to understand the complexities of this disaster by incorporating educational possibilities into some of our programs.

We found it more difficult to reconcile individual concerns about the developing war in a time of intense patriotism and widespread insecurity about personal safety. Seminars, workshops and teach-ins in response to the tragic circumstances gave the community opportunities to gain information, share feelings, and formulate ideas and beliefs.

At the same time, the economic downturn created considerable uncertainty for the campus. Funding for construction of Seminar II was frozen after we broke ground. The campus engaged in long and difficult discussions anticipating budget reductions and tuition increases. Because the actual size of the legislative budget reductions could not be known until spring, those discussions took place in a climate of uncertainty, which was undoubtedly stressful for everyone affected.

**GOALS FOR THIS YEAR**

I started this year with some specific goals and objectives that were shaped by our strategic plan and by conversations with our Trustees, faculty, staff and students. We have had some measurable successes and continue to face real challenges.

One of our major, long-term commitments has been to improve compensation for faculty and staff relative to our peer institutions. Another goal was to make substantial progress in integrating General Education into the academic programs through faculty institutes, program assessment, and greater coordination with student affairs in academic advising. We also planned to continue supporting the development of the new Tacoma Campus programs.

We continued a major emphasis in strengthening our enrollment management function in order to expand and enhance the applicant pool, recruitment and retention, and recognition within the state, including upgrading our web page.

Improving civility, campus climate, and safety were also important goals that we set for this year. A DTF on Human Resources, underway a year ago, was expected to complete its work this year with recommendations that would lead to future work. The DTF's charge was to address deficits in training and staff development, to make recommendations to improve the alignment

and efficiency of Human Resource services, to develop an exempt salary model, and to research best practices in hiring, recruitment and retention of classified and exempt staff.

Beginning construction of the Seminar II building, completing the transition to the new Banner student information system and beginning the transition to the Banner finance system were important goals.

Continued expansion of our fundraising and friend-raising efforts through alumni and foundation support was a major external goal. Expanding alumni support, both in giving, and through renewed contacts to build relationships and develop the donor database to increase annual giving was one aspect of this goal. Another external goal was to increase national awareness of the college through engagement in national liberal arts venues.

Finally, it was my goal, in partnership with the college Trustees, to work toward the development of a statewide higher education coalition to address long-term funding for higher education in Washington.

## **BUDGET**

Although the college entered this year with a balanced budget, huge statewide deficits significantly altered our entire budget plan for the second year of the biennium. The rapid decline in state budget resources made it impossible to accurately project the magnitude of the budget adjustment we would have to face, requiring us to enter into an extensive and painful budget reduction planning process that has taken a severe emotional toll on everyone on campus and deeply affected morale.

I have spoken with many on campus about the pain of this process and wonder if there might not have been another alternative. There is an inherent tension between a desire to have a more inclusive and open process and the importance of sensitivity to the people and programs that may be affected by budget proposals. Perhaps one goal for next year will be to think through this process along with our other decision processes to search for a consensus on ways to improve this aspect of our life as a community.

The final legislative recommendations have resulted in the elimination of all state supported salary increases for the entire Evergreen community. Even with this impact, the institution remains committed to providing a one percent salary increase for faculty through internal reallocations. We will also attempt to relieve some of the salary compression among exempt staff.

The budget process this year has been lengthy and difficult, and I want to recognize the dedicated work that the Planning and Budget Council performed in developing recommendations for the reductions.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

My participation in the academic core program, Trash, during fall quarter provided a wonderful opportunity to meet the first year students who come to our college. The readings and the interactions with students reaffirmed for me the high level of academic expectations that our

faculty have for first year students. Both the academic capabilities and the rich diversity of the students were striking. Camping on the Columbia River with the students and other faculty gave me the opportunity to interact with these first year students in a way that has allowed me to keep year-long contact with a number of them.

Again this year I had the opportunity to participate in the new faculty orientation retreat, and again I appreciated the chance to meet the new faculty and to see their diverse talents and their enthusiasm for teaching and for Evergreen.

One of our major, long-term commitments has been to improve compensation for faculty and staff relative to our peer institutions. While statistically the numbers show improvement, we continue to lag behind to the extent that it hurts competitiveness in hiring and keeping faculty and staff whom we want at Evergreen. The statistical changes are in some small respects due to internal efforts we have made to address these issues, however the chief source of the improvement in numbers is related to significant retirements and hiring of new faculty who come in at a lower level on the faculty grid than those close to retirement.

We have continued our efforts to integrate General Education throughout the curriculum. A dean has been appointed to provide ongoing clarity and coherence to development and assessment. An Assessment Study Group will continuously review the status of General Education, make recommendations about future direction, and coordinate with deans to ensure comprehensive data collection for evaluation. Academics and Student Affairs are collaborating to improve student advising by conducting training institutes and supporting faculty advising within their programs.

