

Self-evaluation
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This evaluation marks the end of my fifth year as president. We encourage graduating students to undertake a summative self-evaluation. This year seems an appropriate time for me to attempt something similar with my annual self-evaluation. As I sit down to reflect on my work and on the state of the college, I am trying to reflect on the full extent of my tenure so far.

Academics

Five years ago, Evergreen was engaged in series of conversations about General Education, inspired by our 1998 self-study and accreditation visit. Those conversations allowed us to better articulate our expectations of an Evergreen graduate, to give greater prominence to the work of our learning resource centers, and to engage in a productive series of program planning and faculty development activities.

With the leadership of the Provost and the Institutional Research office, we are now working to assess the effectiveness of this work on the student experience. Our assessment of teaching and learning is ongoing. The six curricular planning units, the Tacoma Program, and the Reservation-Based Community-Determined Program are all completing self-studies. Self-studies for the three graduate programs were also conducted in the past two years. These studies will help us discuss issues around curriculum breadth and depth, faculty development and hiring priorities.

The work that we have done on general education is central to our mission as a liberal arts college. The extraordinary freedom that Evergreen provides to both faculty and students to tailor their academic work to their immediate interests provides the energy and close engagement that make the Evergreen experience uniquely challenging and rewarding. At the same time, our mission as a liberal arts college demands that we make sure our graduates are exposed to the full range of learning that a liberal arts degree signifies. The faculty voted to facilitate curricular reform and curricular support to increase student access to arts, sciences and quantitative reasoning. To meet this demand while preserving the extraordinary freedom of our pedagogy, we will need to continually engage in the kind of discussions about general education that have marked these last five years.

At the same time that we have engaged in serious work on general education, we have continued to experience a generational change among the faculty. This shift, which has been underway for some time, came into sharp focus this year as we conducted searches for 16 new faculty members, 10 visiting faculty, and nominated nine retiring faculty for emeritus status. I have had the opportunity to participate in each of the new faculty retreats since I have been president and to spend time with each new cohort of faculty. I intend to continue teaching in programs and participating in the orientation of our new faculty and students.

After many years of discussion, we are now undertaking an expansion of the Deanery and a re-organization of academic administration. This is clearly needed to cope with the growth in the

faculty and the growing array of academic activities that the Provost is responsible for. The Provost and the Deans are planning this expansion in a thoughtful and consultative fashion that will enable the Deans to sharpen their focus on Evergreen's core teaching practices.

In spite of some comparatively lean years, our academic work has made several remarkable gains. We now have permanent state funding for our MPA track in Tribal Administration. This accomplishment represents years of hard work on the part of many at the college and the strong support and advocacy of our friends outside the college. Our Public Service Centers have worked hard and had considerable success in supplementing state support with grant income. The establishment of the Center for Community Based Learning is perhaps the most visible sign of this effort on campus, but it is certainly not the only achievement. With support from the Pew Charitable Trust, Boeing, the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Russell Foundation, the Ford Foundation and others, our work in these areas has continued to flourish.

The new Tacoma facility, designed to accommodate 350 students, was completed early in 2001. Enrollment goals for the Tacoma Program were achieved by Fall 2004, and much work has been done to strengthen the bridge program in Tacoma. We have also worked to strengthen the administration infrastructure for the Tacoma Program.

Since 2000, we have gained a significant new tool to help us measure our work. The National Survey of Student Engagement seeks to measure many of the qualities that Evergreen has always valued in the student experience. That a major, nationwide survey would so closely match Evergreen's approach to teaching reflects the historic role that the college has played in shaping the national discussion about education. It was not surprising during the first years the survey was administered that Evergreen emerged as an exemplar. The most recent administration of the survey, however, showed slippage in several areas where we would expect to score well. The Provost is using the survey as a catalyst for further reflection and discussion about the student experience and will convene study groups next year to suggest next steps.

Enrollment

Five years ago, enrollment was one of the key strategic issues that concerned the college. It remains so today. The 2000 Strategic Plan, which was drafted and adopted following the 1998 self study and accreditation visit, called for Evergreen to take steps to increase the number of in-state freshmen at Evergreen and to hold the proportion of out-of-state students at 25 percent.

