



# The Evergreen State College Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Fostering growth, equity, and resilience for our students and for Washington

September 2020

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# Making a life-changing education accessible to all Washingtonians

Dear Governor Inslee,

At The Evergreen State College, we didn't wait for a pandemic to rethink the college experience. We make a world-class education accessible to all types of learners and Washingtonians.

Our non-traditional students include high numbers of veterans, people of color, returning adults, LGBTQ+, tribal members, low-income and first-generation students, and students with disabilities. They thrive in Evergreen's flexible, affordable study programs that build community and get them to marketable degrees, fast.

In their 2020 rankings, the prestigious Washington Monthly named Evergreen the second-best masters' granting university in the entire U.S., because of the college's contribution to the national public good in three vital categories: social mobility, research, and promoting public service.

A 2018 study by the Thurston Economic Development Council stated that for every dollar of state funding, Evergreen returns \$4.68 in economic activity to the state of Washington.

With decades of demonstrable commitment to social justice, Evergreen helps Washingtonians with talent and potential, sometimes passed over by other colleges, break down barriers and achieve their goals. They graduate prepared to excel in high-demand jobs, and start their own businesses, in a world of shifting boundaries and unprecedented opportunities.

This is a time of transformative change—and we wouldn't have it any other way. It's a time to think boldly, inventively, about what today's world demands, and what students need to embrace its complexity.

Our college, with innovation in its DNA, was built for times like these. That's why we're creating new areas of study that match growing student demand, expanding support for student success, using digital platforms for teaching and learning, and developing programs for sought-after certifications and credentials to help students achieve career goals.

Evergreen's strategic plan is our promise and our future. As our state looks to expand opportunity for all Washingtonians, education and innovation are the way forward. With your help and the support of the Legislature, Evergreen will ensure more students have an opportunity for a life-changing college education.



George S. Bridges  
President  
The Evergreen State College

# Vision

For the local community, the region, state, and nation, Evergreen provides an exceptional education preparing every graduate to create, innovate, and lead in building a more just and resilient society.

## Who we serve (Fall 2019)

<b>2,854</b>	Enrolled students
<b>27</b>	Average student age
<b>85%</b>	Students are from Washington
<b>60%</b>	Female students
<b>31%</b>	Students of color
<b>52%</b>	Low-income students
<b>50%</b>	Olympia undergraduates identify as LGBTQ+

## Mission

As an innovative public liberal arts college, Evergreen emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary learning across significant differences. Evergreen's academic community engages students in defining and thinking critically about their learning. Evergreen supports and benefits from local and global commitment to social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship, and service in the public interest.

## Our unique role and model

As Washington's designated public liberal arts college, Evergreen is dedicated to ensuring that a college education in Washington is rigorous, accessible, and affordable. We take pride in admitting, supporting and graduating students from groups underrepresented in and underserved by higher education. Evergreen prepares students for today's challenges through collaborative work, hands-on experiences in and out of the classroom, and active community engagement. The college offers two undergraduate and three graduate degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of Environmental Studies, Master in Teaching, and Master of Public Administration.

## Our goals

<b>1</b>	Achieve unprecedented levels of student academic success and personal development in a manner responsive to students' unique career goals, talents, identities, and diverse perspectives
<b>2</b>	Significantly expand support for our local community, region, state, and nation during an unprecedented period of social and economic turbulence
<b>3</b>	Become a much stronger, more resilient, and adaptive college by expanding our capacities to serve a much wider range of students and achieve our vision of contributing fully to the larger society

# Goal 1

Achieve unprecedented levels of student academic success and personal development in a manner responsive to students' unique career goals, talents, identities, and diverse perspectives

## Objective 1: Deepen and expand the impact and reach of the curriculum

*Develop academic programs, courses, and stand-alone learning opportunities delivered partly or wholly online*

Tactics:

1. Create online and low-residency academic programs and courses that offer flexible participation and increase access to Evergreen's BA, BS, MES, MiT, and MPA degrees
2. Create certificate and credential opportunities within programs and courses documenting students' development of professional competencies and skills

## Objective 2: Build on and create new academic areas of emphasis and excellence

*Create additional academic directions in areas of high student interest and societal need*

