

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A REGULAR INTERIM REPORT

The Evergreen State College
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*A confidential report prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities that represents
the views of the Interim Visitor*

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INTRODUCTION

Institutional Accreditation History

Evergreen State College (TESC) was voted into existence by the Washington legislature in 1967, was named by the Board of Trustees and had its first president installed in 1968. In 1969 through 1970 construction began on the campus and the founding faculty and administration was appointed. The College began operation and was granted candidate status by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in 1971. Initial accreditation was granted in June of 1974.

The institution has had three full-scale accreditation visits, the most recent in October, 1998, with accreditation reaffirmed in December, 1998. The Commission requested a focused interim visit to examine progress on Recommendation #1 from the report of the 1998 full-scale visit which dealt with general education. The focused visit was conducted in May, 2001 resulting in reaffirmation of accreditation in June, 2001.

TESC submitted two substantive change proposals in 2001: the MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts and the MPA in Collaborative Tribal Government, both of which were determined to be minor changes and were subsequently approved in August, 2001.

The Commission scheduled the regular interim visit for the fall of 2003 requesting that the visitor also evaluate the two newly approved masters programs.

Purpose of the Regular Interim Accreditation Visit

The general purpose of a regular interim accreditation visit is to permit the Commission to monitor institutional change, to evaluate the adequacy of the institution's response to the recommendations from the last full-scale evaluation report and the institution's ongoing compliance with Commission eligibility requirements, standards and policies. Through the preparation of an interim report and in preparing for the interim visit the Institution demonstrates the continuing commitment to self-study.

In addition to these general purposes, the interim accreditation visit was to examine the implementation of the two masters programs authorized as minor changes in 2001.

Significant Changes at the Institution Since October, 1998

Although the institution has not experienced major change since the last full-scale visit, the institution has implemented a number of changes--some directly related to the recommendations from the full-scale visit and some arising from their own continuing self-study and initiatives. The cumulative effect is quite impressive. The state support for the institution has continued to denigrate producing significant challenges and has prevented the institution from initiating several desired improvements and programs. Striking among those deferred improvements are professional compensation and the NWCCU approved MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts.

Description of the Regular Interim Accreditation Visit of October, 2003

The regular interim visit was preceded by a general mailing of information from both the Commission and the institution including the interim report. Additional materials were provided by the institutional staff with grace and efficiency. Special commendation needs to be given for the excellent report which was both clearly written and carefully organized to respond directly to the issues raised.

The visit was conducted on October 30 and 31, Thursday and Friday, including eight group conferences, several individual or small group meetings, participation in a student class, an open session where any campus personnel could meet with the visitor and numerous hallway conversations--a total of about 18 hours on campus. In addition, the evenings were used to review documents and other materials gathered through the days permitting discussion of those materials with those who had prepared them.

The campus personnel were most gracious in hosting the visit and providing efficiently all information requested. All contributed to an environment which made the collection and verification of data easy and comfortable. Many kindnesses made the long days a productive experience.

EVALUATION ARISING FROM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 -- General Education, especially Mathematics
Standard 2; Policy 2.1

General Recommendation #1

The Committee recommends that The Evergreen State College insure that all of its students acquire the competencies appropriate to general education, especially but not exclusively in Mathematics. This is called for by the college's own goals as well as Standard 2C. Whatever the means taken, given a situation in which there are no required courses/programs, and in which student choices are largely unconstrained, there is nonetheless an institutional responsibility to achieve its stated liberal and general education goals and the goals for education and related instruction set forth in Standard 2.1.

(Evaluation Report, p. 43)

General Recommendation #1 addresses a central issue for the Evergreen State College by identifying the point of tension between two central commitments that help to form its distinctive *ethos*: its claim to provide a high quality liberal education and its commitment to give students ultimate control over their own education. TESC has but one graduation requirement--the accumulation of 180 credit hours. That requirement alone cannot guarantee either the quality or consistency of the general liberal education gained by each student nor the quality and consistency of the professional or more specialized education built upon that base.

