



Office of the President

John Carmichael, Ph.D.

Dear Evergreen Community,

We continue to grieve the loss of our community member Jonathan Rodriguez. As we strive to fully understand the circumstances of Jonathan's death, we are sharing regular updates with you about what we are learning and what steps we are taking. Everything we are doing comes from our goal to ensure safety and restore trust and confidence.

A crisis response group of campus leaders met daily over Winter Break to prioritize and act on safety concerns. In addition, in preparation for the return of students and faculty for the start of Winter Quarter, last week we held two forums to provide updated information and tools to prepare faculty and staff who are supporting students.

Here are some actions we have taken since our last communications update:

- All students living in the mods that use propane as a source of heat or hot water have been moved into new housing on campus or across the street at Evergreen Gardens. Thanks to the college's foundation, students have received financial support to help them get settled into their new homes.
- With everyone moved out of units that rely on propane for heat or hot water, no one is residing in spaces with appliances or utilities that generate carbon monoxide.
- We are inspecting all residential buildings (the mods, Building A Dorm, and the apartment buildings) and compiling a comprehensive list of maintenance issues that need to be addressed. We will get outside help where needed to get this work completed as soon as possible.
- Given that people are living in these spaces, we need to provide adequate notification and work with the residents to conduct inspections and repairs.
- We have not found anything that warrants moving students out of these spaces, but if we find anything that does, we will take immediate action.
- Evergreen has historically had two independent facilities departments - Residential and Dining Facilities and Campus Facilities. These two teams are taking an "all hands" approach to immediately assess and address needs in housing while developing a comprehensive maintenance plan to sustain quality student residential housing.

- We have met with the Geoduck Student Union and they provided us with a list of recommendations to elevate student voices and the voices of students working in housing maintenance. I deeply appreciate and respect their leadership and constructive engagement. I welcome their continued involvement as we act on their ideas.
- Plans are underway to remodel the Building C Dorm for occupancy this fall to provide more housing options and enough space for future enrollment growth.
- The college will begin a search this Spring for a permanent director of residential and dining services.

Changing gears from what actions we are taking, we heard from the Washington State Patrol recently. They are still conducting the investigation and it sounds as though it will be at least another month until we have their report in hand. We do not know if the report will answer all our questions. The State Patrol has asked us to refrain from conducting our own inquiries, which has been hard because of our urgent desire to understand what happened. While we wait, it is natural to find ourselves trying to fill in the blanks with surmises, hypotheses, and inferences. Though such speculation doesn't get us any closer to the answers we seek.

Until we have more answers, there are things we can and need to take action on now. Most significantly, we need to address some facility conditions that have become known since the incident. We've heard serious concerns about the maintenance of our residential buildings. We've heard this from students living in these spaces, student Residence and Dining maintenance workers, and professional staff. We do not need to wait for the State Patrol's report to take on these issues.

I support students who want to name issues and propose solutions. Inclusive dialog is needed to foster effective institutional change. And that goes for staff and faculty too. If you have questions or concerns, send them to community-response@evergreen.edu. The inquiries we receive help us understand what information you want to hear more about. The most current updates and resources can continue to be found at www.evergreen.edu/campustragedy.

John Carmichael, President

The Evergreen State College
2700 Evergreen Parkway, NW, Olympia, WA 98505