It soon became clear that we were faced with a decline in the proportion of out-of-state students. At least in part, this decline may have been due to a steep rise in tuition for non-resident students, which made private colleges with more generous financial aid resources more attractive to non-resident students. This decline represented a serious threat to the fiscal health of the college. As the proportion of non-resident students dipped to 21 percent, it represented a loss of approximately \$2 million in foregone revenue. We made up some of this loss by reducing our base budget. The shortfall was also offset by strong demand from community college transfer students, which allowed us to carry a level of enrollment above the state-funded level. But it was clear that this condition was not sustainable.

We addressed these challenges by making significant investments in student recruitment. The number and quality of publications directed at potential students increased. Staff re-worked the messages directed at potential students, updated the Web site, revised recruitment strategies, and adjusted financial aid awards. This work produced clear results. After several years of declining applications, we experienced a jump in applications for Fall 2003

We changed the enrollment assumptions on which our budget is based. We no longer assume that 25 percent of our students will pay non-resident tuition in order to make the budget balance. Our current budget assumes our current level of 855 non-resident students.

Five years ago, we recognized that we needed to take steps to avert an enrollment shortfall, and we successfully took steps to address the problem. Nevertheless, we now confront a new set of circumstances. For many years, community college transfer students have made up the largest share of our entering class. In years when we have had a shortfall of other students, we knew that we could rely on transfer students to fill those seats. This year, we experienced a decline in the number of applications from community college transfer students. As UW-Tacoma and WSU-Vancouver expand to four-year institutions, students who have traditionally come to Evergreen will have more options elsewhere.

The work of the Enrollment Growth DTF is critical to our ability to control our future as a college. I am grateful for the serious attention that the Board of Trustees and the faculty and staff have given to the work of the DTF. The DTF has made specific recommendations for new interdisciplinary programs that reflect student demand and a rapidly changing student market. Regardless of how we choose to plan for the next increment of growth, this kind of engagement will be essential to building a healthy enrollment in the future. I want to commend the DTF for its hard work and determination to deeply consider the issues before it.

Financial Affairs

We begin the next biennium in a more stable financial condition than we have enjoyed in many years. The financial challenges Evergreen has confronted during the past five years are well known. We faced the abrupt and precipitous decline in the state's financial health that began in 2001. The depth of the recession became clear to us when the governor froze the funds to build Seminar II. The freeze was temporary, but it marked several years of hard economic times for the state, during which Evergreen experienced a combination of budget cuts and tuition hikes. At the same time, the falling investment markets squeezed our endowments.

Looking back on those years, it is truly remarkable to find ourselves in such a comparatively strong financial position. I have always found that people at Evergreen pull together and do what is necessary when confronted with threats to the college. That was certainly the case in the fall of 2002, when our economic prospects appeared most challenging. The formation of the College Budget Council, the Financial Futures Group, a Communications Group and the Core Values Group at the Management Retreat that year marked a turning point in our efforts to take some control of our financial situation.

Our work with the legislature and our efforts to improve our internal financial management have paid off. We did not have to implement the budget cut that we anticipated in the fiscal year

ending June 30. Even better, the biennial budget beginning July 1 will allow us to stabilize our base budget. In addition to providing the salary increases approved by the legislature, we will be able to:

- Limit tuition increases to resident undergraduate students, addressing our concerns about overpriced nonresident and graduate student tuition.
- Add 5.5 faculty lines to support our current over-enrollment and add 5.5 more lines in the second year for expected growth.
- Re-base our budget assumptions to reflect a reduced dependence on nonresident students.
- Provide permanent funding for both the MPA Tribal Administration program and the Center for Community-Based Learning
- Add support staff in several critical areas, including technology/media support, visual and performing arts, and mental health counseling.
- Provide permanent funding for positions previously funded with one-time money in fundraising, business services and composting.
- Build a healthy reserve fund so that we are well prepared for the next biennial legislative budget.
- Create a strategic initiative fund that we can use to respond to issues that may arise out of next year's strategic plan update.