Evergreen depends almost solely on two factors to assure a high quality general liberal education. First, the persuasive interactions between faculty and the students. Students will interact with a wide range of faculty throughout the four years who will act as advisers: core program instructors as well as the other program instructors, advisers selected by the student, the mentor chosen by a student for a culminating experience and more. Second, is the design of the year long, two term and single term programs by a faculty team working with a high degree of autonomy. The faculty are key both in persuading the student of the importance of meeting the "expectations of an Evergreen Graduate" which well identify the general education requirements as envisioned in Standard 2.C and Policy 2.1 and in conceiving and designing programs that include instruction related to the general education components.

In addressing Recommendation #1, the College then wisely focused considerable energy on educating the faculty to perform both the advising and instructional functions related to the general education requirements. A review of the summer faculty Institutes demonstrated a strong emphasis on general education, particularly quantitative reasoning which had been found both by the full-scale visit and the College personnel as particularly problematic.

Analysis of a random set of program syllabi demonstrated that a wide range of programs are now including central or secondary emphases on quantitative reasoning. All discussions with faculty reflected a consistent concern for general education competencies not only to meet the standards of NWCCU but even more to prepare the students to do adequate upper division work in the distinctly interdisciplinary context of TESC. Clearly the faculty are convinced of the centrality of general education skills in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning and are incorporating the teaching of those skills in their programs. As expected the quantitative reasoning is almost exclusively addressed through applied rather than pure mathematics, often with statistics. However, some of the applied quantitative reasoning required in several programs rises well beyond college algebra, especially in several programs anchored in physics.

The enhancement of the Writing and Quantitative Reasoning Centers has helped considerably in assisting faculty to discover and develop teaching moments for skill acquisition in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. That is particularly clear with the new director for the Quantitative Reasoning Center who is uniformly praised for assisting faculty in seeing opportunities and necessities for quantitative reasoning instruction and use even in programs not obvious prospects: some anchored in the visual arts, for example. The Writing Center director too is

oriented to assisting faculty in finding appropriate instructional moments. Given the seminar and paper writing character of the student expectations in nearly all programs writing and critical thinking were rightly found to be less an issue than quantitative reasoning. However, seminar sessions might benefit from a more direct infusion of instruction on the foundations of logic since many faculty are defining critical thinking at a fairly introductory level. Critical thinking appears to be taught more by example and coaching than direct discussions in lecture. The center directors are not only active throughout the year with faculty but also central participants in the summer faculty seminars. The addition of a person more thoroughly trained in critical thinking and logic working in both centers might well provide a greater strength in this area.

The College has also recognized the necessity of careful and consistent assessment to assure that indirect strategies are indeed producing the desired final result. The review of 27 randomly selected transcripts for 2003 graduates demonstrated the difficulty--if not impossibility--of validating attainment of desired competency in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning in almost all cases. Determining that the students had been introduced to the modes of thought represented in the arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences and the sciences from the program descriptions, course summaries and narrative evaluations was much easier. Each faculty member's narrative evaluation of the student's work in a program concludes with a summary of course equivalencies and assigned credit value for each course equivalency. Adding to that summary an equally brief yet specific identification of the character and level of skill acquisition demonstrated in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning would be invaluable. In combination with the end of program reviews such an assessment would enable a much more reliable final assessment.

The surveys of graduates and their employers, including graduate schools, is impressive particularly due to the high participation levels. These have been very useful in allowing the faculty to identify points of significant success and areas of continuing challenge. Graduate schools where students are enrolled would be a very useful addition. Validation through the employer surveys provides significant data and is highly commendable.

Additional means of validating student acquisition of these key skills need to be explored. Perhaps a yearly analysis of the verbal and quantitative scores obtained by graduating students on standardized tests such as the GRE would provide significant data. In addition faculty who have viewed their program as a culminating experience for a graduating student might add a section to the narrative evaluation or the end of program evaluation that deals with demonstrated skill levels in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning.

Verifying the acquisition of a general education becomes essential in a system where such competencies are obtained in such a variety of means--some totally invisible to one not in the program with the student. Clearly the final assessment of the general education or expectations of an Evergreen graduate is the least developed part of the assessment and needs continued attention.

Commendation: The College has addressed this recommendation with intelligence and energy much to the benefit of the instructional program. The response has been broad and creative with the College much more certain now than five years ago that students are attaining these goals. Founding the response on a culture shift within the faculty including how the faculty approach program planning and student evaluation has been both wise and productive.

