

ASSESSMENT AT THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE  
September 1990

ORIGINS AND PURPOSES

Origination Within the College

Evergreen's provost charged an Assessment Study Group in 1987 to devise strategies for evaluating teaching and learning at the College in ways that would engage faculty, staff and students in an ongoing conversation on the topic of improvement. The Study Group was also charged with developing a response for external audiences interested in documentation of effective teaching and learning and attention to strategies for the improvement of teaching and learning.

The Study Group has adopted six teaching and learning goals as central areas of inquiry for assessment projects. These goals have their origin in an institutionwide planning process initiated in 1985 and were refined as a results of the 1989 accreditation Self-Study Report. These central teaching and learning objectives, or foci, are: (1) to study interdisciplinary themes; (2) to develop the capacity to judge, speak, and act on the basis of reasoned personal beliefs; (3) to link theory with practice; (4) to create and share work within cooperative, non-competitive contexts with respect for diversity of perspectives, abilities, and experiences; (5) to develop a capacity to elucidate and appreciate differences in culture and gender in order to live in an increasingly diverse world; (6) to continue to develop reading, writing, computation, critical thinking, speaking, listening and computer skills.

State Legislation

The Washington State Legislature provided funding during the 1989-91 biennium for each four-year institution to develop "performance evaluation programs which will: (1) provide a means for institutional self-evaluation and improvement, and (2) meet the state's need for institutional accountability." (Legislative Budget Notes 1989-91 Biennium, Section 607)

The Higher Education Board

The Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board passed a resolution in May, 1989 which refined the performance evaluation program initially recommended in its 1987 Master Plan "to encourage institutional flexibility within a framework of statewide objectives." Six common components were identified by the HEC Board: (1) collection of baseline information; (2) intermediate assessment of quantitative and writing skills and other appropriate intermediate measures as determined by the institution; (3) end-of-program assessment; (4) collection of information describing alumni satisfaction; (5) collection of employer perceptions; and (6) periodic program review.

The assessment projects under way at The Evergreen State College are designed to meet both internal and external expectations for meaningful evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning.