



Report to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness

The Evergreen State College • August 22, 2025



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Institutional Overview

The Evergreen State College (TESC), located in Olympia, Washington, is a nationally acclaimed public liberal arts college. Established in 1971, the college is recognized for its commitment to collaborative, interdisciplinary learning, and fostering critical thinking across significant differences. Evergreen emphasizes values such as social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship, and service in the public interest. The college aims to create an inclusive and equitable community by engaging students in meaningful dialogue and ethical storytelling.

Evergreen offers a variety of unique academic programs that integrate multiple subjects into cohesive themes. Students can choose from over [48 fields of study](#), in addition to graduate programs in environmental studies, public administration, and teaching. Faculty members often teach in teams, drawing on their diverse disciplines to provide students with a rich, interdisciplinary educational experience, all while maintaining small class sizes. As of Fall 2024, Evergreen enrolled 2,505 students, with a student-to-faculty ratio of 17:1. Evergreen has built a reputation for its distinctive programs:

- Established in 1982 and nestled in the historic Hilltop neighborhood, the Tacoma campus – [Evergreen Tacoma](#) – offers a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity, innovation, and community engagement.
- [The Native Pathways Program](#) (NPP) allows students to expand their knowledge through an Indigenous lens. NPP is a cohort-model of learning where students join a community that engages in collaborative studies while working towards their bachelor’s degree. The core curriculum is designed to enhance students' knowledge and skills in research, writing, and critical thinking, with a strong emphasis on community building, leadership development, and the integration of Indigenous values to support both personal and academic growth.
- Evergreen's [Professional and Continuing Education \(PaCE\)](#) program, launched in 2022, offers opportunities for individuals to grow both personally and professionally. The program provides a range of certificates in areas such as Arts, Media, and Design; Business, Entrepreneurship, Leadership, & Administration; Environmental Solutions; Humanities and Social Studies; Integrated Computer Science; and Psychology and Health. These certificates can be earned in under one academic year and are designed to help students break into new careers, explore new fields of interest, or supplement their professional skills. PaCE emphasizes practical applications in a passionate learning community, allowing students to customize their experience with flexible evening, weekend, daytime, and online offerings. This program reflects Evergreen's commitment to lifelong learning and workforce development, helping students build skills for the future.
- [Graduate Studies](#) at Evergreen include three programs: [Master of Public Administration](#), [Master of Environmental Studies](#), and [Master in Teaching](#).
- In addition, Evergreen also offers six public service centers: [s'gwi gwi ? altxw: The House of Welcome](#); [The Center for Community-Based Learning and Action \(CCBLA\)](#); [The Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education](#); [The Sustainability in Prisons Project \(SPP\)](#); [The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change \(CELTC\)](#); and [The Center for Climate Action and Sustainability \(CCAS\)](#).

The college's approach to [interdisciplinary learning](#) is distinctive, allowing students to explore topics through multiple lenses. Programs often include lectures, labs, seminars, field studies, and research projects. Experiential learning and high-impact practices are integral to the curriculum, providing students with hands-on opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. This immersive learning environment helps students develop critical thinking skills and explore connections between different disciplines.

Evergreen is deeply committed to supporting its students and promoting environmental sustainability. The college fosters a campus environment that is equitable, inclusive, and respectful. It engages the community in social justice initiatives and environmental stewardship, preparing students to make a positive impact both locally and globally. [Evergreen's strategic goals](#) further support its commitment to its students and community. The strategic goals include enhancing student access and enrollment, fostering learning and academic success, providing an engaging college culture and climate, and driving innovation and responsible investment.

Evergreen's eight-member [Board of Trustees](#) is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state Senate and includes one student trustee. The Board delegates authority for the operation of the college to the President and, through the President, to the college's faculty and staff.

The President is joined by the Executive Vice President, Provost and Vice President for Academics, and Vice President for Advancement in a closely collaborative institutional leadership team. They are joined in executive leadership by the Associate Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications; the Chief Administrative Officer; the Chief Financial Officer; the Dean of Students; the Director of Government Relations; the Vice Provosts; and the three Divisional Executive Associates.

John Carmichael was appointed as Evergreen's seventh President in July 2022, following a year as the college's interim President and over 20 years as an employee at the college. He earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Public Administration degrees from Evergreen and his Ph.D. in Education and Human Resource Studies from Colorado State University. President Carmichael's expanded biography, and biographies for the rest of the executive leadership team, are available at [Executive Leadership | The Evergreen State College](#).

Preface

Update

The Evergreen State College was founded during a period of social and technological change. The college provided new approaches and more effective modes of learning to a growing population of students who previously did not have access to higher education. Over fifty years later, Evergreen continues to innovate and connect with populations of students that other institutions struggle to reach.

At the time of our [Mid-Cycle report](#), Evergreen was being challenged by a steep enrollment decline, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these headwinds, Evergreen has made remarkable strides in enrollment recovery over the past three years, advancing key goals outlined in the mid-cycle review—such as improving retention and graduation rates relative to peer institutions and strengthening its financial position. At a time when most other Washington state institutions have seen declines, Evergreen’s undergraduate enrollment has increased by 25% and its first-year retention rate has increased from 58% to 69% since 2020. Leadership believes this is due primarily to new recruitment initiatives, new programing, and a continued commitment to Evergreen’s core values.

While this progress has been significant, Evergreen needs to extend this positive growth trajectory for several more years to achieve full-financial stability and to meet the expectations of the state legislature. As outlined in the 2025 strategic plan, Evergreen lays out a clear vision that continues to build by expanding curricular offerings and engaging new groups of students. The following are areas of key innovative accomplishments and points of pride since the institution’s mid-cycle report in 2021:

- New Curricular Initiatives
 - Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE): Launched in Fall 2022, Evergreen continues to develop academic certificates and degree completion curricula tailored to the needs of non-traditional working students with some college experience but no degree. The institution is on track with our enrollment goals, having achieved a net growth of 290 FTE in this part of the curriculum over the last three years and are on track to add another 75 FTE in 2025-2026. Following an initial investment of \$2.2 million, PaCE is now generating net revenue for the college and has repaid the initial drawdown from reserves.
 - Evergreen Prison Education Program (EPEP): Launched a new Bachelor of Arts program in partnership with the Department of Corrections at the Stafford Creek Correctional Center, with Department of Education approval for Pell Grant funding. Leadership anticipates enrolling 40 incarcerated students in fall quarter 2025.
 - Early Childhood Education (ECE): Adopted a dual-language early childhood education program at our Tacoma Campus. ECE has helped increase enrollment by approximately 100 FTE starting in Fall 2023.
 - Proposed Graduate Programs: The college has recently received board approval to launch a new Specialized Master of Business Administration in Sustainability and

Social Impact (SMBA) in Fall 2027. There are plans to add additional new graduate programs in the years to follow.

- Recruitment Initiatives
 - Shelton Promise: Launched in January 2024 with legislative support, Evergreen intends to expand this program in the coming year. Shelton Promise is designed to increase the college-going rate for students from the nearby Shelton school district, a district with a 31% college participation rate in 2022. The college will provide wrap-around services and full financial support for students who attend Evergreen.
 - Guaranteed Admission Articulation Agreement with South Sound Community College: Evergreen has entered into an agreement with our neighboring community college to create clear pathways and incentives to improve transfer rates and degree completion rates.
- Improved Retention: Since 2021, Evergreen has increased first-time, first-year retention by 11%, from 58% to 69%. The institution purposefully allocated resources and prioritized work in the following areas to achieve this:
 - New Student Advising and New Student Program: Onboarding staff have enhanced early outreach and advising for newly admitted students. Evergreen has also made assessment-based improvements to our New Student Programs, including pre-orientation programs and our “first-year seminar program,” Green Foundations.
 - Title III Grant, *Holistic Advising: Coordinated Services and Technologies with Community- and Career-Connected High-Impact Practices*: The team is halfway through the grant’s funding cycle, and holistic advising has accomplished several key milestones that were goals of the original proposal. These accomplishments include opening a centralized information and navigation desk on the Olympia Campus called the “Greener Hub”, funding internship support, and developing a new and more advanced advising software and customer relations management system called Slate Student Success.
 - Athletics: Evergreen has expanded athletic programs, adding teams in wrestling and track and field.
- Increased Institutional Capacity
 - Leadership changes: When Evergreen’s midcycle review occurred in 2021, the institution was in the midst of several organizational changes, with interim placements in some key executive leadership team positions. With one exception, all members of the Executive Leadership Team now have continuing appointments:
 - The Board of Trustees removed “interim” from President Carmichael’s appointment and extended it to 2027 based on his resoundingly positive contributions during his interim appointment.
 - In July 2024, Evergreen welcomed Provost and Vice President for Academics, Noah Coburn, a highly regarded scholar, academic leader, and advocate for innovative education.
 - Holly Joseph was named Dean of Students.
 - Trevor Speller transitioned from an interim appointment as vice provost for academic operations to an ongoing position.

- Tonya Strong was appointed in July 2025 to serve as the Associate Vice President of Enrollment, Marketing & Communications.
 - The college has also retained two of our interim leaders, David McAvity and John Reed, for shorter-term project-based positions to help steward academic and college strategic initiatives. John Reed’s experience as former president of Trinity Lutheran College has been invaluable during his role as Evergreen’s interim Chief Enrollment Officer. He has helped us continue to build new approaches to student recruitment. David McAvity continues to help build out our prison education and PaCE programs, which were started under his interim Provostship.
- Organizational Changes: During the last accreditation visit Evergreen had recently adopted a new divisional structure: parts of the traditional Student Affairs portfolio were being incorporated into a new division called Inclusive Excellence and Student Success (IESS), while aspects of student life functions were being combined with Academic Affairs to create the division of Student and Academic Life (SAL). In September of 2021, the president and executive vice-president charged a group to recommend a process for recombining the various components of the traditional Student Affairs portfolio into a more coordinated unit under unified leadership. Based on these recommendations, Evergreen established the division of Student Engagement, Equity, and Support (SEES) in September 2023, under the leadership of Dean of Students, Holly Joseph.
- Strategic Plan: As described in section 1.B.2, the college adopted a new strategic plan after an 18-month college-wide inclusive planning process: [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#).
- Fundraising: In 2024, Evergreen completed its first comprehensive fundraising campaign, the Forever Green Campaign. The campaign raised \$62.5 million in gifts, grants and estate commitments to support scholarships and programs. The five-year effort surpassed internal and external estimates of fundraising capacity – exceeding the preliminary goal of \$40 million by 56%.
- IT modernization: The college has received legislative funding to maintain and upgrade our IT systems and infrastructure.

In addition to the above accomplishments, the college faces some continuing challenges:

- State Budget: Entering the 2025 legislative session, Washington State forecasted a revenue shortfall of \$12-16 billion over the next 4 years. The State subsequently passed a budget bill that included appropriation reductions for higher education in the 2025-2027 biennial budget. Evergreen received a 2.25% reduction for FY 2026 and an additional 5% reduction for FY 2027. Leadership has addressed the initial reduction in our FY 2026 budget using a series of one-time strategies. To prepare for FY 2027, the institution will plan for further budget reductions and revenue generating strategies during the coming academic year.
- National Context: Evergreen, like other higher education institutions, continues to face a political and social climate that questions the value of higher education. The COVID pandemic also created an environment that still puts doubt on in-person

education as many current students had their earlier educations disrupted by the pandemic. On the other hand, the pandemic also saturated the market for online offerings, making it a more competitive market. Ultimately, Evergreen will need to continue to evolve and market its uniqueness to address the national context.

Response to Outstanding Recommendation

In fall 2024, our most recent response to Recommendation 1 – an [Ad Hoc Report](#) – was accepted, and [the Commission found](#) that Evergreen “has continued progressing on its strategic enrollment plan to ensure both short-term and long-term financial health and stability.” NWCCU issued the following recommendation:

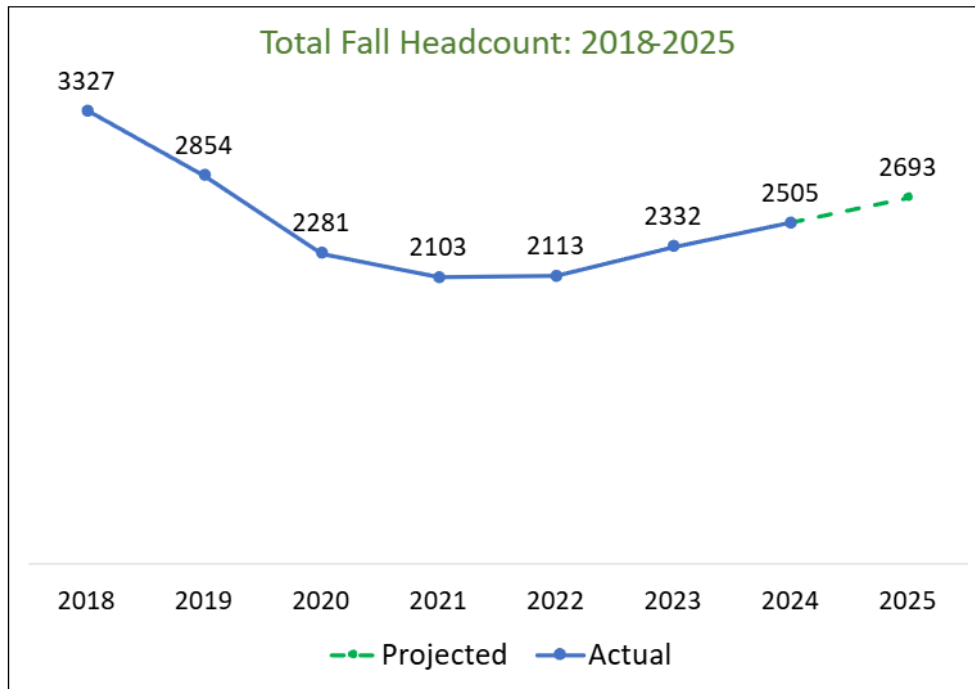
Recommendation 1: Fall 2024 Ad Hoc Report - Demonstrate short-term financial health and long-term financial stability, and sustainability. (2020 Standard(s) 2.E.2)

Evergreen has made significant progress on Recommendation 1. Many of the initiatives that the college put into place to address enrollment at the time of our 2021 mid-cycle accreditation report have now been implemented and are concomitant with demonstrable increases in enrollment and an improved financial position. Furthermore, the [2024 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review \(PRFR\)](#) report details the work Evergreen has done in this area and the continued progress. The NWCCU issued no findings for the PRFR.

Enrollment Progress

As noted in our ad hoc report, Evergreen stabilized total enrollment starting in Fall 2022. Stabilization was driven by new first-time student enrollments, which had increased 40% (227 up to 318) by Fall 2024. Since then, overall enrollment has increased for nine consecutive quarters, with continued growth projected for Fall 2025. Evergreen’s total fall headcount grew from 2,103 to 2,505 between Fall 2021 and Fall 2024. Headcount is projected to grow by 188 students to 2,693 in Fall 2025, a 28% increase in four years (see Figure 1). Furthermore, Evergreen has also begun shifting into a period of more strategic growth, looking to expand not just the number of students but also revenue per student by enhancing the recruitment of non-resident students.