Recommendation: The College must continue to address general education and most particularly the final assessment of student competencies in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. A sound base is now in place upon which a more uniform assessment system can be built. Some gains can come from minor additions to the student evaluations and end of program evaluations especially for those programs or independent studies that constitute a culminating experience for a graduate in the mind of the faculty evaluator. Independent measures such as the GRE may be helpful data in validating the information coming from the excellent surveys of students and their employers.

Recommendation 2 -- Alternative Source of Revenue, especially Auxiliary Services Standard 7

General Recommendation #2

As the percentage of the budget provided by state funding decreases, it is recommended that the college consider various alternative sources of revenue. Without additional contributions and support from auxiliary services, the

college may be, in violation of Standards 7.B.1 and 7.A.4, eroding financial funding for its core academic programs. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the role of auxiliary services in campus finances, as required in Standard 7.B.9.

(Evaluation Report, p. 43)

A review of the financial statements for the years since the full-scale visit indicate that the trends which caused concern in 1998 are still present and in some limited areas have intensified--largely areas beyond the control of the campus.

Significant effort has been invested in dealing with the budgets for auxiliary services--housing, food services and the bookstore. The greatest improvement has been realized in the bookstore which now appears to be operating at a break-even point or a slight profit. Significant work has been done to limit inventory and to avoid ordering excess texts which at times cannot be returned for full refund.

Significant effort has also been invested in housing; paying off the indebtedness in 2007 will permit some major reforming of the spaces and expansion. Converting apartment style facilities to more traditional dormitory spaces needs to be very carefully assessed in light of the experience of colleges similar to Evergreen which almost uniformly report student dissatisfaction with traditional dormitory spaces. The final financial solution for housing will have to await the retirement of the debt service; however, significant action has been taken to reduce the annual deficit. Clearly a good faith effort is in place and reducing the problem. A well defined plan of action has been developed for implementation once the debt has been retired.

An equally strong effort has been made with food service. This fall for the first time all freshmen who live on campus are required to participate in the meal plan with exceptions carefully monitored and limited. The visit occurred too early in the year to determine the impact of this action on the food service though the higher volume should result in a significant reduction of the financial problem. In addition, the institution is in the midst of renegotiating the food service contract which comes up for renewal or rebid in June of 2004. The University of Washington food service administrators have agreed to assist in the review of the problem and to provide advice and assistance in developing strategies for the future. Again progress has been realized through significant effort. Elimination of the problem will depend on the effectiveness of strategies and actions implemented for the 2004-2005 academic year as a result of the renewed or rebid contract. Food quality seemed to be high and general satisfaction as expressed by students, staff and faculty seemed high.

The continuing state budget crisis and the reduction of state funding as a percentage of the total budget of the College has intensified the budgetary challenges being faced by TESC. That is seen dramatically in the projected absence of salary improvement funds from the state for F03, F04 and F05. The institution was able to provide a 1% adjustment in F03 from redirected funds and savings. Clearly TESC is experiencing fully the budgetary challenges of public higher education generally.

TESC has partially adjusted to the lowered state revenues through significant tuition increases. Intensified and focused recruitment activity has kept the tuition increases from resulting in lowered enrollments though some on campus suspect that it is affecting the mix of students arriving on campus. Scholarship funds have increased as well. However, TESC recruiters are now reporting applicants who are choosing a private institution because the costs when combined with the scholarship and loan packages are less than at TESC despite the significant tuition differentials.

Since the full-scale visit TESC has focused strongly on the attraction of private funds to compensate for lost state funding. Income from the private sector has increased dramatically in F02 and F03 after several years of decline; in F04 the advancement personnel have already realized more than 70% of their goal for the entire year after but three months largely due to a single large gift yet also a continued increase in private giving. The increases are occurring with a advancement staff that was reduced by six positions in 2001 as part of a pervasive reorganization. The giving has been heavily directed to student aid and thus has had only an indirect impact on the general fund. The Advancement Division has significant new initiatives which should result in continued growth. The new telemarketing system should aid greatly the annual fund drive; the widening of the major donor base should now assist in obtaining large dedicated gifts.