Tactics:

1. Build on existing areas of curricular strength to create and deliver new undergraduate and graduate programs
2. Focus curriculum development on areas of high student demand, aligned with Evergreen's mission and vision and current/future job markets
3. Develop new academic programs integrating multiple disciplines to develop the skills and capacities needed to solve real-world problems such as climate, public health, and racial injustice



*Madeleine Beatty-Lagerberg '13 is a data scientist at Amazon. A single mom once diagnosed with dyslexia, she credits Evergreen faculty with helping her excel in mathematics.*

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## Objective 3: Integrate all aspects of the academic curriculum

*Create an integrated curriculum by leveraging connections within curricular areas and across the college*

Tactics:

1. Develop clear and consistent levels of progressive rigor within each of Evergreen's paths of study, ending in rich, culminating learning experiences
2. Integrate programs and courses: across full-time and part-time, and across daytime and evening and weekend programs
3. Identify and leverage synergies between existing and planned undergraduate curriculum and graduate programs
4. Design and implement structures for organizing ourselves and our curriculum to create greater coherence, to foster innovation, and to achieve excellence

## Objective 4: Fully support students personally and holistically

*Develop and implement clear, consistent, and comprehensive academic/career support services tailored to the individual needs of different students*

Tactics:

1. Create and fully implement proactive academic/career advising and support services, including technology solutions for use by advisers and faculty to enable student progress toward goals
2. Provide equitable access to tools, technologies, resources, social networks, high-impact practices, and opportunities to allow all students to be successful in their academic studies
3. Provide proven academic transition programs for all new students
4. Establish a formal process for routinely reviewing and improving academic policies and practices through a student-centered, equity lens

## Objective 5: Realize our commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice

*Cultivate and sustain a campus culture that fosters a strong sense of personal belonging, and embraces and affirms all through open-hearted engagement, humility, and individual empowerment*

Tactics:

1. Increase students' sense of connectedness to each other and to the Evergreen community
2. Using climate survey results, identify the aspects of campus climate that undermine a sense of belonging and create barriers to an inclusive education; improve institutional structures to promote transformational growth for all our students, particularly those underserved by higher education
3. Design, develop, and execute interventions to strengthen equity, inclusion, and belonging for students, faculty, and staff experience

## Objective 6: Develop and engage partnerships to enhance curriculum

*Forge mutually beneficial partnerships with higher education institutions and other organizations to serve more students, to expand and strengthen academic paths, and to develop new academic programs*

Tactics:

1. Identify aspects of our mission and academic direction that may be advanced from partnerships
2. Identify potential partners, assess feasibility, and implement partnerships



*Stephanie Burgett '22 is a health-care administrator at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, studying business management and human resources at Evergreen. After graduation, her goal is to serve at the top level of the federal Senior Executive Service.*

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## Goal 2

Significantly expand support for our local community, region, state, and nation during an unprecedented period of social and economic turbulence

### Objective 1: Contribute to the region's workforce development

*Build capacity to support returning adults interested in completing degrees and credentialing programs, with an emphasis on community and career-connected learning and outcomes*

Tactics:

1. Partner with local and regional economic development, workforce-related, and higher education institutions to combine efforts in pursuit of shared educational goals that serve workforce needs
2. Integrate regional workforce development priorities into curriculum development

### Objective 2: Prepare graduates for post-degree success

*Prepare students for post-graduate careers and graduate study in which they contribute meaningfully to creating a more just, sustainable, and equitable world*

Tactics:

1. Develop new graduate degree, micro-degree, credential, and certificate opportunities that lead to post-degree success
2. Build on strengths and prior successes to significantly increase student participation in research, internships, and community-based learning
3. Develop and implement enhanced transcripts and online portfolios by which students record and articulate how their educational experience prepares them for future academic and career goals

### Objective 3: In accordance with the Centennial Accord and New Millennium Agreement, strengthen partnerships with Native nations and their citizens

*Increase Evergreen's support of Native arts, education, and tribal relations by deepening existing and developing new educational partnerships with tribal nations and other higher education institutions*

Tactics:

1. In partnership with representatives from local tribes, determine alignment of educational interests of our closest tribal partners with the college's current and future curricular offerings through the co-development of a tribal relations plan
2. Build programs for Native students that complement rather than duplicate other programs offered in the region and partner with other higher education institutions to achieve shared objectives



*Yakama Nation member, historian, and start-up CEO Emily Washines MPA '10 decided on Evergreen after considering Princeton and Harvard, because of the college's unique Master in Public Administration in Tribal Governance.*

## Goal 3

Become a much stronger, more resilient, and adaptive college by expanding our capacities to serve a much wider range of students and achieve our vision of contributing fully to the larger society

### Objective 1: Grow the total number of students who enroll, persist, and graduate

*Broaden Evergreen's academic appeal, capitalizing on the results of objectives outlined above, to attract students in new markets and to increase recruitment success in existing markets*

#### Tactics:

1. Expand and orient admissions efforts to attract more adult students, such as those individuals who have completed some college but have not yet earned a degree, and those seeking to increase competencies and skills for career advancement, such as state government employees
2. Maintain and expand recruitment of high school graduates who enroll directly from high school
3. Develop new and strengthen existing partnerships to expand avenues for reaching potential students

### Objective 2: Build our individual and collective strength and resilience

*Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding faculty and staff, representing diverse perspectives and identities, to support student success and achieve the college's aspirations*

#### Tactics:

1. Foster a respectful, inclusive, and equitable campus climate, focused on student success
2. Increase opportunities for and participation in professional development for faculty and staff aimed at increasing student and institutional success
3. Review, develop, and implement faculty and staff hiring practices through an equity lens to ensure recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce

### Objective 3: Strengthen Evergreen's financial position

*Secure, sustain, and steward financial resources to enable the objectives outlined in the first two goals above*

#### Tactics:

1. Reallocate existing resources to support new institutional initiatives
2. Identify, develop, and engage in partnerships in support of objectives outlined above
3. Diversify and increase revenue by increasing enrollment (while maintaining comparative affordability of an Evergreen degree), leasing space, and fundraising
4. Reduce costs and scale operations



*Strong support for veterans led Army veteran Oscar Lira '21 to choose Evergreen. After graduation, his aim is law school.*

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## Objective 4: Enhance and elevate Evergreen’s reputation

*Elevate our local, regional, state, and national reputation to increase enrollment*

Tactics:

1. Develop, deliver and promote big, bold initiatives that solidify Evergreen’s reputation as offering a rigorous, relevant, and accessible education
2. With the development of new undergraduate and graduate degree programs, assess the feasibility of becoming a state university, and, if feasible and beneficial, pursue legislative support for this new identity
3. Highlight and promote examples of innovation and student success at Evergreen

## Recent and ongoing strategic processes

In 2018, we launched [Evergreen Renews](#) to deepen our commitment to student success and stabilize enrollment. In 2019, Evergreen embarked on a generative and broadly collaborative process of designing the college’s future, initially through “Blue Sky” conversations, then during the development of “Big Bets,” which evolved into “[New Academic Directions](#).” At the same time, important strategic work of fostering growth, equity, and resilience for our students and Washington has been underway with the launch of the campus climate survey in early 2020 and through the development of our tribal relations plan. The scale of input into this work to design our future has been breathtaking. For example:

- Hundreds of Evergreen students, staff and faculty have participated in the campus conversations over Evergreen Renews, Blue Sky conversations, and dialogues about Big Bets and New Academic Directions
- Over 500 ideas were submitted during the Blue Sky process
- 124 meetings occurred prior to when the new academic concept model was affirmed by faculty
- 143 students responded to a survey about the ideas

Building on the broad consultation over the last two years, the Evergreen senior leadership team developed this framework of high-level goals, objectives, and tactics. This encapsulates core ideas and initiatives emerging from many cross-campus conversations and strategic work. As of September 2020, there is much critically important work underway, and more planned, to ensure our vision will be well-implemented and transformative for the college. This includes feasibility analyses of curricular elements, anticipated outcomes of the new models of instruction, and identifying resources needed to ensure success.

We will continue to seek broad input on this strategic framework and its implementation as this work continues.