Figure 1: Fall Headcount



Financial Stability & Sustainability

Evergreen’s financial position has improved significantly since the mid-cycle accreditation visit in Fall 202. At that time, the institution was facing a \$7.3 million initial operating budget deficit and a year-end deficit of \$2.5 million (see Table 1). Leadership has taken measures to reduce expenditure through salary savings and strategic budget reductions, while investing in recruitment and curricular initiatives to increase revenue through improved enrollment. Advancement has also completed a comprehensive fundraising campaign that raised over \$62 million. The success of these efforts has helped reduce our FY 2026 initial operating deficit to \$1.4 million. While enrollment and tuition revenue continue to grow steadily, a reduction in state appropriations for FY2027 will require the college to implement additional budget reduction measures in the coming fiscal year. These steps are necessary to ensure spending remains aligned with projected revenue.

Table 1: Operating Budget and Reserves

Description	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025*	FY 2026
Total Operating Budget	\$49,433,356	\$53,155,271	\$55,642,759	\$61,063,787	\$64,109,410
Initial Operating (Deficit) or Surplus	(\$7,328,899)	(\$3,755,351)	(\$1,997,866)	(\$4,221,958)	(\$1,357,951)
Year End (Deficit) or Surplus	(\$2,501,119)	(\$175,600)	\$277,706	(\$1,601,077)*	TBD

Year End Operating Carryforward	\$11,911,591	\$10,647,591	\$8,540,429	\$6,939,352*	TBD
Total Carryforward (all funds)	\$23,156,708	\$22,690,172	\$19,329,222	\$16,809,850*	TBD

*FY2025 year-end numbers are projected.

Even though the college has continued to draw down our reserves during a period of financial stabilization, FY24 ended on a positive note and made a small contribution to operating reserves. The college’s FY25 operating reserves are projected at \$9.72 million, comprised of a board-supported operating fund reserve of \$2.5 million and a projected operating carry-forward reserve of \$7.2 million, as shown above. Evergreen also has a \$5 million board-designated contingency fund and over \$4 million in reserves projected for the summer school fund, for total projected reserves of \$19 million.

Over the years, the college has received strong support from the legislature for new initiatives. Notwithstanding the most recent reductions due to State revenue shortfalls, support of Evergreen and our mission at the legislature continues to be strong.

Table 2 details the operating funding the college has received from the legislature since the last accreditation visit:

Table 2: State Appropriations FY 21-26 – Operations

Description	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
001-1: State General Fund	\$32,198,000	\$32,051,000	\$38,770,000	\$39,723,000	\$34,883,000
066-1: TESC Capital Projects	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
08A-1: Education Legacy Trust	\$2,725,000	\$2,725,000	\$2,725,000	\$2,725,000	\$2,725,000
24J-1: Workforce Education Investment	\$1,953,000	\$1,953,000	\$2,777,000	\$3,018,000	\$6,858,000
Other	N/A	N/A	\$35,000	\$918,503	\$202,000
Total	\$36,916,000	\$36,769,000	\$44,347,000	\$45,424,503	\$47,708,000

Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Standard 1.A: Institutional Mission

1.A.1 Mission

The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

Mission Statement:

As an innovative public liberal arts college, Evergreen emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary learning across significant differences. Our 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.

Development of Evergreen's current mission statement was led by the 2010 Re-accreditation Steering Committee, which consisted of four faculty, two academic deans, all vice presidents, and additional staff from each division. This group examined data using an inclusive process that included broad consultation with faculty, staff, and students through a public forum; faculty meeting small group seminars; a management group meeting; a Geoduck Student Union presentation; and several smaller constituent meetings. Evergreen's mission statement was adopted in 2011. The Strategic Plan serves as a cornerstone for our educational approach and institutional values. By emphasizing collaborative and interdisciplinary learning, the college fosters an environment where our students can engage deeply with diverse perspectives and develop critical thinking skills. This commitment to social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship, and public service not only enriches our academic community but also prepares students for success in a complex, global society.

As Washington State's designated public liberal arts college, our mission also guides us in creating programs and initiatives that support student achievement and personal growth. Over the past two years, stakeholders worked to operationalize the mission in a new [strategic plan](#). The strategic themes outlined in the strategic plan are both foundational to ensuring institutional effectiveness and supporting the fulfillment of the mission. Through its strategic plan, Evergreen will focus on achieving progress by increasing enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, as well as improving measures of community experience and institutional investment. With the plan developed, the college now shifts focus to the implementation phase, to drive mission in the context of a rapidly changing higher education landscape.

STANDARD 1.A.1 EXHIBITS

[Mission and Strategic Goals](#)

[Mission Policy](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

Standard 1.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

1.B.1 Evaluation and Planning

The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

Evergreen prides itself on its democratic approach to education, which emphasizes community consultation and input from all parts of the college, particularly students. This commitment, combined with Evergreen’s lack of department structures, means that Evergreen has designed an interconnected set of alternative planning structures.

Evergreen works in a variety of ways (Table 3) to systematically plan, evaluate, and utilize results of assessment to inform practices at the institutional level – including within individual units and for targeted initiatives – aimed at advancing student success and institutional effectiveness.

Evergreen’s interdisciplinary approach, open curriculum, and department-free structure mean that evaluation and planning look somewhat different than at other institutions. The new strategic plan is at the center of our institutional effectiveness efforts. Through an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process, Evergreen refines its effectiveness, allocates resources, and improves student learning and achievement.

Table 3. Planning and Evaluation at Evergreen

Focus	Assessment Area	Process	Cycle	Planning and Evaluation Resource
Institution Level	Mission Fulfillment	Strategic Planning	5 Years	Strategic Directions 2020-2026
			5 Years	Strategic Plan 2025-2030
			Annual	Annual Reports
			Ongoing	Student Profile and Achievement Metrics
	College Climate	Climate and Student Surveys	Periodic	Evergreen Community Experience Survey
			Biennial	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
			Biennial	Evergreen New Student Survey (NSS)
			Biennial	Evergreen Student Experience Survey (SES)
	Budget and Finance	Budgeting	Annual/Biennial	Audited Financial Statements, Financial Ratios
	Infrastructure and Operations	Facilities and Technology Planning	Periodic	Evergreen Campus Master Plan
Unit Level	Unit Planning	Division Equity Action Plans	Biennial	Division Plans and Benchmarks
Targeted Assessment	Student Learning	Learning Assessment Data	Biennial	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
			Quarterly	Credit Attainment Evaluation
			Annual	Six Expectations of Learning (SEAL)
	Ad Hoc Projects	Project Specific	Ad Hoc; Ongoing	Institutional Research Data Requests
			Institutional Research Data Request Form	

Over the past five years, Evergreen faced unique challenges that disrupted traditional evaluation cycles. In response to significant enrollment declines between 2017 and 2019, followed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, leadership made a strategic decision in 2020 to align the planning process with the biennial legislative budget cycle. At the time, this shift enabled a more integrated approach to resource allocation and institutional priorities. As a result, the strategic plan was hurriedly developed under tight time constraints at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The plan was largely informed by a broad, consultative process called “Blue Sky,” led by the provost in the 2019-20 academic year. This initiative intended to generate bold new ideas, or “Big Bets,” to address the declining enrollment situation. The resulting strategic plan ([Strategic Directions: 2020-](#)

[2026 Strategic Plan](#)) was initially developed to guide the institution for four years. It was extended for another two years to allow a comprehensive consultative process to create our current plan. Although the plan was not directly connected to clear indicators and mission fulfillment targets, a working group was tasked with conducting a post-hoc analysis to develop evaluation recommendations for the success of the plan. Additional challenges—including transitions in executive leadership, a reorganization of the Office of Institutional Research, and other institutional capacity constraints—prevented full implementation of the recommendations before development of the new plan began.

By 2023, leadership had stabilized, and the Board of Trustees initiated the development of a new Strategic Plan to guide the college's mission fulfillment efforts from 2025-2030. President Carmichael charged Executive Vice-President Gordon to chair the process of developing our next strategic plan. The college secured the support of consultants from the Society for College and University Planning to provide three days of training for 39 leaders from different organizational areas. After intensive training, a planning team was formed.

The resulting [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#), detailed further in 1.B.2, represents a deliberate effort to build upon recent successes in enrollment, retention, and institutional vitality, while setting ambitious yet attainable goals for the future. The planning process involved broad consultation across the college, including governance bodies, senior leadership, and thematic subcommittees. The planning team conducted an environmental scan, analyzing data on demographic shifts affecting college-bound students, market trends in higher education services, and global trends in higher education's participation, services, and pedagogical practices.

Key questions—such as what should be measured, how progress would be assessed, and what institutional priorities deserved attention—shaped the selection of the plan's four themes: Access and Enrollment; Student Learning, Retention, and Success; Community, Culture, and Campus Climate; and Innovation and Investment. Each theme includes a clearly defined goal, a set of supporting strategies, and specific action steps or approaches that reflect a mix of data-informed decision making, peer benchmarking, and aspirational yet realistic targets.

Institutional context played a vital role in shaping the plan's goals. For example, an enrollment goal of 1,000 additional students reflects an intention to return to levels the college has previously achieved for financial stability and curricular breadth. This goal outlines an ambitious but achievable growth trajectory of about 8% annually over five years. Similarly, retention goals were informed by both internal data and comparisons with peer institutions, targeting a 75% first-year retention rate as both beneficial for student success and essential to broader enrollment health. Other themes address critical qualitative dimensions of campus life, including a sustained focus on climate, belonging, and satisfaction. These goals were developed through both institutional research and community dialogue. Financial sustainability, embedded in the fourth theme, emphasizes a comprehensive approach to revenue growth and operational effectiveness and innovation. Quantitative and qualitative measures for each of these goals are described in section 1.B.2.

The Strategic Plan's action steps have been prioritized and reviewed across multiple institutional levels. Implementation is guided by a cycle of continuous assessment and refinement at the unit

level, ensuring the plan remains a dynamic and responsive tool for institutional decision making and resource allocation.

Strategic Plan themes, goals, KPIs, and their origin are summarized in Table 4, below:

Table 4: Strategic Plan Summary

Theme	5-Year Goal and KPI	Origin
Access and Enrollment	Enrollment - Fall Headcount to 3,332	Executive Leadership
Student Learning, Retention, and Success	Retention - New First-Time Retention to 75%	Retention Work Group
Community, Culture, and Campus Climate	Student Satisfaction - Campus Climate to 80%	Strategic Planning - Climate Sub-Committee
Innovation and Investment	Budget - Net Operating Revenue Ratio at 2% or higher	President and Chief Budget Officer

More details about the Strategic Plan and how it will be implemented and progress assessed are included below in 1.B.2.

STANDARD 1.B.1 EXHIBITS

[Strategic Directions: 2020-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

[Mid-Cycle Accreditation Report](#)

[2021-2026 Evergreen Strategic Enrollment Plan](#)

[Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)

[Facts and Figures](#)

[Evergreen 2020 Climate Survey on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[2025 National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\) Executive Summary](#)

[Evergreen New Student Survey 2024](#)

[Evergreen Student Experience Survey 2024](#)

[Annual Financial Reports](#)

[Evergreen Campus Master Plan](#)

[Divisional Equity Action Plan Introduction](#)

[Divisional Equity Action Plan Status Updates and Template](#)

[Six Expectations of Learning \(SEAL\)](#)

[Institutional Research Data Request Form](#)

1.B.2 Planning Details: Actions and Indicators

The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions.

Mission Fulfillment

As discussed in the prior section (1.B.1), there were challenges to implementing the previous strategic plan and creating accurate and consistent measures of effectiveness. The process to create a new strategic plan over the 2023-24 academic year was mission driven. Due to the mindfulness, time, and robust effort from across the college during the strategic planning process, Evergreen’s institutional effectiveness process and key indicators are embodied by the strategic plan. Our [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#) discusses how the institution’s strategic themes and goals reflect “issues, and priorities our Board and other stakeholders value and identify as necessary for

the growth and strengthening of Evergreen.” Therefore, these strategic themes are not only the foundation of the strategic plan, but they also support mission fulfillment and are necessary to uphold and address as the college continues to improve effectiveness.

Mission fulfillment at Evergreen means providing innovative and interdisciplinary curriculum; admitting, supporting, and graduating students who are underrepresented and underserved by higher education; and committing to social and environmental justice. Through the Strategic Plan, Evergreen will focus on achieving progress through increasing enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, and improving measures of climate, satisfaction, and belonging.

Goals, Strategies, and Indicators

Our Strategic Themes include:

1. Access and Enrollment
2. Student Learning, Retention, and Success
3. Community, Culture, and Campus Climate
4. Innovation and Investment

Each of these areas has an established definition and rationale, goal, strategies, and prioritized approaches.

Strategic Theme 1: Access and Enrollment

Goal: Evergreen aims to boost enrollment by 1,000 students during the next five years (by Fall 2029), driven by increased access, exceptional and transformative academic opportunities, and a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of students and their communities.

Strategies and “Top Priority” Approaches:

- Strategy 1 (Academic Opportunities): Expand and further develop innovative undergraduate and graduate academic programs and offerings that meet evolving student interests and emerging workforce demands and that capitalize on the growing interest in online and hybrid learning environments.
 - o Expand and strengthen unique opportunities for traditionally underserved students.
 - o Create new academic programs, degrees, and other credentials in partnership with workforce organizations, government, businesses, tribes, and nonprofits to address demographic shifts, evolving careers, and global challenges like climate change, technology, public health, and social inequality.
- Strategy 2 (Value and Distinctiveness): Spotlight Evergreen’s distinctive, high-quality, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and affordable liberal arts education, showing students the lifelong value of an Evergreen degree.
- Strategy 3 (Enrollment Experience): Enhance our enrollment services to deliver more personalized, streamlined, and accessible experiences.

- Strategy 4 (Relationships): Grow and nurture mutually beneficial relationships with regional, national, and international partners connected with prospective student populations.
 - o Develop transfer and dual enrollment agreements with community colleges in our region, to include guaranteed admissions, two- and four-year degree pathways, co-advising, and four-year plans for financial aid.
 - o Work with regional and local community partners, including local high schools, tribes, and other organizations representing historically marginalized groups, to align educational interests that help generate a college-going culture.

- Strategy 5 (Internationalization): Create an internationally engaged campus that prepares students to thrive in an interconnected world. By expanding international perspectives, we will develop globally competent graduates who can address complex challenges across cultures.

Strategic Theme 2: Student Learning, Retention, and Success

Goal: Evergreen will intensify its commitment to enhancing student engagement in coordinated, high-quality learning experiences and providing personalized support to drive academic success, foster personal growth, and ensure career readiness.

We aim to increase first-year retention of new first-time undergraduate students to 75% within five years, and year-to-year persistence for all students to 82%.

Strategies and “Top Priority” Approaches:

- Strategy 1(Retention): Increase students’ successful completion of their degree at Evergreen from their first year through graduation.
 - o Implement a student-centered service ethos for all student-facing offices with a goal of creating a supportive environment, providing clear and responsive guidance and resources, promoting a sense of care and belonging, and adapting services to changing needs.
 - o Implement a data informed “early alert” system to identify and assist students at risk of leaving the College, using academic performance and engagement metrics, among others.

- Strategy 2 (Navigation): With a student-centered approach, strengthen advising, mentoring, and support for students as they navigate their college experience.
 - o Develop and implement a tracking and reporting system that facilitates proactive communication between students, support staff, and faculty regarding student needs, academic planning, and postgraduate preparation.
 - o Foster proactive institutional programming and student agency to ensure all students receive comprehensive, consistent, and impactful academic and career advising.
 - o Develop a state-of-the-art last-mile training and development program to enhance career readiness and student success after graduation.