The College has developed a more comprehensive plan for revenue enhancement even adding discussions of how existing assets like its 1,000 acres of surrounding land could be managed to be or to produce an endowment.

Since the full-scale visit, the College has invested significant effort and resources in transforming the auxiliaries from a deficit operation to a positive contributor to the College budget though that goal has not been fully achieved and in broadening the revenue stream from the private sector where improvement has already begun with the promise of even greater improvement in the next five years. Research and planning has taken place intensively over the last five years; the College is now poised to implement those plans and begin realizing more fully the anticipated benefits.

The financial situation of the College is not much better than it was in 1998--a fair success in light of the declining state support through the entire period. However, the College is poised to take some significant steps in the next few years which should result in a healthier fiscal situation when the next full-scale visit occurs. In addition, the Higher Education Coordinating Board with the aid of a number of well placed political and business leaders is launching a major statewide campaign for more adequate funding of higher education by the legislature as a necessity for state economic health. Initial indications are that the campaign is having influence on legislators some of whom are also joining the campaign. The future looks hopeful.

Commendation: The College has expended significant energy in diversifying the sources of revenue with particular attention to the auxiliaries and private giving. Significant research and planning has brought the College to the point of now implementing and realizing the benefits. The Advancement Division is leading the way with increased giving and a significant gift from a major donor.

Recommendation: The College remains in much the same financial condition in which the visitors found it in 1998. In the five years since 1998 the College has identified a number of causes and has developed a range of plans to address them from bringing the auxiliary budgets into balance to the continued enhancement of private support with initial implementation producing praiseworthy results. In the next five years the College must implement these plans closely monitoring their impact. By the next full-scale visit the auxiliaries need to be fully self-sustaining.

Recommendations 3 and 4 -- Enrollment Management Standards 3 and 9; Policy 3.1

General Recommendation #3

It is recommended that the institution, in order to manage effectively future growth and expansion, develop and implement a comprehensive enrollment management strategy that conforms with Standards 1.A.5, 7.A.2 and 7.B.5. In light of the pressures to increase enrollment, such a strategy is necessary to insure that the college will be able to continue to fulfill its unique mission of close student-faculty collaboration and educational interaction.
(Evaluation Report, p. 43)

General Recommendation #4

We recommend that the College expand its efforts to address its serious attrition problem by insuring, in accordance with Standard 3.B.5, 3.B.6 and 3.1, that prospective students come for the right reasons and that they have a good chance to succeed. There has been much attention to what can be done to support students once they are here; there has been too little done to insure that prospective students make the right choice in the first place.
(Evaluation Report, p. 44)

Both the TESC Interim Report and the Visit demonstrated a sophisticated and detailed enrollment management strategy that is well adapted to the unusual character of the academic program at TESC. The College has responded comprehensively and intelligently to the recommendations relating to recruiting and retaining students.

TESC has done an impressive job of developing its web site for a wide range of purposes including recruitment and retention. The College has designed the web site to represent well its unusual nature to those with little knowledge of the jargon of higher education or the unique jargon of the campus in naming and describing its programs and

values. As a result, the College has a much clearer window into its culture and character to use as a recruiting tool. In addition the viewbook has been newly recreated to convey the culture of the campus more fully and accurately.

In addition the College has broadened the pool of individuals contacting potential students as early as middle school--the admissions personnel plus faculty, current students and graduates. The College has also identified its primary audiences through a series of contracted research studies in 1999 and has developed distinct recruiting strategies for each: in-state high school students, out-of-state students, in-state community college students and students of color. Common to all the strategies is an emphasis upon individualizing the message as far as possible to mirror a central value imbedded in the instructional program: individual self-awareness, choice, responsibility and active participation in all aspects of learning. The College has implemented electronic applications though in the first year these did not convert into enrollments at the same rate as did paper applications.

The combination of activities has been designed to present even more clearly the unusual nature of the campus and its programs to prospective students early in the recruiting process. Anecdotal information gathered from faculty and students in the core programs this year seems to indicate that the new freshmen in those courses were satisfied that the actual program this fall did conform to their expectations and faculty indicate that the freshman seem more suited to that unusual pattern of self-directed education at TESC though at the time of the visit the freshmen had been on campus just 5 weeks.

