

EVERGREEN

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 15, 2007

TO: The Evergreen Community

FROM: Thomas L. Purce, President

SUBJECT: Board Evaluation of the President

At their regular meeting on Wednesday, July 11, the Trustees will evaluate my performance as president during the past year. I invite you to take part in that process by responding to my self-evaluation or by making any observations you wish, in writing by Monday, July 2.

The Board's Bylaws specify that the president shall be judged by the performance of the College as a whole, so it is in my interest that each of you should be successful in your own work. I need to know how I can most effectively serve Evergreen, and how I can help you to work most effectively as well.

My self-evaluation is posted on the Web at <http://www.evergreen.edu/president/selfeval.htm>. If you would like a printed copy of my self-evaluation documents, please call my office at 867-6100.

Comments regarding my performance can be sent to the Board of Trustee's e-mail (tescbot@evergreen.edu), or to me at the President's office, Library 3109, or to both the Board and me.

I hope you will participate in this process. A tradition of regular self-evaluation is an important part of Evergreen. Thank you for reading and responding to my self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation
Thomas L. Purce
June 15, 2007

I began the fall quarter of my seventh year as President by participating in a core program titled "American Experiences/American Dreams." The program explored the many paths that Americans have followed in their attempt to realize the American dream. In spite of the challenges and contradictions that people of color and immigrants faced when they arrived in this country, they often managed despite difficult odds to carve out a social and economic life that allowed their next generation to live a more fruitful and equitable existence. Hearing students in their final presentations talk about their family histories reinforced for me the centrality of the work we do in higher education, and more specifically the work we do at Evergreen. In many of these student stories, education played a pivotal role in shaping the future of their families.

This year has been a watershed for the college in many respects. We completed an update of the strategic plan that focused and reaffirmed our mission as an interdisciplinary, public liberal arts college. Our ongoing planning efforts include a broad-based examination of the curriculum through the faculty's Curricular Visions work. The strategic plan calls us to expand our commitment to diversity and to increase our efforts to address global warming and sustainability. The strategic planning process also led us to take an honest look at the college's financial footing, the important role the state plays, and the increasing importance of campus-wide engagement in private fundraising that supports our mission and goals. All of this helps to prepare us for our ten-year accreditation site visit in the Fall of 2008.

This year, we saw the beginnings of substantial change in our system of college governance. The first board-recognized student government was active on campus this year, working to solidify its role. In Fall Quarter the United Faculty of Evergreen was recognized as the voice and official bargaining representative of Evergreen's faculty. In addition, our Board of Trustees is entering a period of transition. In 2006, the average tenure of Board members reached seven years, the longest in the history of the college. In the past year, two Trustees have left the Board. In the next year, we expect the departure of two more trustees. Paying attention to all these changes in our governance structures will be an important part of our work in the next year.

As I begin my eighth year as President, I continue to marvel at the energy and hard work that staff and faculty invest in Evergreen. The level of commitment is inspiring, and at times threatens to become unsustainable. This year's legislative session was especially gratifying because, for the first time in recent memory, we received a budget that will allow us to provide new resources to shore up some of our core activities. In addition to enrollment funding, which I will discuss below, the legislature provided compensation increases in both years of the biennium, 3.2% and 2%. We received money to significantly enhance our retention efforts for low-income students, first generation students and students with disabilities. The legislature provided significant new resources for financial aid for needy students throughout the state. At Evergreen the legislature committed to expanding the institutional aid that we are able to provide through tuition waivers. The budget adds positions in our Labor Center. Perhaps most significantly, unlike legislative budgets in previous years, this budget does not presume that new revenue from tuition will be used to offset budget reductions. This means that any tuition

increases over the next two years will enable us to shore up the base budget for our core activities, for instance by hiring an International Studies Coordinator, an additional Science Instructional Tech, and more media support for our classroom and workshop spaces.

We continue to receive strong state support for the physical renewal of the campus. This year we received funding for a much-needed expansion of the Longhouse. The legislature also provided almost \$5 million for the renovation of the College Activities Building. When combined with the \$16 million the students have committed to the project, these funds will produce a significant improvement in the quality of student life on campus. Next fall, we will be working to finalize the design for the CAB Renovation, where student voices will be key in the many decisions we will face.