- Strategy 3 (Student Learning and Post-Graduate Success): Deliver an exceptional educational experience that empowers students to reach their highest levels of academic learning, achievement, and post-graduate success.
 - o Increase the availability of and equitable participation in high-impact practices and advanced learning opportunities to prepare students for postgraduate success, including research, internships, fieldwork, study abroad, and senior capstones.
- Strategy 4 (Evergreen’s Distinctive Approach): Commit to an immersive and transformative, student-centered learning model that guarantees flexible, hands-on, interdisciplinary experiences and fosters collaboration and strong peer relationships.
 - o Cultivate and integrate student peer learning through enhanced employment opportunities, supported by professional and leadership development, positioning students as peer mentors and facilitators.

Strategic Theme 3: Community, Culture, and Campus Climate

Goal: Evergreen will demonstrate continuous improvement in measures of climate, satisfaction, and belonging by striving to be a learning organization marked by a vibrant culture that promotes well-being, inclusivity, and joy, where every member is valued.

Strategies and “Top Priority” Approaches:

- Strategy 1 (Inclusive Engagement): Build a cohesive and inclusive campus environment that upholds academic freedom and a culture of meaningful engagement across difference, while promoting active participation in decision-making processes.
 - o Strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of shared governance to inform decision making, including enhancing student, staff, and faculty engagement.
- Strategy 2 (Building Community): Grow a community grounded in thriving and flourishing that appreciates our full human potential and sustains Evergreen’s built and natural environment.
 - o Increase the vibrancy of campus life across all Evergreen locations, including enhancing existing recreational, performance arts, and lab and studio facilities.
 - o Expand food services and campus life in the evenings and during weekends, and more.
 - o Grow curricular and co-curricular programming connected to the Organic Farm, our campus forest and shoreline, and neighborhoods in the vicinity of our two campuses.
 - o Enhance Evergreen’s reputation and role as a unique intellectual hub by deepening the College’s engagement with communities in the South Sound, including Olympia and Tacoma, on academic, social, and public issues. Continue to engage with community partners in sponsoring informative speakers, dramatic performances, music and dance performances, recreational activities, festivals, museum displays, and more.
- Strategy 3 (Connections): Enhance connections among the College’s various units, programs, and campuses.

Strategic Theme 4: Innovation and Investment

Goal: Evergreen will fund operational excellence, innovation, and efficiency in support of the College’s mission and fiduciary responsibilities.

Strategies and “Top Priority” Approaches:

- Strategy 1 (Efficient, Agile, and Responsive Operations): Develop sustainable, adaptable, and consistent systems that encourage innovation, minimize constraints, and align with effective operational processes.
- Strategy 2 (Revenue, Investment, and Resource Management): Continuously and vigorously pursue diverse external revenue streams and related support and promote inclusive, transparent, and cost-effective financial decision-making to improve alignment between revenue and expenses and to establish a financially sustainable business model.
 - o Launch Evergreen’s next comprehensive fundraising campaign.
 - o Improve the capacity of staff and faculty to design and redesign programs that grow enrollment with a financially sustainable balance of resident and non-resident students and attract diverse external revenue streams and support.
 - o Account for existing financial resources, equipment, and facilities, along with the expertise of staff and faculty, when developing new programs and expanding the curriculum.
- Strategy 3 (Technology): Increase use of innovative technology applications and systems that will improve student learning outcomes, enhance student, staff, and faculty experience, improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, and reduce administrative costs.
 - o Develop and implement a college technology strategic plan by 2025/2026.

Our inclusive planning process (discussed in more depth in section 1.B.3) came with a set of challenges. Due to the more broad and exhaustive nature of inclusive planning, the planning team often had to balance and work to incorporate multiple views. This phenomenon proved to be the most challenging when creating approaches for each strategy. Ultimately, the planning team and leadership came together and detailed out priority levels among the approaches. While only the “top priority” approaches are listed above, a complete set of strategic approaches can be found in the [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#).

Evergreen monitors progression of these goals through a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and priority metrics, which are also tracked in our [Strategic Planning Scorecard Dashboard](#). The institution regards reaching our 5-year targets for each of our KPIs, as outlined below, as evidence of fulfillment of our strategic plan in support of our mission. Progress will be tracked annually, and this information will be used to adjust action steps as needed.

For Theme 1, *Access and Enrollment*, the college on track to meet our overarching goal of growing enrollment by 1,000 students over five years. As of fall quarter 2024, the headcount target of 2,446 students was exceeded by 59 (totaling 2,505), signaling positive momentum. Our prioritized action steps for the coming years are strategically timed to sustain and build on this trajectory.

For Theme 2, *Student learning, Success, and Retention*, progress toward our goal of achieving a 75% first-time, first-year retention rate is encouraging. Fall-to-fall retention increased from 65% in 2023 to 69% in 2024. This improvement reflects ongoing efforts to support student success and provides a solid foundation for continued gains in the years ahead.

For Theme 3, *Community, Culture, and Campus Climate*, the college is using a two-year rolling average of aggregate student satisfaction and campus climate scores, drawn from multiple surveys. Leadership set a goal of achieving a score of 80, indicating a high level of student satisfaction on a scale where 100 is the maximum possible score. This measure has risen from 75 in the 2023–2024 academic year to 79 in 2024–2025, indicating strong progress toward our target.

For Theme 4, *Innovation and Investment*, leadership has selected the net operating revenue ratio as our key financial indicator, with a goal of maintaining a ratio of 2% or higher—a benchmark associated with sound fiscal health. This ratio reflects the difference between operating revenues and operating expenses, expressed as a percentage of revenues. The ratio improved from –2.3% in FY23 to 0.5% in FY24. Our financial strategy aims to align annual operating budgets with this target, while acknowledging that the ratio may fluctuate year to year due to changing conditions and strategic investments.

In addition to these headline measures, progress will be tracked using indicators of success for each strategy. Action steps and approaches to help with this progress are identified and renewed on a continuous basis. Moreover, the college tracks, assesses, and publicly publishes rates of enrollment, retention, and graduation for our students via our [Student Profile](#) dashboard and Common Data Sets (CDS) (see [Facts and Figures webpage](#)). Stakeholders can disaggregate and analyze headcount and three-year weighted retention by multiple demographic indicators, including first-generation status, gender, full or part-time status, Pell eligibility, and race and ethnicity. These data are updated annually and, together with other approaches to evaluation of student learning, underpin Evergreen’s student achievement measures. The assessment of learning outcomes is discussed in detail in section 1.C.6.

Peer Comparison Data

Prior to academic year 2023-24, Evergreen’s peer institutions were members of the [Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges](#) (COPLAC). This was due to the assumption it was best to compare our college to other public liberal arts colleges. However, this led to a peer group of about 30 institutions and only one Northwest Regional peer. Furthermore, NWCCU wanted our peer group to be smaller and include more targeted selections. Based on these requirements, the provost issued an executive charge to identify new peers.

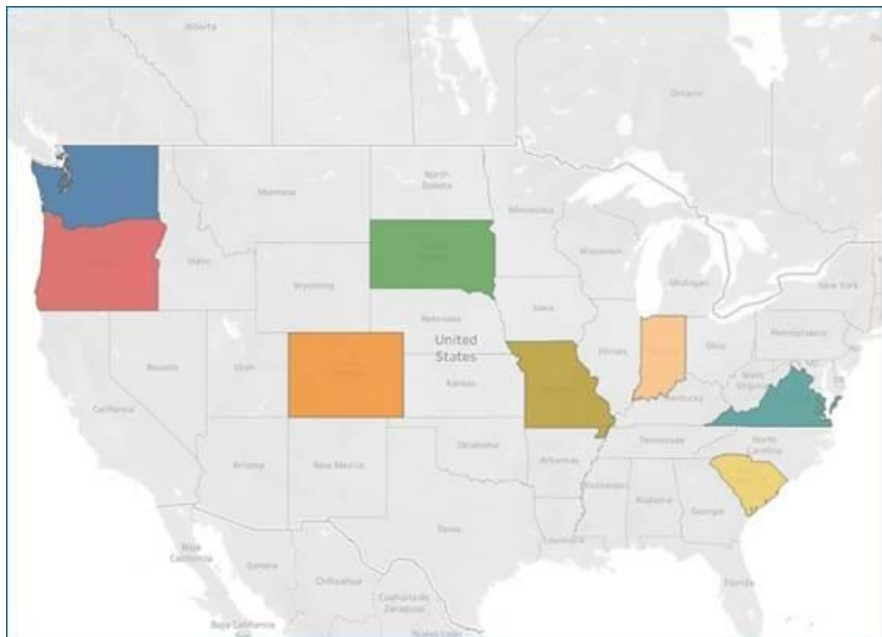
Institutional Research and Decision Support specified a dataset of colleges using IPEDS data to help with narrowing the selection. The dataset included COPLAC colleges; Washington state public 4-years; and select other colleges, based on size and Carnegie classification. Once the data set was created, the college looked at distributions (box-and-whisker) to eliminate outliers. Selection criteria were then prioritized in the following order: Fall enrollment, percent of students that received Pell funding, and 6-year graduation rate.

These indicators were chosen to represent: 1) benchmarking to like schools via Carnegie classification and enrollment, 2) economics of our student pool through percent that received Pell funding, and 3) an aspirational target, such as graduation rates. After overlaying these indicators on the set of institutions, Evergreen was left with 10 comparison schools: 6 national and 4 regional. This resulted in the following selections, listed in Table 5, with geographical distribution in Figure 2:

Table 5. Peer Comparison Institutions

Peer Group	Institution Name	State
National	Fort Lewis College	CO
National	Indiana University - Kokomo	IN
National	Northern State University	SD
National	Truman State University	MO
National	University of South Carolina - Aiken	SC
National	University of Virginia's College at Wise	VA
Regional	Central Washington University	WA
Regional	Eastern Washington University	WA
Regional	University of Washington - Tacoma	WA
Regional	Western Oregon University	OR

Figure 2. Geographical Distribution of Peer Institution States



A new [Peer Comparisons dashboard](#) has been developed that tracks the following performance indicators of Evergreen and its peer groups:

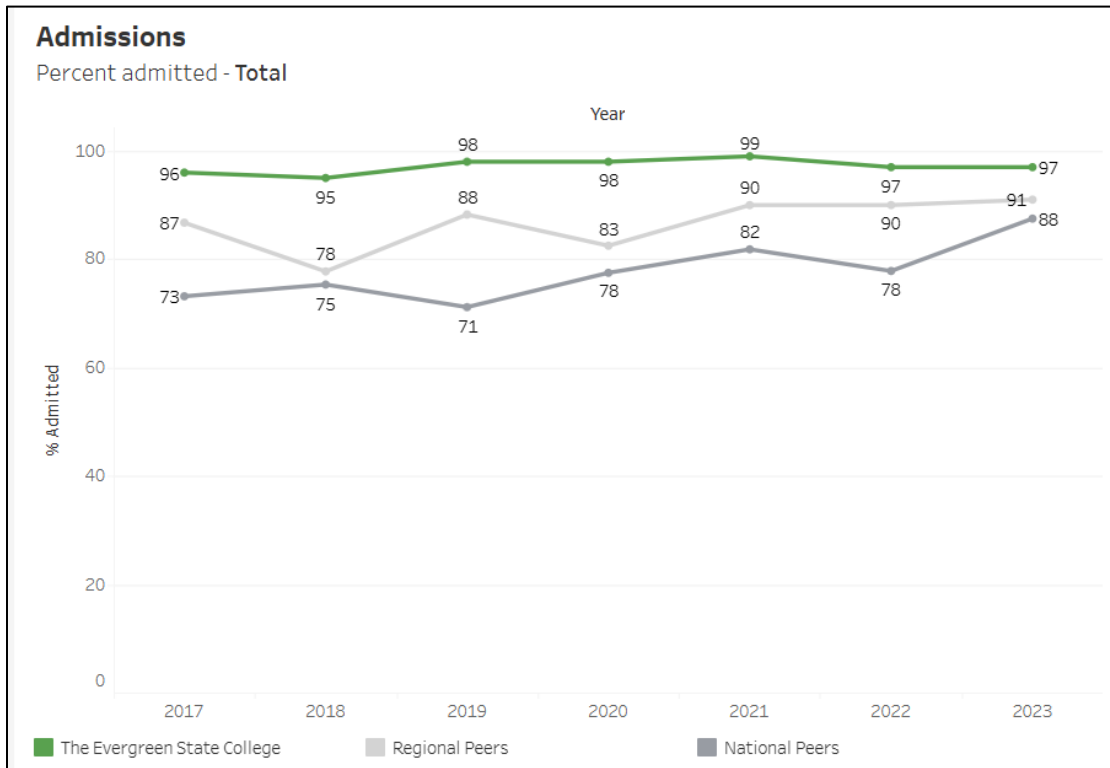
- Total Admitted (%)
- Total Enrolled (%)
- Retention Rate (%)

- Graduation Rate (%)

These dimensions can also be disaggregated and analyzed by the following demographics: gender, race/ethnicity, residency, enrollment status.

Within a peer comparison lens, Evergreen’s strengths are admission and enrollment. Since 2017, Evergreen has, on average, admitted 10% more of its applicants than regional peers, and 19% more than its national peers. This high rate inherently supports Evergreen’s mission fulfillment, as the college evaluates its success in part by admitting, supporting, and graduating students who are underrepresented and underserved in higher education. Furthermore, Evergreen’s high admission rate supports our Strategic Plan as well. Our plan states, “Evergreen is dedicated to ensuring that a college education in Washington is ...accessible.” As for enrollment, the college remains competitive in the context of peer institutions. When enrollment data is disaggregated by demographics, Evergreen consistently falls between its regional and national peer groups.

Figure 3. Comparative Peer Institution Data for Admissions



Both our regional and national peers act as aspirational benchmarks for retention and graduation rates. For full-time retention, Evergreen lagged at least eight percentage points behind our regional peer group (with our national peers falling in between), prior to 2021. However, looking at data over

the past three years, Evergreen has been consistently within 5% of our regional peer group. Moreover, retention of new first-year students has increased from 58% to 69% since 2020. To learn more, Evergreen chose to analyze 2023 retention data through a disaggregated lens focusing on full-time students. When compared to individual schools within the peer group, Evergreen ranks roughly in the middle of its 10 comparison institutions. One regional and three national peers fall below Evergreen's retention rate, while three regional and three national peers rank above. Peer institutions who have higher retention rates are: Western Oregon University, University of Washington – Tacoma, Central Washington University, Truman State University, Northern State University, and University of Virginia's College at Wise. While Evergreen does fall in the middle, the gap between Evergreen and its peers who have higher retention rates is larger than those who fall below. This gap can largely be explained by Truman State University's and University of Washington – Tacoma's high retention rates. However, both universities also have more selective admissions, which carries the general trend of higher retention rates. Part-time retention follows a pattern similar to full-time retention. This indicates that retention is an area of meaningful progress for Evergreen, with clear potential for continued improvement in comparison to our peers.