Also contributing to improved adjustment and satisfaction is the freshman orientation week designed to introduce students to unusual aspects of the campus and its programs, and the two credit "Beginning the Journey" program taught by faculty and staff from Student Affairs. Two other orientation programs for special populations were added as well: the Early Start Program--First Peoples' Scholars Program designed for students of color; the Keep Enhancing Yourself program or KEY, Step-Up designed for first generation students, low income students and students with disabilities.

The comprehensive enrollment strategy is well adapted to the unusual character of the campus. Not only is the program attracting students more knowledgeable and suited to the programs of TESC but also gaining the attention of more students. Applications were high enough in the spring of 2003 that admission for fall 2003 closed in March as compared to August prior to the fall of 2002, five months earlier. Very early in the 2004 recruiting period, inquiries from 10,000 prospects have already been received, a significant increase in interest. The rate of conversion of these increased inquiries into applications will not be known until spring 2004.

The program which deals with first year students once they are on campus has been redesigned. The CORE programs have an early emphasis upon students new from high school becoming acclimated to the campus, its programs and its expectations. Students are asked by their advisers at the end of the second week of classes to respond in writing to the question, "how are you doing in terms of your academic life? Your social life?" Advisers review the responses, identify students having difficulty and plan follow-up sessions with them. The responses are then summarized by the First Year Dean who provides the faculty with feedback to help faculty see how they might revise programs or provide support to struggling students. In addition for the past five years a student affairs person has been assigned to each core academic program to act as a "connector" between student affairs and the academic program. Several more resources are available to first year students to help ease their transition to the campus including a first year program in housing. The campus has implemented a multifaceted new student orientation program extending from the latter part of the recruiting process through the first year of campus experience. Greater retention seems almost assured with this active and pervasive approach.

A comprehensive recruiting and retention program has been developed which is well adapted to the unusual character of the campus. That program is highly self-reflective as is normal on this campus and thus is being pervasively evaluated on a continual basis leading to adjustment and revision.

Commendation: The College has developed a comprehensive enrollment management plan well adapted to the unusual character of the campus and instructional program. The program seems to be yielding a student cadre well suited to TESC; continuing assessment and revision will be required as the College gains further experience.

Recommendation 5 -- Recruitment and Retention of High Quality Faculty, Administrators, and Instructional Technology Personnel
Standards 4, 6 and 9

General Recommendation #5

Standards 4.A, 4.A.1, 4.A.4, 5.A.1 and 6.C.9 give clear guidance to the institution regarding the absolute necessity that the College's ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty, administrators, and instructional technology personnel be developed and maintained. The Committee strongly recommends that the institution review all of the components that impact its ability to meet these standards and to insure compliance in the future.

Salaries at the Evergreen State College (TESC) continue to be a significant issue though some progress has been made since 1998. In general some progress is evident; however, significant progress will be delayed until the overall budgetary situation of the institution improves and state support levels are addressed.

Comparison of faculty salaries at TESC and comparable institutions is particularly difficult due to the absence of ranks at TESC; significant manipulation of the national Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) information is required to accomplish any but the most general comparisons. In addition, the Washington state Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) has identified peer institutions for each public institution in Washington including TESC. The choice of comparators at times seems to be driven by other than actual similarities of situation and program.

Overall the College has made considerable progress in faculty salaries through a very difficult budgetary period. The average faculty salary at TESC increased from \$44,643 in AY99 to \$53,548 in AY02 for an increase of \$8,905 or 20% as compared to the IPED/HECB comparators from \$53,834 to \$60,076 or 11.6%. TESC salaries still lagged behind the average for comparators by 11% in AY02 as compared to 17% in AY99. The state has appropriated no salary improvement funds for FY03, FY04 and FY05; the institution was able to generate only 1% salary improvement funds for faculty in FY03 and nothing in FY04 and FY05. Given the context of state appropriations nationally that freeze in salaries is likely to produce only a modest slip downward from the IPED/HECB comparator group average.

Thus faculty salaries at TESC have improved modestly in the five years since 1998 up to AY02 and will likely slip somewhat backward in the following three years.