A few challenges that we faced five years ago remain unresolved. We will need to continue giving attention to our self-supporting auxiliary enterprises. Our experience with food services over the past five years demonstrates that the financial risks and benefits in our auxiliary programs can be significant. Our contract with Aramark has produced a vast improvement in the financial health of the program, but we still have work to do in this area. We will want to give attention to all the auxiliary budgets in the years ahead.

Human Resources

Five years ago, the Human Resources DTF was working on its recommendations. Since that time, we have taken steps to improve conditions for the staff and faculty who give so much to the college. We have tremendously expanded the program of development opportunities and required trainings that we provide for staff. We have also been able to direct additional resources to support faculty development activities. At the Senior Staff level, we have given greater visibility to Human Resources issues by raising the head of the department to the level of Associate Vice President and making the position a member of the Senior Staff. We have implemented some management reporting tools to help us better monitor the well-being of our workforce.

One of the most significant changes in this area during the last five years occurred when the legislature adopted a civil service reform law providing a new process for collective bargaining. When it came time to negotiate a union contract under the new system, both the college and the union felt that it would be best to negotiate as part of a consortium of higher education institutions. Now that the negotiation is complete, we are working to finalize the revised policies and procedures that are necessary to implement that agreement. It is probably still too soon to judge the full impact of those changes, but I am committed to continuing the amicable and collaborative relationship with our union that we have enjoyed for many years.

Student Affairs

While enrollment has necessarily been a major focus in Student Affairs over the past five years, other areas have also seen significant work. We have made significant improvements to our new student orientation program, and student retention has shown a marked improvement. For the past three years, fall-to-fall retention of undergraduate students has been at 80 percent or above. This compares favorably to retention rates that ranged between 74 and 77 percent from 1997 through 2000. We continue to retain students of color at a rate equal to or above the retention rate for white students.

Over the last few years, we have made investments in the well-being of the youngest members of our community. Last year, the capacity of the Child Care Center doubled, thanks to a major investment by the college and the student Services and Activities Board. At the same time, with the help of a major federal grant, the Gear Up program has worked to help middle school children, their teachers and their families to begin thinking about college.

Over the next few years, we will have an opportunity to significantly improve life on campus for our students in other ways. The Campus Life work group has studied ways that we might improve the CAB and make it a more effective "living room" for the Olympia campus. At the same time, we will soon pay off part of the debt associated with our Housing operation, which gives us an opportunity to plan for much-needed updating of our Housing facilities. We will also experience a transition and change of leadership in Police Services.

Diversity

Over the past few years, I have observed and participated in a number of thoughtful discussions about campus climate and the environment we provide for students, faculty and staff. Our mission calls us to give serious consideration to issues of social class, age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, religious preference, and sexual orientation. I have charged a Diversity DTF to study the issue and recommend a five-year plan for improving the campus climate. I have asked them to give particular attention to ensuring that we can sustain our efforts in this area, that we plan and coordinate this work carefully, and we assess our diversity work in a thoughtful and ongoing fashion. I look forward to receiving the DTF's recommendations next year.

Physical Plant

Some of the most obvious changes in the past five years have occurred in our physical campus: The construction of the Seminar II building, the renovation of the parking lots, the expansion of the Child Care Center, the renovation of our labs, the construction and lease of a new Tacoma facility, and the relocation of Student and Academic Support Services. The renovation of the Parkway and the modernization of the Library building are well underway.

The past five years have seen the largest growth in the physical plant of any period since the original building of the campus, with more than \$117 million of construction completed or underway. Seminar II was recognized as one of the top "green" buildings in the US for 2004. This level of construction is a huge vote of confidence in Evergreen by the legislature and people of Washington. Individually and in combination, these projects will make a big difference in the learning and working environment for our students, faculty and staff.

College Advancement

We have had successes in College Relations, especially in improving the quality of our publications, reaching out to members of the press, and working extensively with legislators. We have also organized some well-attended community events on important topics including the First Amendment Forum, the Search for Peace dialogues, and the *Brown v. Board* Anniversary Commemoration.