Prior to 2020, Evergreen had a higher graduation rate than its regional and national peers. Since 2020, Evergreen has been eight percentage points behind its leading peer group. This flip in peer benchmarking, again, led Evergreen to analyze 2023 peer graduation data through a disaggregated lens. Evaluating Evergreen's graduation rate against its 10 comparison schools shows two national peers fall below Evergreen. Meanwhile, four national and four regional peers rank above. Peer institutions who have higher graduation rates are: Western Oregon University, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, University of Washington – Tacoma, Central Washington University, Truman State University, Northern State University, and University of Virginia's College at Wise. Once again, the graduation rate gap between Evergreen and Truman State University and University of Washington – Tacoma can be a potential explanation for the larger aggregate rate differences. As stated, both universities have more selective admissions, which carries the general trend of higher graduation rates. Another notable explanation is all of Evergreen's peers have more traditional and structured models. As a result, graduation rates can also be influenced by students who start at Evergreen and later choose to transfer to other institutions during their academic career for a more structured experience.

Evergreen systematically uses peer comparisons to evaluate student achievement measures, such as retention and completion. These comparisons also inform goal setting, as demonstrated in the 2021 Mid-Cycle Report. At that time, our peers were all COPLAC members plus the Washington regionals: Western Washington University, Eastern Washington University, and Central Washington University. From 2016-2018, Evergreen generally found our graduation rates to be similar or higher than our peer institutions for both first-time first-year students and transfer students. However, Evergreen's rates decreased below our peers after 2018. In the Mid-Cycle report, Evergreen named a goal, "to increase graduation rates to the levels we achieved compared to our peers prior to 2017...[by] 2025". Rates prior to 2017 were 43% for 4-year and 56% for 6-year. Evergreen saw similar trends in retention rates compared to peers as the institution experienced a general decline after 2017. Again, at the time of the Mid-Cycle Report, Evergreen named a goal to, "increase retention rates above 70%, close to where they were in 2013...[by] 2025". Since Evergreen's peer group changed by 2025, these goals were never explicitly evaluated. However, the retention and

completion goals in our Strategic Plan meet or exceed the goals set in our Mid-Cycle report based on peer comparison. For example, our current first-time first-year retention rate of 69% meets the goal set in our Mid-Cycle report and is similar to most institutions in our new peer group. Our new goal of 75% retention would put us among the highest of our new peer group.

STANDARD 1.B.2 EXHIBITS

[Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)

[Facts and Figures](#)

[Strategic Planning Scorecard Dashboard](#)

[Peer Comparisons Dashboard](#)

1.B.3 Inclusive Planning

The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

Inclusive Strategic Planning

As described in 1.B.1, Evergreen completed its Strategic Plan in fall 2024, following a two-year inclusive development process.

To engage its broad community, Evergreen implemented a layered and iterative process that provided multiple avenues for participation—inviting students, staff, faculty, alumni, the Board of Governors, and the Board of Trustees to contribute meaningfully to the development of the plan. After listening sessions, retreats, workshops, focus groups, surveys, and presentations, Evergreen crafted a Strategic Plan with four goals, each supported by targeted strategies and actionable steps.

From the outset, the Institutional Research team was embedded within the planning process to ensure the Strategic Plan was informed by relevant data and designed to be continuously assessed. These data and metrics guide our implementation, and allow for annual reviews, timely course corrections, and continuous improvement. While Evergreen is still early in the Strategic Planning implementation cycle, the process is already informing key decisions and resource allocations. For example, in June 2025, the Board of Trustees authorized the launch of a new Sustainable MBA program—an initiative aligned with our goals for enrollment growth and financial stability. As another example, Evergreen is moving forward with a close partnership with a local community college to improve access and transfer pathways in three high demand areas that align with our strengths. This initiative is designed to address our enrollment and degree completion goals.

At strategy meetings and retreats, Academic and Executive leadership teams regularly review and adjust priorities relating to the Strategic Plan. Leadership also uses the plan to inform agendas for Board of Trustees meetings and the annual Legislative budget request process.

With phased implementation over the next five years, the Strategic Plan also commits Evergreen to an ongoing process of planning and organizational development aimed at achieving the highest levels of institutional effectiveness. Evergreen’s commitment to inclusive planning is exemplified by

the development of initiatives and new academic programs implemented over the past five years, described in section 1.B.4.

STANDARD 1.B.3 EXHIBITS

[2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#)

[Board of Trustee's Meeting Schedule and Materials](#)

[Governor Inslee's 2023-25 Budget Proposals](#)

[10-Year Capital Plan](#)

[Annual Financial Reports](#)

1.B.4 Strategic Monitoring: Internal & External Environments

The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

Evergreen State College maintains a comprehensive approach to monitoring internal and external environments, using these insights to guide strategic planning and institutional direction, as described in Section 1.B.3. The college recognizes the critical importance of continuously assessing and responding to emerging trends in higher education.

Institutional Context and Environmental Scanning

Evergreen's strategic planning process began with a systematic approach to understanding both internal capabilities and external challenges. In the years immediately preceding and following the COVID-19 pandemic years, the college faced significant enrollment challenges that demanded a proactive response. This led to the development of a holistic approach to institutional sustainability and growth.

External monitoring efforts have focused on several key areas, including demographic shifts, workforce needs, and evolving student expectations. Through careful analysis, college stakeholders identified critical opportunities for innovation and development.

Strategic Initiatives Emerging from Environmental Assessment

The Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) initiative demonstrates our responsive approach to environmental monitoring. Approved by the Board of Trustees in 2022, the genesis for PaCE was a college wide consultative process called "Blue Sky" to generate "Big Bets," or initiatives to address enrollment. The process was grounded in data analysis and literature review to understand the current context of higher education. PaCE was designed to directly address the findings related to regional market needs and emerging student demographics. PaCE developed academic and professional certificates that build enduring skills for students and are stackable to a degree. The

new curriculum is designed specifically to meet the needs of returning adult learners and schedule-constrained students. The college's goal is to expand enrollment in this part of the curriculum by 500 FTE by fall 2027. The PaCE initiative helps with our financial position, as the program is on track to contribute \$1 million to college reserves annually by 2026-27.

Technology Integration Progress

Through the SWOT analysis and environmental scanning incorporated into the strategic planning process, Evergreen recognizes that the future of higher education is deeply intertwined with technological advancement. The college has made significant strides in implementing new systems designed to modernize our operations and enhance service delivery to incoming students. Our strategy has focused on three key technological platforms that are transforming our admissions and student engagement processes: Niche, Slate, and Washington General Application Platform (WAGAP).

[Niche](#) represents our commitment to meeting prospective students where they are in the digital landscape. This platform offers a more holistic approach to student recruitment, allowing us to reach potential Evergreen students through channels they naturally frequent. Though still in its early implementation stages, Niche is already demonstrating value by enabling authentic connections with prospective students who might otherwise overlook our unique educational offerings. This technology aligns with our institutional philosophy of meeting students where they are on their educational journey.

The implementation of [Slate](#) has revolutionized our admissions and enrollment management processes. This comprehensive platform has dramatically reduced processing times for applications and supporting documentation, while simultaneously enabling robust communication with prospective and admitted students. Slate provides continuity of student support from first contact through to graduation, offering real-time data that informs strategic decision-making. By digitizing our processing workflows, the institution has eliminated many paper-based procedures, resulting in greater efficiency, accuracy, and environmental sustainability.

Our participation in WAGAP demonstrates our commitment to collaborative solutions within Washington's higher education landscape. This joint effort with other Washington public baccalaureate institutions has streamlined the application process through digital transcript sharing and seamless integration with Slate. WAGAP strengthens the college-going culture throughout Washington state by reducing barriers to application and enrollment. This system exemplifies how technology can foster both institutional cooperation and student success across the educational ecosystem.

Governance and Strategic Positioning

Our governance system plays a crucial role in translating environmental scans into strategic action. While PaCE programming was the first example of this, more recently, the provost charged a Curriculum Planning for Enrollment Growth (CPEG) workgroup to help inform future areas for curriculum development. In fall 2023, this group completed a comprehensive review of internal and

external data indicating areas of growing student interest, degree completion, and workforce needs. The CPEG report identified eight academic areas with the highest potential for enrollment growth. That report has had direct implications for institutional resource allocation. For the 2024-25 academic year, the provost authorized nine regular faculty hires recommended by a faculty Hiring Priorities Workgroup – decisions that directly aligned with the projected enrollment and curriculum expansion needs identified in the report.

Forward-Looking New Program Development

Recognizing the need for continued evolution, the college initiated a strategic process for developing new graduate programs in spring 2024. The new graduate program workgroup solicited letters of intent, developed a request-for-proposals process, and conducted research on student interest, market demand, emerging fields- leveraging data analysis and decision intelligence tools such as Gray DI. The committee submitted a report in winter 2025 with recommendations that included specific new program proposals, a change to the administrative organization of our graduate programs, and an ongoing regular process for new graduate program development.

Strategic Partnerships

Evergreen is part of a local ecosystem of organizations and institutions that are invested in creating educational opportunities for students. Therefore, one of the top strategic priorities emerging from the planning process is to develop strategic partnerships in the region. Our emerging articulation agreement with South Puget Sound Community College provides one example. Under the agreement, students who enrolled at SPSCC for a 2-year associate degree can develop a seamless 4-year plan should they wish to pursue a bachelor's degree with Evergreen. Our agreement aims to provide three key goals: clear and direct links between students' Associate of Arts (AA) Pathways and Evergreen Paths; systematic advising and cohort building to create a sense of identity; and simplified transfer and registration process. This agreement involves good coordination and planning from Evergreen faculty to ensure requirements and opportunities are coherent and attainable, and a dedicated engagement plan from staff in admissions, advising, and marketing to ensure clear communication.

Legislative Intent

As a publicly funded college in Washington State, Evergreen is attuned to the interests and needs of the state and the legislature. One of those interests was to expand prison education in Washington State Department of Corrections Facilities. [Bozick et al. \(2018\)](#) clearly document that prison education programs significantly reduce recidivism. A Washington State Institute for Public Policy [cost-benefit analysis](#) determined that for every \$1 invested in college within the prison system the public stands to accrue \$19.74 in benefits. Another study by [Pompoco et al. \(2015\)](#) shows that prisons that include college programs are safer for everyone involved. Moreover, there is a strong correlation between liberal arts classroom experiences and the development of agency-related well-being for incarcerated students ([Moore & Erzen, 2021](#)). In alignment with this vision, Evergreen

sought and received legislative funding in 2022 to start a new program at Stafford Creek Corrections Center, the Evergreen Prison Education Program (EPEP), offering a Bachelor of Arts degree to incarcerated students. The NWCCU approved this program in 2024, and the college was approved by the Department of Education in 2025 to open Pell funding for our incarcerated students.

Council of Presidents

Evergreen is a member of the Washington State Council of Presidents (COP)—a structured body of the six public baccalaureate institutions that operates through issue-focused committees (e.g. Academic Planning, Admissions, Data Standards, etc.). These meetings are designed for information sharing and to help coordination in light of the regional, state and federal landscapes relating to topics such as changing student, demographics, new program development, legislative changes, and other topics. The President and various deans and directors participate monthly or quarterly in these meetings and regularly share reports and action items with their respective teams. This structure ensures that environmental scanning is not episodic or anecdotal—it is a systematic, documented practice, fully integrated into both institutional roles and planning rhythms via COP participation.

Conclusion

The above examples illustrate some of the ways that Evergreen incorporates environmental monitoring and strategic positioning. Through collaborative governance, data-informed decision-making, and a commitment to responsiveness, the college continues to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of students and the broader community.

As illustrated above, our regular planning and decision-making process is characterized by systematic environmental scanning at multiple levels of leadership, informing collaborative planning and partnerships, flexible and responsive program development, and continuous assessment and improvement.

Moving forward, Evergreen remains committed to our core mission while being agile enough to respond to emerging educational opportunities.

STANDARD 1.B.4 EXHIBITS

[Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)

[Evergreen 2020 Climate Survey on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[Board Resolution for Professional and Continuing Education](#)

[Board Resolution for EPEP](#)

Standard 1.C: Student Learning

1.C.1 Appropriate Content and Rigor

The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminates in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials and includes designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

The Evergreen State College's learning approach, as embodied in the Five Foci of Learning, form the foundation of our educational philosophy, emphasizing:

1. **Interdisciplinary Study:** Students integrate concepts from multiple disciplines to address complex real-world issues.
2. **Collaborative Learning:** Knowledge and skills are developed through shared learning experiences, promoting cooperation over competition.
3. **Learning Across Significant Differences:** Students learn to recognize, respect, and bridge diverse perspectives, essential in today's global society.
4. **Personal Engagement:** Emphasis is placed on students taking responsibility for their learning, fostering critical thinking and self-reflection.
5. **Linking Theory with Practice:** Abstract theories are applied to practical projects and real-world situations, enhancing understanding and skill application.

These foci define Evergreen's approach to academic rigor and mission-alignment by promoting comprehensive, engaged, and practical learning experiences. Students not only develop expertise in their chosen areas of study but also work collaboratively and acquire the ability to think critically across disciplines. The college's emphasis on applied learning and field-based study enhances this interdisciplinary approach, allowing students to engage with real-world problems and apply their knowledge in practical settings.

Rather than traditional majors, students typically engage in [coordinated studies programs](#), where they explore interconnected themes across multiple disciplines. For example, a program might combine environmental science, policy, and ethics to address sustainability challenges. This approach ensures that the content is both intellectually rigorous and practically applicable. The full-time nature of these programs allows faculty to design and sequence learning activities that embody the five foci, enabling students to reach depth and rigor appropriate for the level of the program. The coordinated studies programs and the process by which faculty design and implement them is described in section C.2

Evergreen's programs are designed with clear learning outcomes that include the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, work collaboratively, and apply interdisciplinary approaches to problem-solving. Students demonstrate their achievement of these outcomes through comprehensive evaluations, including faculty evaluations, self-revaluations, and final projects. Evergreen's narrative evaluation system, which replaces traditional grades, provides detailed

feedback on students' progress toward these outcomes, ensuring a holistic understanding of their learning. Our narrative evaluation system is described in C.2

To help students navigate the interdisciplinary curriculum, Evergreen has developed [Paths](#), which connect different recognized fields of study and provide guidance for students to progress from entry-level to advanced study leading to a degree. For instance, a student interested in the environment and sustainability might follow the [Environmental Studies Path](#) that begins with foundational programs in ecology and environmental policy, progresses to intermediate-level programs integrating science and society, and culminates in advanced work such as independent research or a capstone project. This structured yet flexible approach ensures that students build a coherent body of knowledge while allowing for a deeper study of interdisciplinary connections.

Evergreen has designed Paths to meet the needs of specific student audiences. Full-time Paths, consisting primarily of 14-16-credit coordinated studies programs offered during the day on the Olympia campus, appeal most directly to traditional students pursuing their degrees full-time. Part-time Paths are tailored for adult learners who are aiming to advance their careers, explore new fields, or enhance their professional skills. These paths provide pathways to a degree for schedule bound students, who may wish to study part-time or to learn on-line. The Native Pathways Program (NPP) is an interdisciplinary program that offers programs and courses that blend Indigenous and Western pedagogies and prepares students for careers in social services, public service, Tribal governance, education, and other humanities and social science fields. Paths at Evergreen's Tacoma site, based in the historic Hilltop neighborhood, offers an interdisciplinary curriculum that fosters critical thinking and leadership by connecting diverse fields of study to real-world challenges. Tacoma also provides an Early Childhood Education Path, which provides a culturally and linguistically responsive education, preparing students for early childhood education certification after graduation.

Details about how Paths are created and structured are described in more detail in C.2.