The strong funding in the state budget cycle this year came at a time when state revenue collections were up. As we all know, this kind of economic fortune comes and goes. Recognizing this, we will continue the practice, which has served us well in recent years, of maintaining a healthy contingency reserve to cushion against sudden reversals of the state's economic fortunes. In a broader sense, these budget enhancements occurred because of the participation and leadership of many people. The leadership of our local legislators was critical, as was the support of our Trustees and alumni. The testimony of faculty and the hard work of staff made the case for the college's needs. It truly was a team effort. As an example of the scale of this work, we hosted at least 35 events over the course of the year, attended by more than 1,600 people from the college and external community.

This summer we will begin preparation for the second phase of renovation in the Library Building. As we have all learned by now, the disruption and distraction that accompanies a major renovation is considerable and requires the patience and good will of all those involved. Among the key renovations left undone is a modernization of the old Television Studio and Master Control suite. In the next year we will be working to develop a funding strategy for the Center for New Media that is proposed to occupy the site.

The improving financial state of the college helps us move forward in other key areas identified in the strategic plan. In responding this Spring to the final report of the Diversity Task Force, I am charging a President's Committee on Diversity and Equity to follow-up on many of the DTF's recommendations. We are fortunate that the budget will support a significant enhancement to the President's Diversity Fund so that the Diversity Lecture Series can continue, the Day of Absence/Day of Presence events can have specific funding in the base budget, and we can devote resources to improving the coordination of publicity for our many diversity-related events. At the same time, we will direct more resources to ensure that faculty members have the tools they need to prepare for difficult topics in seminar. We will also fund the start-up of a Center for Community Matters to help members of our community navigate our conflict resolution systems.

The work of the Sustainability Task Force provides a strong foundation for working on our sustainability strategy. Serious work on sustainability touches every part of the college. We will hire a Sustainability Coordinator next year who will focus on this area full time. Thanks to the hard work of Master of Environmental Studies student John Pumilio, we have completed the

college's first inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, a critical step in our goal to become a "carbon-neutral" campus. I have joined the Leadership Council of the President's Climate Commitment, joining with college and university presidents around the country in an effort to make our campuses national models in addressing global warming. On January 31 next year, we will join with colleagues in the region to produce a Focus the Nation event to bring attention to the urgency of climate change. As always, the greatest impact that we can make on this topic is through teaching and learning. Through the Curricular Visions process, the faculty is working to articulate a curricular pathway for sustainability studies, supported by recent faculty hiring, that will build upon Evergreen's long tradition of environmental education.

For several years now, we have focused on enrollment. We all recognize the pivotal role that healthy enrollment plays in the life of the college, both academically and financially. We have been confronted with a host of challenges: declining enrollment in the community college system, increased competition from new baccalaureate programs in Tacoma and Vancouver, and tuition increases that threaten our ability to attract non-resident students. Larger or wealthier colleges have the ability to direct major portions of their budgets to respond to challenges like these. At Evergreen we have to think strategically and work collaboratively to apply our limited budget reserves when needed. Long-term enrollment strategy is especially complex at Evergreen, given the wide range of students we serve. We are predominantly a commuter campus, which nevertheless has a significant residential program. We have historically served a large number of local, community college transfer students, while also serving a significant population of in-state and out-of-state freshmen. The tremendous range of students we serve is part of what makes Evergreen such a vibrant public college.

Given these conditions, we can be pleased with the progress we have made on enrollment. In spite of a statewide decline in enrollment, we were able to manage our enrollment mix so that we did not experience a shortfall in tuition revenue. Most importantly, the work that we have done in this area over the past several years is beginning to pay off. Applications from both resident and non-resident freshman are up by 12% this year and the several-year decline in applications from community-college transfer students appears to have stopped. These improvements have not happened by accident. They are the product of intensive work by the staff in Admissions, working in close collaboration with a number of faculty and with staff in College Relations, to better explain the college to prospective students. At the same time, we have used our budget flexibility to address critical financial aid needs and worked to continue building strong relationships with community colleges.