Classified staff salaries were addressed in the identified critical areas of information technology, police and accounting/budget by a special allocation by the legislature on a state-wide basis in FY02 assisting in making these salaries more comparable to other academic institutions and the private sector. However, other classified salaries have been affected by the same freezes mandated by the legislature for all state employees. Thus in the past five years only major inequities in a few classifications have been addressed for classified staff.

Professional staff (exempt) salaries have on average fallen further behind since 1998 as indicated in a FY02 according to data from the College and University Personnel Association. The number of exempt staff found to be 20% or more behind their benchmark went from 12.8% in FY98 to 24.56% in FY02 even after special funds were internally generated by the College for adjustments for exempt personnel specifically.

Salaries remain a significant challenge for the College. Internal reallocation appears to be an unlikely source for enough funds to significantly impact the challenge across such a broad range of positions given the budgetary reallocations already implemented in the past five years. As a result the solution likely depends upon legislative action in the next biennium. The salary problem is of such a general challenge to public higher education in Washington that a concerted effort will be required to effect any major progress. The College must find a means of addressing the problem within the next five years to prevent a pervasive and severe negative impact on the mission and quality of its programs.

The visitor found the faculty, administration and classified staff with whom he came into contact to be highly skilled and competent, far stronger than the institution or state has any right to expect given the record of compensation.

Recommendation: The College must address specifically the pervasive salary problem across exempt, faculty and certain categories of classified positions in order to help assure the continuing viability and quality of its programs. Progress needs to be made toward a fair and competitive salary schedule for exempt, faculty and classified positions.

EVALUATION ARISING FROM CHANGE DOCUMENTS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Master of Fine Arts Degree in Interdisciplinary Media Arts
(Change Proposal of 2001 and NWCCU Response)

Funding has not permitted activation of the MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts; the degree remains inactive.

Master of Public Administration in Collaborative Administration and Tribal Government
(Change Proposal of 2001 and NWCCU Response)

The Tribal Governance Concentration in the existing Master of Public Administration degree program is entering the second year of a demonstration program. An initial cohort of 15 students enrolled in the fall of 2002. The Tribal Governance Concentration of 20 credits is combined with the MPA core of 24 credits, 12 credits of electives and a 4 credit Tribal Governance capstone for a total of 60 credits for the MPA-Tribal Governance. Enrollment in the second year includes 12 students continuing from the first year and 10 additional students for a total of 22 in the Fall of 2003. The first year courses are offered one year and the second year courses in alternate years. The concentration can thus be taught and administered by two faculty. The degree program is being offered in accord with the proposal reviewed by the NWCCU which deemed it a minor change.

A proposal has been submitted by to the Washington state Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide the permanent funding necessary to develop the program to serve on a continuing basis 30 students by 2004-2005. The demonstration program and recruiting activities is attracting sufficient interest from the pool of potential candidates drawn from the managers employed by Washington state tribes estimated to be in excess of 1,200. Additional candidates could be drawn from federal and state agency personnel who work with the Washington state tribes.

Plans are being explored to offer the concentration off campus both within the state and beyond in response to wide interest from personnel employed in tribal governance and government agencies. Such planning is in an early stage; proposals will be submitted to NWCCU prior to implementation.

Materials reviewed and interviews with faculty indicate that the concentration is being well delivered and received. Students are traveling to Olympia from as far away as western Montana to participate in the degree program.

EVALUATION ARISING FROM INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO THE STANDARDS OF NWCCU

Such a short visit permits only a cursory review of the broad range of operations covered by the nine standards and associated policies of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. That cursory review revealed a generally healthy institution of postsecondary education coping creatively and effectively with a severe budgetary challenge emerging from a consistent and pervasive withdrawal of state support only partially replaced by increased tuition revenues and private giving.

Several major physical improvements are evident on the campus including the completion of the new academic building which will allow significant redeployment of space and the needed refurbishing and expansion of the library. The integration of the Writing and Quantitative Reasoning Centers even more fully into the learning resource area will enhance their central work with faculty and students.

The visit found a faculty, staff and students that were generally pleased with the College as well as indicators that the College was well addressing and achieving its mission and goals through an active and pervasive planning process. However, without some significant improvement in revenues permitting a more adequate budget particularly in the compensation lines for personnel, the institution will need to engage in fundamental reform to reduce its programs to conform with the reality of its current budget.