Evergreen awards degrees and certificates that are recognized and respected by employers, graduate schools, and professional organizations. Our degrees and certificates are based on established academic fields and aligned with traditional divisions but are structured to create interdisciplinary connections and encourage students to bridge these fields to create unique, holistic educational experiences. Degrees at Evergreen are awarded upon students' successful completion of the [degree requirements](#) and fulfillment of the college-wide student learning outcomes: [Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#). Student fulfillment of the Six Expectations is supported by advising and tailored curriculum. Undergraduate students earn a [Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree](#), which can be complemented with specialized [academic certificates](#) that demonstrate proficiency in specific areas of study. Evergreen's graduate programs, the [Master of Environmental Studies \(MES\)](#), [Master's in Teaching \(MiT\)](#), and [Master of Public Administration \(MPA\)](#), further exemplify our commitment to providing advanced, career-oriented education.

STANDARD 1.C.1 EXHIBITS

[Coordinated Studies Programs](#)

[Evergreen's Paths of Study](#)

[Degree Requirements](#)

[Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#)

[Academic and Professional Certificates](#)

[Master of Environmental Studies \(MES\)](#)

[Master's in Teaching \(MiT\)](#)

[Master of Public Administration \(MPA\)](#)

1.C.2 Outcomes: Credit and Degrees

The institution awards credit, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based on student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.

As described in 1.C.1, the primary vehicle for integrating breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis at Evergreen is through our distinctive [coordinated studies programs](#). Unlike traditional universities where students take multiple disconnected courses each term, Evergreen students typically engage in half- or full-time integrated programs, often spanning multiple quarters. These programs are organized around themes, questions, or problems that naturally draw from multiple disciplines. Rather than fragmenting knowledge into separate course containers, coordinated studies programs create immersive learning communities where connections across disciplines are explicit and intentional. This structure inherently promotes synthesis of learning as students apply multiple perspectives to complex questions. Year-long coordinated studies programs provide developmental structures for depth in specific areas, while thematically organized programs ensure breadth across ways of knowing. This approach creates coherent, planned learning experiences within single curricular offerings.

Paths: Guiding Students from Breadth to Depth

Evergreen's interdisciplinary undergraduate [Paths](#) serve as a key mechanism for guiding students from broad exploratory studies to deep, focused inquiry. Paths provide structured yet flexible trajectories within interdisciplinary areas, allowing students to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines while progressing toward mastery. Each Path is designed to scaffold learning, beginning with introductory concepts and progressing to advanced applications, ensuring students engage in a sequenced and cumulative educational experience. This model allows for both breadth—exposing students to a variety of disciplines—and depth—encouraging deep engagement within a chosen area of study. Synthesis occurs through integrative projects, capstone experiences, and interdisciplinary seminars that require students to apply their learning in complex, real-world contexts.

Paths begin with foundational programs that introduce students to key concepts, methods, and questions within the interdisciplinary area. As students progress towards their degrees, they engage with increasingly advanced and specialized programs, culminating in capstone experiences that synthesize learning across disciplines. The intentional sequencing within Paths supports students in building upon previous learning while the interdisciplinary nature of programs facilitates synthesis across subject areas.

Importantly, while Paths provide structure, they maintain Evergreen's commitment to student agency. Students may follow a single Path, combine elements from multiple Paths, or design their own educational trajectory through our fields of study with faculty guidance. This flexibility allows students to pursue their unique interests while ensuring they develop the breadth, depth, and integrative capacities necessary for meaningful learning.

Curriculum and Program Development

Each academic year, Evergreen follows a structured cycle to update the curriculum two years in advance of registration. The college has annual retreats in the fall quarter which provides time for thematic cross-divisional faculty curricular planning time. Moreover, faculty develop and teach curriculum specifically associated with Paths as members of Curricular Area Teams, which meet several times each quarter. The college also sets aside time each quarter specifically for faculty to design and plan their team-taught coordinated studies programs. Student input into the curriculum design and development process can occur directly during quarterly academic fairs and through curricular planning and mentoring events that are scheduled a few times a year. While Faculty hold ultimate responsibility for curriculum planning, avenues for student input reflect the college's commitment to student-centered learning.

Faculty supporting each Path produce annual reports which address Path-level and institutional insights about student outcomes. Report findings are also used to adapt the curriculum to ensure good credit coverage at all levels. This collaborative planning ensures that, despite the absence of traditional distribution requirements, students have access to appropriately sequenced learning opportunities.

Academic certificates are established through a similar process. Faculty may propose new certificates through a certificate letter of intent process that is reviewed by the dean for publication. The assessment of certificates comes through an iterative process involving the faculty and dean.

Similarly, a process has been developed for faculty to propose new graduate programs.

To ensure appropriate representation of breadth, depth, and sequencing in the college's offerings, Evergreen employs regular administrative oversight. Curriculum deans continuously monitor seat availability, disciplinary coverage, educational level, and student demand, and adapt as necessary.

Individual Learning Contracts and Student-Originated Study

Complementing the coordinated studies curriculum, Evergreen offers robust options for individualized learning through learning contracts and student-originated study. These options are particularly valuable for advanced students pursuing in-depth work in specialized areas.

Individual Learning Contracts (ILCs) allow students to design focused studies with faculty support, addressing specific learning outcomes that may not be currently available in the coordinated studies offerings. Students must articulate their learning objectives and the activities they will engage in to reach them. The flexibility offered by ILCs helps bridge any gaps between a student's academic interests and the current curriculum, particularly at the advanced level.

For students with similar interests, loosely affiliated study groups called Student-Originated Study or "Undergraduate Research in..." provide collaborative frameworks for independent work. These structures work similarly to ILCs but increase peer support and community, while still honoring individual learning goals and providing rich capstone experiences.

Through these multiple, interconnected approaches, Evergreen ensures that student learning reflects appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis while maintaining our commitment to student agency and self-directed learning.

Clear Learning Outcomes and Consistent Assessment Practices

Course and Program Learning Outcomes

All academic offerings at Evergreen – whether full-time interdisciplinary programs, courses, or Independent Learning Contracts – have clearly articulated learning outcomes that are communicated to students and form the basis for assessment.

Faculty develop and publish syllabi and learning agreements for all courses and programs, as specified in Article 6.3.2 of the [faculty collective bargaining agreement](#). In an effort to provide consistency across the curriculum, the college provides syllabus templates through its Canvas LMS, which include explicitly stated program or course learning outcomes. These templates are intended to provide consistency across the curriculum while allowing for the disciplinary and pedagogical diversity that is central to Evergreen's mission. Syllabi should include specific, measurable learning outcomes that align with program-level goals, a clear explanation of how these outcomes will be assessed, and how outcomes relate to broader educational goals, including Evergreen's Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate (described below).

Faculty regularly review and refine learning outcomes to ensure they reflect current disciplinary standards, pedagogical best-practices, and institutional priorities.

Credit Policy and Learning Assessment

Evergreen's [narrative evaluation policy](#) for awarding credit, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, explicitly connects credit award to demonstrated achievement of learning outcomes rather than simply time spent in class. The policy states that credit is awarded based on evidence of significant learning related to stated program or course outcomes, completion of work that meets college-level standards, demonstration of growth in relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities, and active engagement with the learning community.

This policy ensures that credits reflect meaningful learning rather than mere course completion.

Institutional Learning Outcomes: The Six Expectations

In addition to course and program level learning outcomes, Evergreen has established institutional learning outcomes articulated through the [Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#). These expectations represent the core capacities the college believes all students should develop, regardless of their specific area of study:

1. **Articulate and assume responsibility for your own work:** Students assume responsibility for setting and reaching their learning goals, using resources that are provided, and contributing fully to the learning environment.
2. **Participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society:** Students develop the ability to work effectively with others across differences and contribute to collective efforts.
3. **Communicate creatively and effectively:** Students learn to express ideas clearly and persuasively in multiple media and for various audiences.
4. **Demonstrate integrative, independent, and critical thinking:** Students learn to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from multiple sources and perspectives.
5. **Apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems:** Students develop diverse methodological approaches to addressing complex questions.
6. **As a culmination of your education, demonstrate depth, breadth, and synthesis of learning and the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning:** Students integrate their learning experiences into a coherent whole and understand its implications.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Six Expectations of Assessment of Learning (SEAL) instrument provides a comprehensive approach to evaluating student achievement of these institutional learning outcomes. The SEAL plan includes faculty assessment of samples of student work based on students learning specific outcomes addressed in these assignments and relating to the six expectations. Faculty report on these assessments using a common rubric. Students also self-assess using the same rubric for these learning outcomes. Moreover, they regularly reflect on their progress toward the Six Expectations through self-evaluations and Academic Statements.

The SEAL instrument provides both qualitative and quantitative data about student learning, allowing for continuous improvement of curriculum and pedagogy. More detail about SEAL is included in 1.C.6.

Transcripts That Document Learning Outcomes

Narrative Evaluations

Evergreen's transcript, which is based on narrative evaluations rather than grades, provides detailed information about what students have learned and how they have demonstrated that learning.

For each program or course, faculty write comprehensive evaluations that include:

- A Program description: Detailed information about the content, methods, and learning goals of the program.
- Credit equivalencies: Translation of interdisciplinary work into conventional disciplinary categories (e.g., "4 credits in environmental biology, 4 credits in environmental policy").
- Evaluation of Learning Outcomes: For each student, specific description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities the student demonstrated in relation to the program learning outcomes, including examples of the student's work that demonstrated achievement.

- Growth over time: For multi-quarter programs, the evaluations typically include a summative assessment of the student's development throughout the program.

These narrative evaluations provide rich information about student learning in a way that grades cannot convey. They describe in detail what students learned and how they demonstrated that learning. This approach benefits students by providing specific feedback that supports continued learning, recognizing diverse forms of achievement beyond test performance, documenting skills and capacities valued by employers and graduate schools, and encouraging student cooperation and reflection on learning rather than competition for grades.

Student Self-Evaluations

Complementing faculty evaluations, students write their own self-evaluations for each program or course, which they may include in their transcript. In their self-evaluations students identify the learning outcomes they believe they have achieved, providing evidence from their own work to support these claims. They reflect on their learning process and growth, connect current learning to previous experiences and future goals, and develop metacognitive awareness about their own learning. Through regular practice in articulating their own learning outcomes, students develop the ability to recognize, assess, and communicate what they have learned — a valuable skill for lifelong learning and professional development.

The Academic Statement

The Academic Statement is a unique feature of Evergreen's approach to documenting learning outcomes. Each year, students write or revise a reflective essay about their education, culminating in a final statement required for graduation.

The Academic Statement serves multiple purposes. Students integrate learning from different programs and experiences into a coherent narrative consistent with their emerging academic plan. Students identify and describe the most significant learning outcomes they have achieved. Students explain the rationale behind their academic decisions, connecting them to their goals and values – and ideally the six expectations of an Evergreen graduate. The final Academic Statement appears at the beginning of the student's transcript, providing context for the learning documented there.

STANDARD 1.C.2 EXHIBITS

[Narrative Evaluations](#)

[Academic Statement](#)

[Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

- [Credit, Evaluations and Standing](#)
- [Student Self-Evaluations](#)
- [Academic Program Coordinators, Planning Unit Coordinators, Directors and Chairpersons](#)
- [Curricular Areas](#)
- [Curriculum Planning](#)

[Academic Offerings](#)

[Academic Catalog](#)

1.C.3 Publication of Learning Outcomes

The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.

Evergreen fosters academic transparency by publishing expected learning outcomes for all degree programs and certificates it offers. These outcomes are designed to ensure that students acquire the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with their field of study.

Information on Programs and Courses

Evergreen provides comprehensive information on its academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines for completion. Undergraduate degree requirements are detailed on the college's website, while the course catalog offers descriptions of coordinated studies programs and individual courses. Graduate degree requirements are outlined in the respective student handbooks for the Master of Environmental Studies (MES), Master of Public Administration (MPA), and Master in Teaching (MiT) programs.

Learning Outcomes

The institution defines expected learning outcomes through the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate, which guide the interdisciplinary undergraduate programs. These expectations are supported by the Five Foci, which articulate the institutional and pedagogical strategies designed to help students meet these goals. Rather than prescribing rigid graduation requirements, Evergreen emphasizes student responsibility and authentic engagement as key to academic success. In graduate programs, specific learning outcomes are detailed in the syllabus for each course.

Syllabi and Learning Agreements

To further clarify expectations, both undergraduate and graduate students receive syllabi and program agreements that outline course-specific outcomes. Faculty are required to make these documents available each quarter through the learning management system, Canvas. For students pursuing certificates, Evergreen provides clearly defined completion and sequential course requirements on each certificate's webpage.

Course Sequences

While undergraduate pathways are highly individualized and do not follow a fixed sequence or timeline—except for the Bachelor of Science, which ensures consistent upper-level science offerings—some structured guidance is available in specific areas such as the Native Pathways Program and Liberal Studies at Tacoma. In contrast, certificate programs often require sequential course enrollment; detailed requirements are indicated on each certificate page.

Graduate programs, including MES, MPA, and MiT, provide detailed course sequences and projected timelines for completion on their respective websites. Additionally, the MES and MPA handbooks include planning worksheets tailored for both full-time and part-time students. Each graduate program articulates course sequences and projected timelines to completion on their program web pages, listed in the exhibits below.

STANDARD 1.C.3 EXHIBITS

[Undergraduate Degree Requirements](#)

[Native Pathways Program](#)

[Liberal Studies at Tacoma](#)

[Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#)

[PaCE Certificates](#)

[Master of Environmental Studies \(MES\)](#)

[Master in Teaching \(MiT\)](#)

[Master of Public Administration \(MPA\)](#)

[MES Student Handbook](#)

[MiT Student Handbook](#)

[MPA Student Handbook](#)

1.C.4 Admission and Completion Requirements

The institution's admission and completion or graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.

Evergreen is committed to transparency and student success, ensuring that its admission and completion requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to both students and the public. These standards are outlined in the college catalog, website, and admissions materials, providing prospective and current students with the information needed to make informed academic decisions.

Admission

The college has established admission requirements for freshmen, transfer, international, nontraditional, returning, and graduate students, and those requirements guide the enrollment of students at Evergreen.

Qualifications, processes, and deadlines for undergraduate admissions are specifically outlined on the [Admissions and Aid](#) page of the college website. Admission for undergraduates is governed by [a set of state standards](#) developed by the higher education community through the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). These standards focus on a set of core course requirements, [college academic distribution requirements](#), minimum high school GPA and [submission of standardized test scores](#) (either SAT or ACT). Each applicant undergoes a review process consistent with statewide minimum admissions standards for freshmen, transfer, returning and non-traditional students.

Graduate program qualifications for admission vary by program - see "Admission Requirements" on each page below:

- [Master of Public Administration](#)
- [Master of Environmental Studies](#)
- [Master in Teaching](#)

All entering students are advised of their curricular options in the [catalog](#). Entering new students are required to participate in an [Academic Advising Planning Workshop](#) supported by [New Student Advising](#). Prerequisites for individual coordinated studies [programs](#) and courses are listed with the program description.

Faculty members assess student skills and knowledge in the context of student work within coordinated studies programs. They often advise students about connections between their interests and abilities with the requirements of future coordinated studies programs.

Graduate program administrators also advise students and provide them with information about program prerequisites and expectations.

Completion

Completion requirements vary by program and level. Evergreen defines and publishes information on academic programs and courses, including required course sequences, and the frequency of course offerings in the [college's catalog](#). The [Degree Requirements](#) page explains degree and program completion requirements and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress.