The Tacoma Campus completed its second year of academic life in its new building. The program continues to provide important academic opportunities for non-traditional students in Pierce County. Our commitment to the economically depressed Hilltop area is a key factor in the growing economic revitalization of the area.

Our Reservation-Based Community-Determined undergraduate program continues to expand its reach to serve more tribes. The faculty have devised a strategy to implement the Masters in Public Administration in Tribal Administration.

### **COLLEGE ADVANCEMENT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

My work in college advancement has involved both fund-raising and the external promotion of the college. The advancement operation got off to a difficult start in the last year when it had to cut over \$270,000 and four positions out of its program. It has been successfully reorganized at a smaller staffing level, with a more focused and efficient approach to fund raising.

We have seen good overall progress in the Advancement division. Total giving to the college and Foundation from all sources will exceed \$3.6 million this year. The Evergreen Annual Fund, an important source of funding for scholarships, academic initiatives, and discretionary support for faculty and staff, has done very well. The Annual Fund met its goal of raising \$250,000 two months ahead of schedule. With fundraising still underway, we estimate that 2,754 donors will contribute to the Annual Fund, an increase of 16 percent over last year. The total raised for the

Annual Fund should approach \$290,000, an increase of 10 percent. This achievement is especially notable given the economic climate this year. At the same time, the Publications office continues to produce award-winning material.

My work this year has involved numerous contacts with donors, prospective donors, and alumni across the country. We have also made significant progress in our relationships with a number of private foundations. We have identified a donor committed to providing multiple scholarships over the next three years through the Jackie Robinson Scholarship program as we work toward building this endowment fund. A private gift from another donor will allow us to establish a graduate fellowship in the Master of Environmental Science program.

I have continued my service on a number of community and statewide boards. New this year is membership on the board of the Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County. College promotion activities have included work with editorial boards, media appearances, and speeches both about the college and on subjects related to higher education.

### **STUDENT AFFAIRS**

A major goal in the student affairs area involved recruitment and retention of students. We have invested significant resources in staff, in the website, in professional consultation, and in communication strategies aimed at prospective students. We have completed adoption of a new home page and developed a proposal to begin to provide for the long-term maintenance of the site.

We put together an Enrollment Management and Alumni partnership to support student recruitment nationwide. To coordinate our expanded recruiting efforts, we added the position of Director of Admissions. While all of these efforts are targeted toward the class entering in Fall of 2003, we anticipate that applications for Fall of 2002 will close earlier this year than in the recent past and that out of state enrollments necessary for diversity of our student body and health of our budget will edge back toward former levels.

This year also saw the completion of the Banner student information system that improved the quality and access to services for students.

The students on the Tacoma Campus working with the Student Activities Board developed a policy to officially establish a Tacoma Campus Student Activities Board as an affiliate.

### **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The first phase of construction on Seminar II is progressing well. Although the governor's freeze of capital allocations delayed the start of the project, we appear to be on time and on budget at this early stage of its completion. We will work to get full funding for the building, an additional \$4.5 million, included in the 2003-2005 budget.

The food service program has had a rocky first year financially, although excellent gastronomically. The volume of sales among students was much lower than projected, largely because there was no mandatory meal plan, even for students in residence halls. It became apparent that – as at most other institutions – some type of mandatory meal plan would be

required to maintain a viable food service operation. A DTF has recommended a new food service funding plan for Board approval.

The Human Resources DTF has made recommendations to increase staff training and development resources. Last year, we allocated \$50,000 to support staff development and will increase that level of commitment as the budget situation allows.

This year, we completed the first re-negotiation of the Union Contract since 1989. The new contract expands benefits for covered employees.

For the first time, through this work with the Union, the College has included in the contract a series of items for mandatory training. These new guidelines will ensure that all of our employees receive training in areas of sexual harassment, nondiscrimination, ethics, Americans with Disability Act and the Family Medical Leave Act every three years. New employees will be required to attend such training within ninety (90) days of appointment.

We successfully revamped our endowment investment policies for the Foundation to insure a higher rate of return on our endowments. Changes include partnering with the University of Washington to take advantage of their professional investment expertise and the scale of their investment pool.

### **CAMPUS CLIMATE, CIVILITY AND SAFETY**

We made significant progress in our efforts to promote conversations around civility and greater understanding between the campus and the external community. A year-long conversation with the *Olympian* culminated in a First Amendment Forum to engage the community in a discussion of democracy and the rights of citizens as spelled out in the first amendment. It provided a venue for the expression of diverse ideas and perspectives. The broad participation both on and off campus was a good start for what we hope will be an annual event. Significant participation on the part of high school students and teachers provided an important step toward better understanding and interconnectedness between the college and our local K-12 programs.