Denigration of faculty, professional and classified salaries cannot be permitted to continue long without pervasive impact on the academic program and the general viability of the institution. The problem of underfunding extends beyond salary alone. Consider an example in relation to faculty. During the past three years the total number of faculty has remained relatively stable in terms of FTE. The student population increased modestly over that same period either reducing the level of individualized instruction modestly or increasing the load of existing faculty. Faculty already carry a heavy load of instruction with high expectations regarding interaction with individual students; in addition they have a near constant requirement for planning instructional programs (year long and shorter instructional programs for two years hence) in teams with fellow faculty often requiring significant time commitments during the summer; they also participate pervasively in campus governance and policy development. The combination leaves little time during the academic year and even summers for continuing personal professional development to maintain competence and currency in their fields and to engage in scholarship. In that context the reduction in the number of sabbaticals available becomes significant for a campus seeking academic excellence in teaching. The cumulative effect of small reductions in a combination of areas is significant to the long term health of the campus and achievement of its stated goals--certainly to be "an ivy league education at a public college cost." The faculty situation is representative of a number of areas in the College where apparently modest budget reductions over a period of years are now cumulating until they begin to have impact on the College mission, goals and programs.

At present the College does not have adequate financial resources to fund fully and equitably its mission, goals and programs though not yet to a crisis point. The problem remains much the same as noted in the last full-scale evaluation. A comprehensive plan to reconcile its mission, goals and program with available resources needs to be in place by the time of the next decennial full-scale evaluation.

Recommendation: The College needs to produce a comprehensive plan which reconciles its mission, goals and programs with the available resources of the institution.

CONCLUSIONS

The visitor found an essentially healthy and strong academic institution experiencing stresses from serious underfunding which have begun to erode its capacity to implement its mission, goals and programs fully though not yet at a crisis stage. The administration, faculty, staff and students seem uniformly committed to the defining principles and expectations. The high degree of commitment from its personnel has aided the institution to continue even under considerable budgetary stress, particularly from the continuing problem of fair and adequate compensation. However, the institution must in the near future bring its mission, goals and programs into consonance with its resources if it is to continue at an appropriate level of quality. The tension between mission, goals and program on the one hand and resources on the other must be significantly reduced. That will be difficult to address in the current climate of legislative support for higher education and may require constricting the mission and programs somewhat in the absence of enhanced funding.

In contrast, the tension between being able to assure uniformly the achievement by all students of general education goals particularly in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning even as all students are being required to take responsibility for their own education is a healthy tension which should be a continuing hallmark at the institution and its evaluations. It is at the heart of defining the institution and contributes to its health and strength. The visit demonstrated a competent and pervasive concern by faculty and administration alike to monitor graduates for skill in these areas and to design programs which assure the early acquisition and the continual sophistication of these skills in the programs taken. The administration and faculty are to be highly commended for the highly intelligent approach they have taken to this difficult challenge and for crafting a response which is in consonance with the nature of the institution.

The Evergreen State College is a strong and healthy learning community under serious challenge at the fiscal level, a challenge which left unaddressed in a substantial and pervasive manner will erode its quality and unique character.

COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

Commendation #1: The visit was made very much easier due to the very well written and organized report, the efficient provision of data and materials and the effective management of meetings. The habits of inquiry and discussion on campus showed in both the conversations and written materials making verification of the report much easier. The warm hospitality shown from the beginning of the arrangements to the trip back to the hotel at the end of the visit was greatly appreciated. The campus setting is most beautiful and the program of the College highly commendable.

Commendation #2: The College has addressed Recommendation #1 from the full-scale report with intelligence and energy much to the benefit of the instructional program. The response has been broad and creative with the College much more certain now than five years ago that students are attaining these goals. Founding the response on a culture shift within the faculty including how the faculty approach program planning and student evaluation has been both wise and productive.

Commendation #3: The College has expended significant energy in diversifying the sources of revenue with particular attention to the auxiliaries and private giving. Significant research and planning has brought the College to the point of now implementing and realizing the benefits. The Advancement Division is leading the way with increased giving and a significant gift from a major donor.