The catalog provides detailed coordinated studies program and course descriptions. Coordinated studies program and course syllabi and covenants provide additional detail regarding outcomes and expectations.

For graduate programs (see 1.C.9 for further detail), each of the three program handbooks addresses specific information regarding graduation requirements:

- [MES Student Handbook](#)
- [MiT Student Handbook](#)
- [MPA Student Handbook](#)

STANDARD 1.C.4 EXHIBITS

[Graduate Admissions and Aid](#)

[Master in Teaching \(MiT\)](#)

[MIT Handbook](#)

[Master of Public Administration \(MPA\)](#)

[MPA Handbook](#)

[Master of Environmental Studies \(MES\)](#)

[MES Handbook](#)

[Undergraduate Admissions](#)

[Degree Requirements](#)

[Academic Statement](#)

[Graduation Procedures](#)

[Transfer Students](#)

1.C.5 Assessment System for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assessing student learning, and improving instructional programs.

Institutional Assessment of Quality of Learning

Historically, the primary method for institutional assessment of undergraduate learning outcomes had been the Transcript Review. Every five years a team of faculty, staff, and students assessed approximately 15% of the transcripts from the last graduating class. Transcripts were scored using a rubric derived from the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate.

The Transcript Review provided a wealth of mostly qualitative information about the degree to which Evergreen graduates meet the Six Expectations. However, it was a retrospective review that offered limited insight into precisely how and when, during students' Evergreen careers, each expectation was met—or not. Moreover, it did not produce information useful in providing timely interventions to support any students who may not be as successful in meeting the Six Expectations.

The last Transcript Review occurred in summer 2018. A significant goal of that review was to explore whether evidence of learning outcomes, intentional planning by the student, and clarity of articulation of learning and academic choices were strengthened by the then-new Academic Statement transcript document and its supporting processes. While the outcome of this review was generally favorable regarding the evidence for meeting the goals outlined above, the college has shifted from this indirect measure of student learning outcomes. Noted below in Section 1.C.6, in response to accreditors, Evergreen made plans in academic year 2020-21 to implement a new method of assessing how well students were meeting the Six Expectations.

Evergreen also evaluates the quality of learning in its programs through a range of ongoing assessment activities. These feature regular administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Evergreen New Student Survey, the Evergreen Student Experience Survey, and the One-Year Alumni Survey. Additional evaluation methods include focused, ad hoc efforts like topical focus groups, workforce placement analysis, alumni outcomes by field of study or program, National Clearinghouse analyses, and student work evaluations.

Role of faculty in establishing curricula, assessing student learning, and improving instructional programs

Establishing curricula

Evergreen's undergraduate curriculum is intentionally self-renewing rather than static, with a mix of repeating and emergent offerings. A critical tension exists between curricular stability (helping students progress with assurance of introductory to advanced offerings) and flexibility (allowing Evergreen to be responsive to faculty discernment, community partners, and student demand).

Since 2017, Evergreen has established Paths of Study for the daytime undergraduate curriculum to provide that curricular stability while allowing for Evergreen's characteristic evolving curriculum. These have replaced the former Planning Units. Regular Olympia daytime undergraduate faculty are

contractually obligated to “make at least a minor commitment to an approved Path in the Curricular Area Team to which they belong, by teaching in the Path curriculum 25% fulltime equivalent (FTE) over each five-year period (CBA Article 6.4.1(a).” Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) program faculty also have path commitments.

As detailed in Sections 1.C.1 and 1.C.2, faculty play an integral role in establishing and renewing Evergreen’s curriculum. In some areas of the curriculum, the faculty role in establishing curriculum operates under extra constraints. For example, in the Professional and Continuing Education certificate programs, there is the need to support published certificate curriculum, which may have been initiated in response to market research. Yet, even in such instances, development of the curricula quickly passes to faculty whose expertise is appropriate to the new offerings.

Assessing student learning

Evergreen faculty assess students’ work regularly during their teaching and are required to do so as outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) (Article 6.3.1 (c) (d) (e), 6.3.2 (e) (f) (g)). Faculty engage with student work in a variety of ways: providing detailed feedback on writing assignments, offering guidance on projects at different stages of development, administering and evaluating quizzes and exams using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and facilitating labs and skills-building workshops. They also meet with students individually and provide feedback on self-evaluations and Academic Statements. As students progress through their program, they receive regular feedback from faculty regarding their progress toward the learning outcomes articulated in the program or course syllabus. This ongoing exchange allows faculty to identify and support students’ areas of strength while addressing opportunities for growth.

Faculty Assessments of Students.

At the end of a program, faculty assess student learning through a comprehensive evaluation process. Whereas most colleges and universities rely on letter grades to measure student achievement – culminating in a numerical grade point average – Evergreen employs narrative evaluations. These detailed assessments, along with a student-authored Academic Statement, comprise the official transcript. The practice of narrative evaluation is a foundational norm across the college’s academic programs and is also reflected in administrative and staff practices. Many faculty members facilitate self-evaluation workshops, guiding students in reflective analysis of their intellectual development within their academic programs. Some of these workshops are held at the end of each quarter, while others are integrated periodically throughout the term. The structure and timing of evaluation activities are determined by the specific design of each program of study. Once again, faculty articulate program learning outcomes and credit criteria in syllabi and community agreements. Student evaluations are aligned with these outcomes, and credit is awarded based on the program’s relevant fields of study.

Faculty evaluations of students are composed of three parts:

1. *The description section:* This portion documents the program or course’s content, activities, and assignments. It is the same for every student in their respective program or course of study. For Individual Learning Contracts (ILCs) and Internship Learning Contracts, faculty write personalized descriptions for each quarter of study. ILC descriptions are based on a

student's proposed activities submitted at the beginning of the quarter. These proposals are reviewed and evaluated by a dean and the proposed faculty sponsor prior to contract approval.

2. *The faculty evaluation of achievement section:* This component is crafted for each student and outlines their accomplishments, strengths, and development within the context of the program's content. It serves as the central narrative of the evaluation, addressing the extent to which the student mastered the program material and participated in its activities. The narrative may also highlight a student's contributions to the program community and, when applicable, detail the specific focus of their individual work.
3. *The course equivalencies section:* This part indicates the number of quarter hour credits the student has earned, along with the specific fields of study the credits were awarded. These equivalencies document credit earned in both traditional academic disciplines and interdisciplinary areas of study.

Student Assessment of Learning Outcomes. Students' self-assessment is an integral component to Evergreen's pedagogical model and occurs throughout the academic program delivery. At the end of each quarter, students write a narrative self-evaluation that reflects on their learning and achievements. This self-evaluation, which faculty read and respond to, serves as a culminating assessment – functioning similarly to a final exam – and plays a central role in end-of-quarter evaluation conferences. In their own words, students articulate the breadth, depth, and highlights of their learning. While inclusion of self-evaluations in the official transcript is at the students' discretion, faculty are required to include all student self-evaluations in their teaching portfolios.

Student Assessment of Faculty. At the end of each quarter, students write narrative evaluations of their faculty. These evaluations provide students with an opportunity to reflect on and document the effectiveness of faculty in delivering course content and facilitating learning. They serve as a constructive mechanism for identifying both strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. Faculty members are required to keep these evaluations in their professional portfolios, which are reviewed during contract renewal, continuation, or conversion to permanent status. Anonymous submission of faculty evaluations is not permitted. Therefore, students may choose to submit their evaluations after credit has been posted rather than during the end-of-quarter evaluation conference. The writing center offers support for evaluation writing every quarter.

Faculty Assessment of Themselves and Each Other. Faculty teaching in teams are required to write narrative evaluations of themselves and their colleagues. This practice ensures that self-assessment and peer evaluation are part of the process used to assess student achievement of learning outcomes. Article 6 of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\) for 2023-25](#) outlines faculty responsibilities and includes:

6.1.3 Reflection. All faculty members are expected to write a self-evaluation at the end of each year including self-assessment in relation to the appropriate responsibilities outlined in this Article especially teaching well, meeting commitments, professional development, and service.

6.1.6 (g) Faculty are required to include in their portfolios "Comments and evaluations from other College faculty members, staff or students describing the faculty member's participation in College affairs."

6.3.2 (c) When teaching in teams, writing an evaluation of teaching colleagues at the end of each program. Collegial evaluations must address how well a colleague has met his/her responsibilities as outlined in this Article and must be exchanged with each team member before the beginning of the next academic year or sooner if needed for a faculty review.

These evaluations also become part of faculty member's professional portfolio.

Student feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with the quality of instruction provided by Evergreen faculty. According to the Spring 2024 Evergreen Student Experience Survey, students reported consistently positive experiences with faculty teaching and feedback. On a scale where 1 represents 'Very Dissatisfied' and 4 represents 'Very Satisfied,' the mean weighted scores were:

- Overall quality of instruction – 3.45
- Narrative evaluations by faculty – 3.44
- Quality of faculty feedback on student work – 3.34

These results suggest that students value both the instructional quality and the personalized feedback they receive as part of their academic experience.

Improving instructional programs

Faculty at Evergreen play an active role in the ongoing improvement of instructional programs. Faculty self-evaluations provide an annual opportunity for a reflexive praxis. In team-taught programs, peer review is embedded in the instructional process, occurring both informally through collaborative planning and delivery, and formally through the exchange of collegial evaluations. Additionally, regular classroom observations and portfolio reviews by deans or program directors – conducted in accordance with Articles 9 and 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (for regular and adjunct faculty, respectively) – offer further opportunities to enhance instructional quality. Faculty on continuing contracts also participate in a peer-led review of their work every five years.

The [Learning and Teaching Commons \(LTC\)](#) supports faculty in developing meaningful learning outcomes and effective assessment practices. It offers regular workshops, individual consultations for faculty designing new programs or courses, resources on assessment across disciplines, and opportunities for faculty to share successful strategies. The LTC also designs and solicits proposals for faculty development during their annual summer institutes. Through these efforts, the LTC fosters a culture of thoughtful, consistent assessment across the curriculum.

One notable new service offered by the Learning and Teaching Commons is [Community Reflection and Feedback on Teaching \(CRAFT\)](#). Unlike formal student evaluations, which occur only at the end of a course and are not anonymous, CRAFT provides mid-quarter, anonymous feedback through a structured, facilitated dialogue with students. This process allows faculty to make timely instructional adjustments based on student input throughout the program or course offering. .

Program Review

As part of a cycle of continuous improvement, Evergreen periodically engages in program review followed by programmatic changes and redesigns. These efforts are initiated by deans and program directors. However, program faculty play the central role conducting reviews, making assessments,

and providing recommendations. Examples of these reviews and their outcomes are provided in Sections 1.C.7 and 1.C.9.

STANDARD 1.C.5 EXHIBITS

[Narrative Evaluations](#)

[Academic Statement](#)

[Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

- [Credit, Evaluations and Standing](#)
- [Student Self-Evaluations](#)

[Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)

1.C.6 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/ or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

Background

Following the adoption of Evergreen’s institutional student learning outcomes—The Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate—in 2001, the college developed two primary assessment tools. First, the End-of-Program Review (EPR) was implemented. EPR aimed to gather data on which undergraduate coordinated studies programs *taught material* that helped students develop skills and knowledge in connection with the Six Expectations. Second, the Transcript Review- now retired- was designed to evaluate the extent to which individual students *met each expectation*. Conducted approximately every four years, this process involved a qualitative analysis of about 10% of transcripts from a recently graduated class. Under the Transcript Reviews process, a team of faculty and staff convened over two weeks during the summer to review and apply the rubric. They assessed how well each transcript demonstrated evidence of student achievement in relation to the Six Expectations.

The Transcript Review had several strengths. By using narrative evaluations within students’ transcripts, it leveraged qualitative assessments from those most familiar with students’ work- faculty and students themselves. Early application of the Transcript Review, which included transcripts from students who completed most of their studies prior to the adoption of the Six Expectations, revealed that students were substantially meeting the Six Expectations. This affirmed that the Six Expectations accurately represented Evergreen’s existing teaching and learning goals. Further, the process brought increased attention to transcript content and faculty evaluation practices. The attention prompted the development of new narrative evaluation guidelines in 2004 and eventually the implementation of the Academic Statement as a [graduation requirement](#).

The Transcript Review had limitations as an instrument for assessment. First, the Transcript Review relied on faculty evaluations of student achievement across entire programs or courses, student self-evaluations, and program/course descriptions. It did not incorporate student work from specific assignments. Second, the Transcript Review was conducted during the summer following the graduation of the students whose transcripts were analyzed. This timing prevented prompt interventions for those who may have been falling short of meeting one or more of the Six Expectations. Third, only a sample of transcripts was included in the analysis, limiting the comprehensiveness of the findings.

In the 2020-21 academic year, in response to accreditor feedback, developed a new approach to assess how well students were meeting the Six Expectations. This initiative, known as the Six Expectations Assessment of Learning (SEAL), was designed to evaluate student achievement of the Six Expectations using direct evidence from their work and to be implemented by all faculty throughout the academic year. In summer 2021, a team of Evergreen faculty and staff developed the initial SEAL protocol and instrument.

Description Of Protocol and Instrument

During the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years, 22 faculty members piloted the SEAL protocol and instrument. Following analysis of the pilot results and additional faculty workshops—which indicated both the feasibility and benefits of scaling up and collecting more data—the SEAL instrument was implemented college-wide in the 2023–24 academic year. During this implementation phase, all faculty teaching undergraduate courses were expected to apply the SEAL instrument to one assignment in a single program or course. For implementation purposes, faculty selected three to five learning outcomes from the provided list. Rather than distributing these goals across all Six Expectations, faculty were encouraged to choose those most relevant to the selected assignment.

SEAL is a clear advance over the Transcript Review in two key areas. First, SEAL directly evaluates student work, offering a more authentic measure of learning than the indirect assessments based on faculty and student reports used in the Transcript Review. Second, SEAL is designed to support timely feedback and adjustments by faculty, enabling them to respond proactively if students are not making adequate progress toward meeting the Six Expectations.

Findings:

To meaningfully evaluate how well Evergreen is fulfilling its mission through student achievement of the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate, the following questions must be addressed:

1. Access and Opportunity: Is the college providing sufficient opportunities in our curriculum for students to develop competencies and make progress towards each of these learning outcomes?
2. Breadth of Learning: Over the course of their studies leading to their degree, do students avail themselves of sufficient opportunities to make and demonstrate their progress towards each outcome?
3. Achievement: When given opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes through direct assessment, what is their level of achievement?

This section focuses on the results of the Six Expectations Assessment of Learning (SEAL), which directly measures student achievement of Evergreen's learning outcomes (point 3). For context, access and opportunity and breadth of learning will also be briefly addressed. To assess access and opportunity, leadership used the End of Program Review (EPR). EPR is a survey that maps academic offerings to specific learning outcomes and evaluates depth of coverage. To assess breadth, leadership employed the Transcript Review, which examines a sample of student transcripts to assess the range of learning and indirectly, student achievement. Both the End of Program Review and Transcript Review require substantial institutional and faculty effort. With SEAL now providing a direct measure of student achievement, the college plans to adopt more streamlined approaches for assessing opportunity and breadth. Specifically for measuring students' access and opportunity to meet learning outcomes, leadership will integrate curriculum mapping into the curriculum approval and syllabus submission processes. Further, the college will be able to monitor the breadth of student learning through curriculum mapping coupled with enrollment data from Tableau.