Orientation for new students, as well as the management retreat for deans and directors served as major venues for discussion about our Social Contract that helped to re-energize our consensus that it remains a “living” document for the institution. A variety of student-initiated activities focused on the war in Afghanistan and on a variety of global and national issues. A number of well-organized workshops, forums, teach-ins, and speakers resulted in a rich, well-conceived program.

The Campus Violence DTF completed its work and made specific recommendations to improve the safety and comfort level of the community.

### **PRESIDENT’S OFFICE**

Within my staff offices significant work has been done in support of many of the institutions goals. Staff have been intensively involved in many of the key DTFs, have provided significant contributions to our external relations work, and have provided important resources for training, planning and providing focus on campus climate.

Our legislative efforts resulted in the release of funding for Seminar II. The Legislature also provided authority to participate in Running Start, should we choose to do so in the future. We directed much of our effort in the legislature toward minimizing further budget reductions due to the state revenue shortfall. Evergreen spearheaded the effort to insure that the State Need Grant program for the most needy students continued to be a priority in a time of scarce budget dollars, especially when it became apparent that tuition would rise appreciably.

We continued our work to maintain and deepen the college's commitment to diversity. Once again, my staff played a major role in organizing the state-wide Faculty and Staff of Color conference. We also hosted a dinner for leaders of eight tribes to discuss how Evergreen can best continue to serve tribal communities. In addition, my staff worked with offices across campus to help organize the Common Ground conference on campus, which provided a forum for further discussions on Native American teaching and learning.

During this year, I worked through the Council of Presidents to involve all of the state's Regents and Trustees in developing a long-term strategy to address the state budget crisis as it affects higher education. Along with other members of the staff, I took every opportunity to testify at Legislative hearings on this topic, supporting long-term funding solutions for higher education. A weekly legislative report highlighting major issues related to our specific work greatly enhanced communication about our legislative work to both internal and external audiences

This year I served as president of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges and, with the assistance of my office staff, coordinated an Executive Board review and restructuring of the organization.

Events, dinners, and receptions on behalf of the college have allowed me to tell the story of the college to over 800 individuals this year. Nationally, I have been elected to the Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, a group devoted to the promotion of excellence in liberal education.

### **EMERGING ISSUES**

Economic and budget uncertainty has taken a toll on the campus this past year. Faculty, staff, students and alumni are all affected as we work to protect the institution we have built together and to respond to this fiscal environment in ways that support our core academic mission. In order to take more effective control of the college's destiny, we must address three critical issues:

1. *Leadership in statewide policy.* The college should play a major role in the emerging statewide discussion about the long-term funding of higher education. As we look at an even tighter state budget situation next year, the primary challenge continues to be funding. We must become more aggressive in our commitment to changing the state structure that supports higher education. We must get the message through that shrinking resources and statewide over-enrollments jeopardize our ability to serve growing numbers of applicants. We can not continue to take on new enrollments at the planned levels without first fully

funding the enrollments that we already serve. And we will not back off from equating the quality of what we do with the compensation of faculty and staff.

2. *Diverse and robust funding sources.* We must become more proactive and creative to ensure that we have the reliable sources of revenue that we need to achieve our dreams. We have begun that work by identifying innovative ways to increase the endowment through our foundation and changing our investment policy. We need to continue to identify new sources of income that can be directed toward improving academic areas and student life. It is critical to continue to expand sources of private giving to support these critical areas of the college. At the same time, we must make sure that our auxiliary enterprises, such as Housing, the Bookstore, Food Services, and Conference Services, are healthy, productive and working to support our academic mission. Finally, we must make sure that our decisions about enrollment and tuition levels are informed by a complete understanding of their effect on our budget. Completing and improving our data and management information systems is a critical part of this work. To improve our efficiency, completion of the Banner finance system is needed. It will provide integrated financial reporting and management information about all facets of the institution.
3. *An engaged and informed campus community.* To respond effectively to this challenging economic environment, it is important that the Evergreen community be informed, engaged, and able to have good discussions and make hard choices. At Evergreen, we pride ourselves on communication and collaboration, but with our increased size and new members in the community, we are faced with having to devise new strategies for improving the way we pass on the traditions of the college, and also how we allow for new voices to be heard and accepted. Fifty percent of the faculty and staff have now been at Evergreen for less than five years. In a campus culture largely based on oral tradition, the continuity of our mission becomes threatened if information about how Evergreen operates is not passed on due to excessive turnover.

I am concerned that this very difficult year has begun to cause tension and mistrust at a time when we must find ways to pull together for the common interest of our college. We have to find ways in the next year to create a climate of trust built on communication. A first step for me next year will be to meet regularly with the Agenda Committee and the Academic Deans to engage with them in intensive conversations about issues of concern to the academic community. I will be developing a similar process for the other divisions of the College. I would appreciate your suggestions as community members about other steps we might take to help everyone move forward together in these increasingly challenging areas.