These improvements in our enrollment picture come at a critical time, as we prepare for the next increment of enrollment growth. The state continues to pursue a goal of expanding access to higher education and looks to Evergreen to help meet that goal. The enrollment growth discussions at the state level have occasionally been frustrating for many at Evergreen. The focus on "high demand" degree production sometimes seems to dismiss the value of a liberal arts education. We continue to believe that a quality, interdisciplinary liberal arts education is excellent preparation, both for participation in our democracy and for a productive career. Consequently, we have worked hard to ensure that this perspective is present in conversations about "high demand" degrees. We have had some success. The high demand funding that we have received – first for the Tribal MPA program, and now for a new Master of Education

program and for undergraduate health sciences – provide truly interdisciplinary programs grounded in the liberal arts. These “high demand” programs are funded at a level significantly higher than general enrollments, so it is especially important to note that Evergreen’s unique organizational structure allows us to allocate this generous high demand funding in ways that can enhance the college as a whole.

Considerable work was done this year in improving the experience of first year students. The First Year Experience DTF arrived as a comprehensive set of recommendations. We have already implemented important changes, including the revival of Beginning the Journey, required advising for new students, and the enhancement of faculty development related to effective pedagogies for first year students.

In the past year, we made improvements in the management of the college in many ways. The Business Services office has made notable improvements in our regular college-wide financial reporting. Residential and Dining Services are on a solid financial footing, with a comprehensive strategy in place to assure the long-term health of these critical programs. That strategy enabled us to raise bond revenue to begin a much-needed renewal of the facilities in Housing. We also completed the implementation of a policy making e-mail the method for official correspondence with students. This change will save money and greatly reduce the use of paper in support of our sustainability goals.

For the past seven years, we have made efforts to enhance private giving to the college. Our ability to fully realize our aspirations for Evergreen will depend in part on our success in attracting private gifts. We have had some striking successes in this area over the past seven years. In 1999-2000, the Annual Fund received \$205,000 in private gifts. This year, gifts to the Annual Fund have surpassed our goal of \$425,000 and will likely exceed \$460,000. In the same seven year period, our endowment has grown from \$3.3 million to nearly \$6.8 million. The increase in overall giving to the Evergreen State College Foundation reflects growing support of our alumni, staff, and friends.

In part, this success also depends on dedicated work of the staff in College Advancement. We began this year with some significant staffing challenges in the division. All of the major Advancement positions were vacant and needed to be filled. We began addressing these challenges when Lee Hoemann, who had played a growing role in the work of the division, agreed to serve as Vice President. That appointment was followed by others: the Alumni Relations Director; the Executive Director of Marketing, Communications and College Relations; the Director of Development; and the Administrative Assistant for the division. These appointments bring to our work in Advancement professionalism, renewed energy and true excitement about Evergreen's future.

Our success in Advancement also depends on a strong committed Foundation Board of Governors. The members of the Board, which include alumni, parents and community leaders, have personally dedicated themselves to raising the level of private giving at Evergreen. Already, their efforts are making a notable difference in the Foundation's ability to support scholarships, faculty development, and scholarship at Evergreen. For the first time, we have

achieved 100% participation in giving from the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, the Alumni Board, and the Senior Staff.

Ultimately our success in Advancement depends on the support and participation of the whole college. We have enjoyed significant support from many faculty members this past year, as well. The recent celebration of the Library renovation was a wonderful Evergreen community celebration. It was also a key event in our strategic effort to build private support for the Library and the college. That those elements fit so comfortably together is a credit to the collaborative, mission-centered work of everyone involved: faculty, staff, students, and Board members.

We have some significant work ahead of us in the next year. We will complete our first contract with the new faculty union. Preparation for our Accreditation review will touch every area of the college. We must continue to move forward with our commitment to long-range curriculum planning and faculty development initiatives. We will finalize a major revision to our Campus Master Plan. We will follow through on the recommendations of the Exempt Staff DTF. We also will take under consideration the recommendations of the International Studies Advisory Group, as we consider how to ensure that all of our students, regardless of financial means, have an opportunity for international experience. While my work will involve all of these areas, I will also continue to pay close attention to our strategic initiatives in Diversity and Sustainability. Evergreen's commitment to these issues reflects our recognition that both will be major factors in the health of our country and our world. Both issues call for the kind of interdisciplinary, pragmatic responses that are hallmarks of Evergreen's teaching and learning, and both issues will need to become more deeply embedded in all aspects of our operations. The coming year will also require that I spend increasing amounts of time on external relations, including enrollment, and fundraising.

It has been a joy to spend another year working with so many dedicated colleagues in this wonderful enterprise of higher education. But the greatest pleasure – and the reward for all the challenges and frustrations we deal with and overcome – is knowing the difference Evergreen has made in the lives of our students who go out into the world.