Six Expectations Assessment of Learning (SEAL)

As described above, SEAL directly measures individual student learning through specific assignments aligned with faculty-selected outcomes. Students can self-assess using the same rubric as faculty.

For reference, the six expectations are:

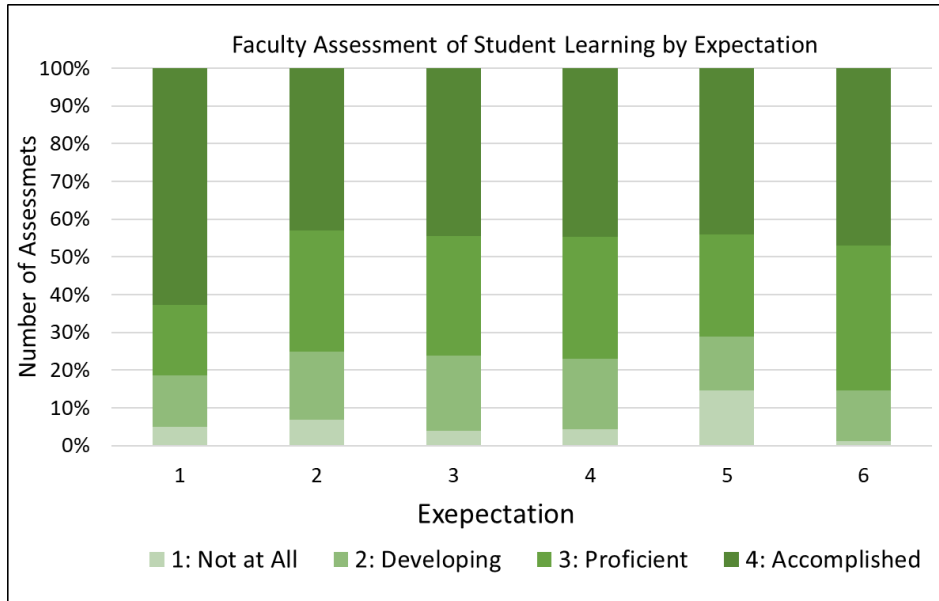
1. Articulate and assume responsibility for your own work.
2. Participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society.
3. Communicate creatively and effectively.
4. Demonstrate integrative, independent, and critical thinking.
5. Apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines.
6. As a culmination of your education, demonstrate depth, breadth, and synthesis of learning and the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning.

Results

Faculty Assessment

Figure 4 shows the distribution of faculty-assessed scores. For all six expectations, at least 70% of the student learning outcomes assessed were at a level of proficient (3) or accomplished (4). Except for expectation 5, fewer than 5% were evaluated as making no progress (1). Perhaps not surprisingly, the strongest expectation for students was expectation 1: *Articulate and assume responsibility for your own work*. In contrast, expectation 5: *Apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines* had the highest proportion (30%) of assessments that showed developing or no progress. A deeper analysis of these assessments shows that students most often demonstrated developing proficiency in quantitative reasoning outcomes, particularly among those enrolled in introductory social science courses. This is not surprising, but further data collection and analysis are warranted to determine if this is a pattern or an isolated case.

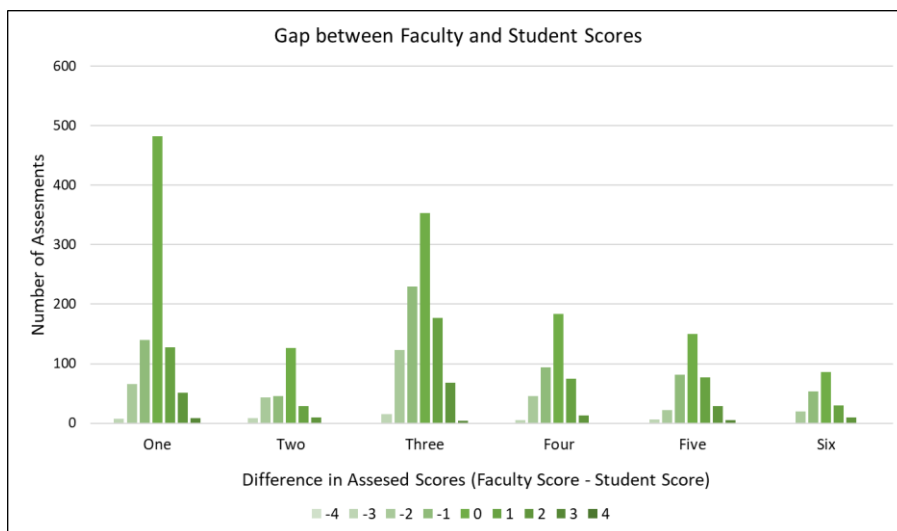
Figure 4. Faculty Assessment of Student Learning by Expectation



Student Assessment

Figure 5 compares student self-assessments of their achievements with faculty’s evaluations, showing the difference for each expectation (faculty score minus student score). Students make very similar assessments as their faculty, with the most common result being identical scores. There is a slight bias towards students assessing their own achievement as higher than that of faculty, except for expectation 5. The most substantial discrepancy was for expectation 2: *Participate Collaboratively and Responsibly in our Diverse Society*.

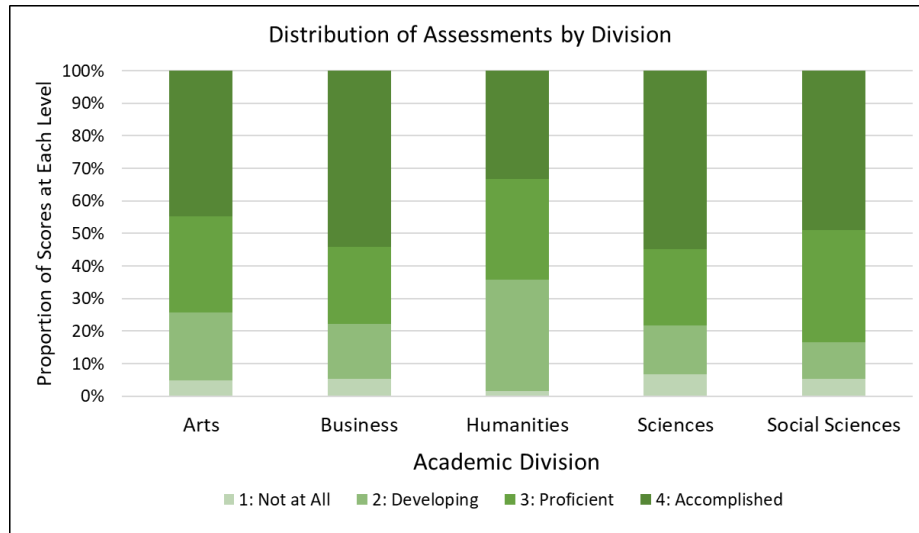
Figure 5. Difference between faculty and student self-assessments for each expectation



Comparison of Faculty Assessment by Academic Division

Figure 6 shows a comparison of the distribution of scores by academic division. All divisions assess student learning outcomes at a high level, with the humanities showing a higher percentage of students at the developing level.

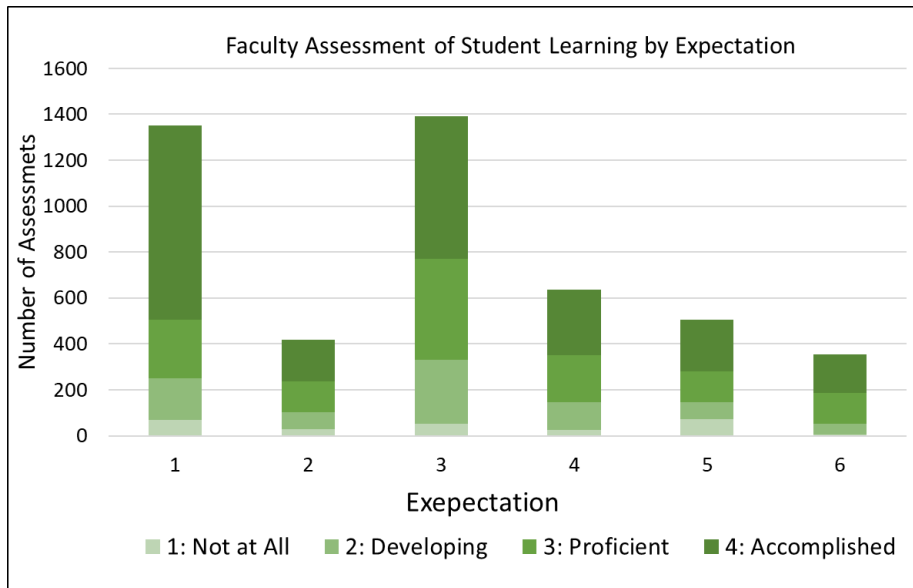
Figure 6. Comparison of mean scores by Academic Division



Distribution Of Number of Assessments by Expectation

Figure 7 shows the number of assessed learning outcomes by expectation. Learning outcomes associated with expectations 1 and 3 are more frequently chosen and evaluated by faculty than other expectations. This distribution aligns with Evergreen’s pedagogical approach, in which most academic offerings provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of expectations 1 (*Articulate and Assume Responsibility for Your Own Work*) and 3 (*Communicate Creatively and Effectively*). In contrast, expectations 2, 4, and 5 tend to vary by discipline and are less consistently integrated. Expectation 6, a summative outcome reflecting cumulative learning, is typically assessed only in advanced coursework.

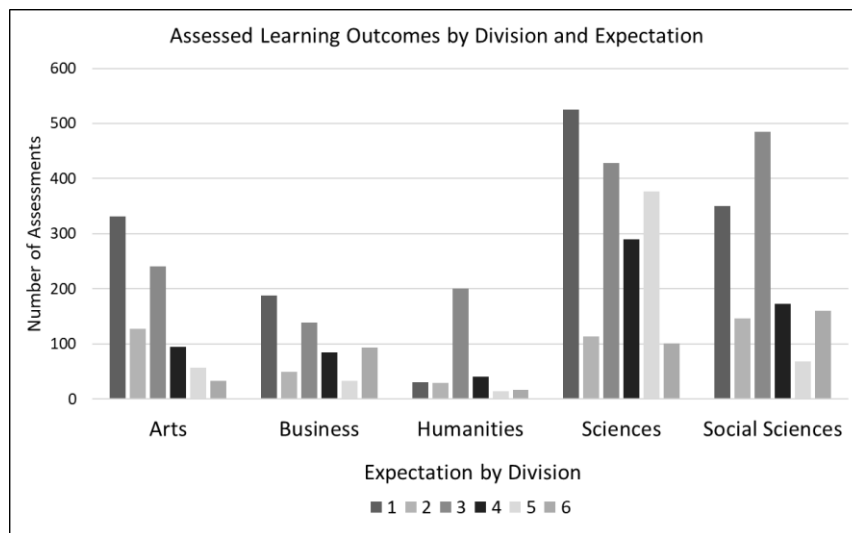
Figure 7. Number of Assessments for each Expectation



Distribution of the Number of Assessments by Academic Division

Figure 8 shows the distribution of the number of student learning outcomes assessed for each expectation by division. The distribution reflects that science and social science faculty participate more with the SEAL instrument than other faculty. Science faculty were more likely than their peers were to assess expectations 4 (*Demonstrate integrative, independent, critical thinking*) and 5 (*Apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines*), both of which are routinely assessed using quantitative methods. As might be expected, humanities faculty placed the most emphasis on Expectation 3: *Communicate creatively and effectively*.

Figure 8. Distribution of Assessed Learning Outcomes by Academic Division and Expectation



Conclusions

Overall, the SEAL instrument indicates that students are performing well on the outcomes assessed. It provides a direct measure of student achievement on specific assignments aligned with targeted learning outcomes. In this way, SEAL enables faculty to evaluate student progress when instruction is explicitly tied to those outcomes. However, it does not capture the extent to which all students engage with opportunities to achieve all outcomes—an area addressed by the complementary approaches (Transcript Review, EPR) discussed above.

Assessment of the SEAL instrument

The college plans to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the SEAL instrument to identify areas for improvement, ensuring it is fully effective in informing continuous improvement.

Initial observations:

- The instrument allows faculty to choose three to five learning goals from a large set, resulting in uneven data coverage- some goals are sufficiently assessed, while others receive little to no attention, limiting generalizability. Additionally, the learning goals vary in their effectiveness as indicators of student progress toward meeting the Six Expectations.
- Currently, there is no systematic way to ensure that a student assessed with SEAL over four years would be evaluated on all six expectations.
- Although 51 faculty participated in the SEAL assessment, this represents less than one-third of the faculty. More participation, with balanced coverage across the expectations, is necessary for a comprehensive and disaggregated analysis of student achievement. Technical issues concerning the instrument may have suppressed the response rate.
- Both the quantity and quality of data is needed to disaggregate on several measures:
 - Class standing: Disaggregating these summative assessments by class standing will enable us to differentiate student achievement and determine if students improve as they approach graduation.
 - Equity Gaps and Student Success: Understanding whether there are significant differences in achievement based on factors such as income levels, sex, or race is crucial to evaluating how effectively Evergreen education addresses and closes systemic gaps in student success.
- The current instrument is cumbersome to administer and evaluate. Leadership will need to develop a more streamlined instrument that is integrated with our other systems in the future.

Areas for improvement with the SEAL instrument include both response rate and the overall utility of the results. To address these issues, a group of Evergreen faculty and administrators will meet in summer 2025 to develop a plan for enhancing the SEAL instrument. The goals of this plan will include refining the instrument to ensure the learning goals measured are strongly correlated with student achievement of the Six Expectations, and that the data college will provide generalizable conclusions. As part of this initiative, the Academic Dean for Interdisciplinary Arts & Science Curriculum will collaborate with faculty to review and analyze existing data.

STANDARD 1.C.6 EXHIBITS

[Our Learning Approach](#)

[Degree Requirements](#)

[Narrative Evaluations](#)

[Academic Statement](#)

[Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#)

1.C.7 Assessment Results to Improve Learning Outcomes

The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

The college continuously reports the results of its assessments to key stakeholders and decision-makers. Results from the pilot phase of the SEAL project were shared in various forums, including faculty meetings and planning retreats. In Spring 2025, results from the instrument's first full deployment were shared with faculty via email, during a meeting, and are being incorporated into the summer 2025 Path Planning Institutes. The following sections outline how assessment efforts have been specifically used to guide academic and learning support planning across various programs.

Olympia – Main Campus

First Year Experience – Greener Foundations

Evergreen's first-year student success support program, Greener Foundations, was developed in Fall 2019 with co-leadership from Academic and Student Affairs. Greener Foundations has undergone iterative improvements each year, enhancing curriculum content, balancing workload, and strengthening staffing support. The [Greener Foundations assessment and program review](#)-led by the Greener Foundations Fellow (Cynthia Kennedy) and the Assessment Fellow (Dr. Clarissa Dirks)- resulted in a program redesign to better meet the co-curricular needs and academic interests of incoming students. In Fall 2025, Greener Foundations will shift to a 2-credit, 1-quarter model. This redesign has four key goals: (1) focus on the most relevant and engaging components for students, (2) reduce its impact on the broader undergraduate curriculum, (3) target participation to those who would benefit most, and (4) simplify faculty staffing.