Commendation #4: The College has developed a comprehensive enrollment management plan well adapted to the unusual character of the campus and instructional program. The program seems to be yielding a student cadre well suited to TESC; continuing assessment and revision will be required as the College gains further experience.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: The College must continue to address general education and most particularly the final assessment of student competencies in writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. A sound base is now in place upon which a more uniform assessment system can be built. Some gains can come from minor additions to the student evaluations and end of program evaluations especially for those programs or independent studies that constitute a culminating experience for a graduate in the mind of the faculty evaluator. Independent measures such as the GRE may be helpful data to validate the information coming from the excellent surveys of students and their employers.

Recommendation #2: The College remains in much the same financial condition in which the visitors found it in 1998. In the five years since 1998 the College has identified a number of causes and has developed a range of plans to address them from bringing the auxiliary budgets into balance to the continued enhancement of private support with initial implementation producing praiseworthy results. In the next five years the College needs to develop and implement a comprehensive financial plan which reconciles its mission, goals and programs with the available resources of the institution.

Recommendation #3: The College must address specifically the pervasive salary problem across exempt, faculty and certain categories of classified positions in order to help assure the continuing viability and quality of its programs. Progress needs to be made toward a fair and competitive salary schedule for exempt, faculty and classified positions.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

Item and Source of Item Reviewed

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| 1. EverGreen Catalog 2003-2004 | Provost, TESC |
| 2. Interim Report for Reaffirmation of Accreditation | Provost, TESC |
| 3. deep Interim Report The Evergreen State College (May 5, 2003) | Provost, TESC |
| 4. Accreditation History Time Line for TESC | Commission on Colleges |
| 5. Focused Interim Report of 2001 from TESC | Commission on Colleges |
| 6. NWCCU Visitor’s Focused Interim Report of 2001 | Commission on Colleges |
| 7. Substantive Change Proposal--MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts from TESC | |
| 8. Commission Staff Analysis of the Substantive Change Proposal-- MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts | Commission on Colleges |
| 9. Substantive Change Proposal--MPA in Collaborative Administration and Tribal Government from TESC | Commission on Colleges |
| 10. Commission Staff Analysis of the Substantive Change Proposal--MPA in Collaborative Administration and Tribal Government from TESC | Commission on Colleges |
| 11. Miscellaneous Correspondence from the Commission to TESC | Commission on Colleges |
| 12. NWCCU Team Report on the Full-Scale Evaluation of 1998 | Commission on Colleges |
| 13. TESC Student Enrollment Fall Quarters 1971-2002 | PDF Web Document |
| 14. Expansion of Enrollment Opportunities in High Demand Fields: a proposal for permanent funding of the MPA Tribal Governance Concentration | Provost, TESC |
| 15. Materials on the MPA Tribal Governance Concentration including the brochure for the TESC MPA Program | Alan Parker, Director of the MPA-TGC |
| 16. 2000 Strategic Plan | Provost, TESC |

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| 17. | Final Report of the Long-Range Curriculum DTF
(February, 21, 1996) | Provost, TESC |
| 18. | 27 randomly selected transcripts for 2003 graduates | Provost, TESC |
| 19. | Assessment Analysis: Beginning the Journey Fall 2002 | Provost, TESC |
| 20. | Materials Generated by the Writing Center and Center
Quantitative Reasoning for Students and
Announcements of Activities | Center Directors |
| 21. | Ten detailed syllabi for a Variety of Academic Programs:
Core, All Level, Freshmen-Sophomore and Upper
Division Extending for a Full Year, Two Quarters or One Quarter | Provost, TESC |
| 22. | Report of Assessment Study Group: Teaching and Learning
at the Evergreen State College 2001/2002 (December, 2002) | Provost, TESC |
| 23. | Variety of Descriptive Materials for the Summer Faculty
Institutes 2003 | Provost, TESC |
| 24. | Annual Audited Financial Statements for Years Since 1999
(F 2002 and F2003) were preliminary unaudited drafts
submitted for Audit) | VP Finance |
| 25. | A Wide Variety of Materials Including Activity Randomly Gathered on Descriptions and Announcements
Campus by the Visitor | |