We made significant strides in College Advancement over the past five years. With strong leadership from the Foundation Board of Governors the endowment has doubled to more than \$6 million. By partnering with the University of Washington, we have significantly improved the performance of the Foundation's investments. Our student phone-athon callers now have a dedicated space and modern equipment to keep in touch with the college's alumni and supporters. Faculty, staff and students across campus have helped to coordinate grant proposals, host officers of philanthropic foundations, and tell the story of Evergreen in the community.

Last year, I asked the Collins Group to review our fundraising efforts, assess our readiness for a major capital campaign, and make recommendations for next steps. In particular, the report recommends that we direct resources to further enhancing our Annual Fund activities, develop a more active major gifts program, and develop a more comprehensive system of prospect management. It is clear to me that an enhanced fundraising program is key to achieving many of our goals for the college. Over the past few years, I have attended alumni events across the country and met a great many alumni and parents who are passionate about Evergreen. Drawing on this support will require that we sustain our engagement and deepen our relationships over the next several years.

Looking ahead to next year

I am grateful for having the privilege of serving as president these past five years. I have had the chance to work and play with colleagues who love this college as I do. It is rare to find a work place that allows such great latitude to be yourself while pursuing the important work of educating the next generations. The Evergreen environment allows me to pursue my interest in and love of both education and music, while fully engaging my public administration and political skills. I have learned that time can really fly when you are truly enjoying your work and are working from a plan that the whole community has embraced.

We have before us challenges that are exciting and that will constitute, in many ways, I believe, the most important work for the future of the college. This next year will lay the foundation for how we deal with those challenges.

The landscape of higher education in Washington state is changing rapidly. Branch campuses in Tacoma and Vancouver will soon offer four-year degrees, and private for-profit colleges continue to aggressively pursue areas of student demand. At the same time, we continue to face the ups and downs of legislative budgets dictated by the health of the state and national economy. The reality is that the state will provide fewer and fewer dollars to educate our students and to support our faculty and staff in that endeavor. A larger burden is likely to be placed on our students and their families. It will have huge negative implications for both the

quality of the programs we can provide and which individuals have access to Evergreen's education, unless we find ways offset these losses.

An important way to offset this challenge is by expanding private giving to Evergreen. While we have made notable progress, I am disappointed that I have not been able to do more. It will need to be a major focus of my work in the coming years. But it is not my work alone. There are many components we must address to succeed in this realm. The faculty must organize itself to be partners in this effort. The staff must do the same, as must the college's Board of Trustees. We have developed a strong and maturing Foundation Board of Governors, with a strong interest in working on behalf of the college. Our alumni and friends increasingly indicate a willingness to support the college. It is my goal to begin a major campaign for the college by the end of this biennium.

This year will require the reorganization of the college's development division, which will include hiring new senior leadership in that area. We will also focus their efforts more explicitly on fund-raising by moving the College Relations unit into the President's Office. My goal by the end of the next academic year will be to have a team working effectively and a development plan in place that is closely integrated with our broader college-wide strategic plan.

It is time to update the college's Strategic Plan. Much of the planning work that forms that update is already complete or underway. The work of the Enrollment Growth DTF, the Diversity DTF and many other DTFs and workgroups will be consolidated and coordinated in an updated strategic plan.

On a more personal note, I will be moving from the President's Residence to my own home to accommodate the needs of my family. I appreciate that the Board recognized when I was hired that my family needs might change. Deciding the future of the college residence will be part of our planning efforts over the next year as they relate to land use and facilities. I look forward to hosting college events in our new home during the next academic year after the remodeling is done.

I want to extend my thanks to all the members of the college community who are working so hard to continually improve the quality of the educational experience for our students. I look forward to working with you all in the years ahead. I also want to acknowledge the strong support we receive from the governor and legislature. Their growing faith in the work that we do can be experienced every day on campus, in our growing and improving facilities and in the resources we have to do our work.

It is a pleasure to be a part of this community. Thank you for your continuing support.