Since the mid-cycle report, the need for Green Foundations student success data has been clearly recognized. With strong support from the Office of Institutional Research, Greener Foundations now has streamlined access to a real-time dashboard that provides valuable data on student credit accumulation each quarter. The program also collects survey student success data disaggregated by Greener Foundations attendance, including: (1) credits earned by first-year students, (2) retention rates from fall to winter and fall to fall, (3) academic topics of greatest interest or need to incoming students, and (iv) co-curricular content that supports student wellness and sense of belonging. The Greener Foundations fellow is responsible for using both formal and informal assessments to adapt the curriculum annually and to collaborate with the Dean in supporting the program's ongoing improvement.

Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS) is part of our Olympia campus undergraduate curriculum, designed primarily around full-time, in-person, coordinated studies programs. It represents most of our undergraduate enrollment. The college has engaged in ongoing assessment to modify the curriculum in response to student needs and to support the achievement of our learning outcomes in several ways:

- The curriculum planning process and catalog communication has changed to better support students in their short- and long-term academic planning for breadth and depth, aligning with Expectation 6. Faculty now include **anticipated credit equivalencies and the level in the posted curriculum**. This change enables students to more easily track how they will engage in the breadth of their curricular interests and complete pre-requisites for upper division curriculum as they progress toward advanced study.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the college temporarily increased the number of academic programs -designated as “all-level” – open to students from first-year through senior standing. This allowed for greater curricular flexibility and more choices for all students. As the pandemic subsided, it became evident that traditionally aged first-year students benefit from more intentional, developmentally appropriate support. In response, the number of all-level programs available to first-year students was limited, and the focus shifted toward expanding dedicated First-Year (FY) and First-Year–Sophomore (FY-SO) programs. Since 2021, these programs have been designed specifically to meet the needs of incoming students by emphasizing a sense of belonging, building foundational academic skills, and aligning with our first-year student success course, Greener Foundations. They also intentionally incorporate broad general education goals to ensure students gain exposure to a wide range of disciplines during their first year. While the college continues to offer some all-level programs – particularly in areas where advanced or specialized study is in demand – this more targeted program design is part of a larger, strategic effort to support and retain our first-year students. Enrollment in First-Year (FY) and Lower-Division (FY–SO) programs has grown significantly. By providing a more deliberate and phased on-ramp to college, these programs help students navigate their academic journey with greater confidence and support. This structured approach appears to be contributing to the college’s improved first-year retention rates over the past four years. (See Section 1.D.1 on Greener Foundations for more detail.)
- To better support student success in the sciences and achievement of Expectation 5: *Apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines*, leadership has made key changes to the Integrated Natural Science (INS) program. As the college’s long-standing pathway to upper-division study in the sciences, INS traditionally combined general biology, general chemistry, and either a third science or introductory mathematics (e.g., pre-calculus or calculus). Over time, it was observed that students entering INS with stronger mathematical preparation were more consistently successful. In response, faculty have developed preparatory programs such as *Speaking of the Brain* and *Chemistry Counts*, which integrate essential quantitative reasoning and mathematical skills into introductory science content. Students who complete these preparatory programs are better positioned to thrive in INS. In addition,

the INS curriculum has been stabilized to consistently include mathematics – specifically statistics and pre-calculus – as a foundational component, reinforcing students’ ability to engage deeply with general biology and chemistry. Faculty teams regularly assess and revise the structure and delivery of these programs to ensure they remain responsive to student needs and aligned with institutional learning goals.

- There is ongoing work to ensure that students understand the specific values of breadth and depth as part of our Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate. To this end, the college is developing the web presence of Paths, specifically via our new “Path Advising pages” . These pages are designed to support current students understand both our emphasis on developing breadth as a foundation for depth, and the specific courses, programs, and independent learning opportunities available to support that development—whether through a pre-built path or one they design themselves. On a longer timescale, the full implementation of the SEAL instrument described in 1.C.6 positively impacts curriculum planning. Early data from the SEAL project focused on investigating which specific Expectations faculty-designed curriculum would best support students in learning. This information is being shared with faculty as part of Path-scale planning with the intent to influence curriculum relating to institutional learning outcomes in future curriculum. Over time, these closing-the-loop efforts will help faculty diversify the range of Six Expectations they support students in achieving. The ultimate goal is to provide students with more opportunities to meet the Six Expectations by the time they graduate.

Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE)

As mentioned in section the Preface, and in section 1.B.4, Evergreen’s Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) program was developed as a strategic response to the evolving needs of non-traditional students—particularly adults with some college credit but no degree, who are often constrained by work and family obligations and limited to part-time, evening, or weekend study. Building on the foundation of the former Evening and Weekend Studies (EWS) program, PaCE enhances the college’s ability to support student achievement of learning outcomes by introducing structured, stackable certificates and degree completion curriculum in learning pathways that provide depth in areas aligned with professional and career goals. Where EWS primarily offered broad liberal arts coursework without consistent avenues for progression in particular areas, PaCE provides ways to go from breadth to depth by establishing six defined academic Paths. Each Path provides coherent opportunities for students to progress in areas of their choice and develop concrete skills through academic certificates that can lead directly to employment, further study, or degree completion. These changes ensure that students who arrive with a foundation of prior academic or experiential breadth are able to engage in deeper, more sustained learning in areas that are personally and professionally meaningful.

In addition to serving non-traditional learners, PaCE courses also benefit traditionally aged undergraduates by expanding opportunities for academic breadth. Evening and weekend offerings in the arts, languages, and sciences enable students in the full-time, day-based coordinated studies programs to explore new disciplines and meet general education goals that might not be available within their primary programs. In this way, PaCE supports Evergreen’s mission to offer flexible, interdisciplinary education while also aligning with institutional learning outcomes,

including the development of breadth and depth of knowledge across fields. The program reflects Evergreen's commitment to adapting its curriculum to meet student needs, support diverse pathways to degree completion, and promote equitable access to high-quality education across the lifespan.

Tacoma

At Evergreen Tacoma, each student selects a Lyceum or seminar faculty advisor annually, often maintaining that relationship throughout their time at the college. This advising structure supports a cumulative evaluation process, which is formalized through one-on-one meetings held during the 5th and 10th weeks of each quarter. Year-long seminar meetings further enable faculty to provide ongoing feedback and write comprehensive evaluations based on sustained communication with students. Faculty also collaborate at the end of each quarter to discuss student progress, using these insights to refine curriculum, determine future annual themes, and adjust advanced coursework to better align with graduate school and career preparation goals.

Native Pathways Program

Faculty and leadership in the Native Pathways Program (NPP) collaborate on both formative and summative assessments to support continuous program improvement. Weekly and mid-term formative assessments—such as assignment-level evaluations using program-specific rubrics and student cohort surveys—provide timely feedback and help identify areas where additional support is needed. For example, when first- and second-year students showed a need for stronger research and writing skills, the curriculum was adjusted to include targeted instruction in these areas, supported by resources like the Writing Center. Summative assessments are reviewed during summer retreats, where faculty and leadership analyze student feedback and performance data to refine learning outcomes, enhance content, and plan for the upcoming academic year.

Library

The library conducts ongoing assessments of its resources, services, and spaces, using the results to enhance offerings and support student success. As part of its instructional efforts, the library offers workshops designed to advance student learning outcomes, particularly those aligned with the fourth (Demonstrate integrative, independent, and critical thinking) and fifth (Apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines) expectations of an Evergreen graduate. To continuously improve these workshops, instructional librarians administer open-ended surveys to gather student feedback on both content and delivery.

Access to materials is a crucial element of student success. To support this, the library maintains a Course Materials on Open Reserve collection, which provides one copy of all required course and program materials – across all levels and campuses – for short-term loan, ensuring broad access. The library analyzes usage data of this collection to better understand student access needs across the curriculum and to inform ongoing resource planning. The library's digital space (i.e., website, catalog, databases, research guides, etc.) are essential tools for discovering and accessing collections. To enhance usability, the library regularly conducts testing of its digital platforms. Furthermore, accessibility audits are also performed for physical spaces.

Since January 2023, the library has promoted artificial intelligence (AI) literacy through in-class workshops. One of our central messages is that, with or without AI, students should “assume responsibility for their own work” (expectation one of the Six Expectations). The ubiquity of AI has complicated this expectation, but it has also given us the opportunity to highlight its importance. Societal biases embedded within AI-generated content, provide an opportunity to discuss collaborative and responsible participation in a diverse society (expectation two). For some, AI appears to either promise or threaten to assume the roles of effective communication (expectation three) and critical thinking (expectation four). In our AI literacy workshops, important questions were raised about whether AI can effectively perform these, and whether relying on it constitutes outsourcing essential skills rather than developing them ourselves.

The library catalyzed and coordinated an Evergreen team that participated in a 7-month AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum. Through this initiative, students were surveyed about their perspectives on AI and are currently developing a similar survey for faculty. The results of these surveys will inform both our ongoing in-class workshops and the Evergreen AAC&U team’s next effort: recommending an institutional governance framework for AI. The library also co-created and co-facilitated two-day Evergreen summer faculty institutes on AI: one held in 2024, and another planned for 2025, providing a space for faculty to share their experiences, perceptions, and ideas for institutional engagement with AI.

STANDARD 1.C.7 EXHIBITS

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Student Profile](#)

[Learning Outcomes](#)

[Strategic Planning Scorecard Dashboard](#)

[Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education](#)

[New Student Advising](#)

[Academic and Career Advising](#)

[TRIO Student Success and Disability Support](#)

[Access Services for Students with Disabilities](#)

1.C.8 Transfer Credit and Credit for Prior Learning

Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor and quality.

Our [transfer credit policy](#) is designed to maximize the transfer of credits within state and institutional guidelines. This means students typically receive more transfer credit at Evergreen than at other institutions. Transfer credit policies are published on our Admissions and Aid webpages for transfer students, in written publications, and through Admissions Counselors.

Transfer credit is generally awarded for baccalaureate-oriented courses completed at [regionally accredited institutions](#). College coursework below 100-level, courses with grades below 2.0 (C), developmental education or remedial courses, PE courses, English as a Second Language, and sectarian religion courses do not transfer, regardless of an institution's accreditation.

Prospective students who earned credit at a Washington State College may use the Transfer Course Equivalency Guide to understand how their credits will transfer to The Evergreen State College.

Students who confirm their intent to enroll at Evergreen receive a transfer credit evaluation. All college-level, non-repeating coursework from all regionally accredited institutions previously attended by the student is used to calculate the cumulative transfer GPA.

Transfer Credit Limits

A maximum of **135 quarter** (90 semester) credits can be transferred into Evergreen. No more than **90 quarter** (60 semester) credits may be at the lower-division level (100, 200, freshman and sophomore level coursework). The remaining **45 quarter** (30 semester) credits must be at the upper-division (300 and 400) level. Once the 45 upper-division quarter credits maximum is reached, any additional upper-division credits may be transferred as lower-division credits to satisfy the 90 credit lower-division maximum.

Technical, Vocational, and Personal Development Credits

Up to 15 technical, vocational, and personal development credits may be eligible for transfer as lower-division credits, subject to the overall transfer credit policies.

Upside-Down Transfer Option

The [Upside-Down Transfer Option](#) allows a block of 90 quarter credits to be transferred after successful completion of 32 quarter credits at Evergreen.

The following degrees may be eligible for the Upside-Down transfer option:

- Associate of Applied Science-Transfer (AAS-T)
- Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
- Associate of Technical Arts (ATA)
- Associate of Applied Technology (AAT)

To qualify for the Upside-Down transfer option, a student must complete the following prior to starting classes at Evergreen:

- Earn a 2.5 cumulative college-level GPA.
- Complete English 101 or equivalent, earning a "C" grade (2.0) or better.
- Earn a minimum of 20 academic quarter hours of college-level credits with a GPA of 2.0 or higher in each course. No more than 10 credits earned in the same subject area can count toward the 20-credit minimum, and English 101 may count toward this requirement.

Credit by Examination

A maximum of 45 credits by examination can be earned toward the 90-quarter credit lower-division maximum. Evergreen accepts credits earned through the Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge

examinations, College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the International Baccalaureate (IB) on a subject-by-subject basis. An official test score record must be requested to be considered for transfer credit, and credit is only awarded for official exam score reports. Credits are awarded only once per course; they are not awarded for duplicate exams or for duplicating coursework completed at any other college.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Evergreen grants credit for College Board Advanced Placement (AP) exams completed with a score of three (3) or higher. Credit is granted upon receipt of official scores (AP Transcript) from the College Board.

Cambridge Examination

A score of E or better will earn credit. Credits are awarded for any AS *OR* A-level exam. Nine credits are awarded for each acceptable exam. 45 credits are awarded for the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE). Credits are reviewed upon receipt of official transcripts from the institution where credit was earned.

CLEP

A minimum score of 50 is required to be awarded credit. Credit is not granted for English with an Essay exam.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

Credit is awarded for any standard-level (SL) or higher-level (HL) IB exam with a score of 4 or better. Five credits are awarded to every SL exam. Nine credits are awarded to every HL exam. 45 credits are awarded for an IB Diploma.

Credits are reviewed upon receipt of official transcripts from where the credit was earned. All credits count toward the 90-quarter credit lower-division maximum.

Military Credit

Veteran, Active Duty, and National or Coast Guard students may receive credit for military service as recommended by the American Council of Education (ACE) Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services and in accordance with University and State policies regarding transfer credits.

Transfer credit is not given for MOS, LDO, NWO, NER, CGR, CGW or MCE designations.

Students receive an evaluation of military credit by submitting to the Admissions Office:

- Joint Service Transcript (JST)
- DD214
- DD229
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

The JST replaces the Coast Guard Institute Transcript, Army ACE Registry Transcript (AARTS), and the Sailor/Marine ACE Registry Transcript (SMART). Air Force personnel may submit the Community College of the Air Force transcript.

Credit for Certificated Learning

Evergreen awards transfer credit for some certificated learning. Credits for certificated learning are subject to the 15-credit limit.

Prior Learning from Experience

As of this writing, Evergreen works with over 100 undergraduate students annually to support the process of composing and submitting a portfolio that documents college-level learning gained through life experience. Students who enter the Prior Learning from Experience (PLE) program must meet certain conditions and sign a covenant that explains the conditions of the program and the restrictions on the credit that may be granted. The process of writing the PLE document is supported by a writing course in which a student may earn between 6 and 10 credits. The faculty member teaching this course helps each student identify the areas in which PLE credit may be granted and checks that the requested credit does not duplicate credit already on the student's transcript. A student may earn up to 30 additional credits for learning demonstrated in the PLE document.

The document is evaluated by a member of the faculty who has been selected by an academic dean based on the faculty member's familiarity with the areas of study discussed in the document. Occasionally, a team of faculty members contributes to the evaluation and award of credit for a single PLE document.

Students indicate the maximum number of credits they seek for their documents. Still, the final determination of the credit awarded is the responsibility of the faculty members who evaluate the documents. The title for the credit earned for the PLE document is designated in the transcript as "PLE Documentation" with specific credit equivalencies and credit amounts listed under that title.

In addition, Evergreen has also developed a prior learning assessment portfolio program designed for incarcerated students participating in our Sustainable Prison Project (SPP). In 2024, 82 students completed 101 portfolios. They earned a total of 746 credits via the SPP Prior Learning Experience (SPP PLE) program. The program is designed to allow students to earn college credit while incarcerated by completing coursework that culminates in an educational portfolio. SPP education portfolios are standardized programs that include a syllabus describing coursework, a portfolio checklist, and a templated course evaluation. Portfolios are reviewed and evaluated by Evergreen faculty. Student learning encompasses both academic and experiential components, culminating in a final reflective writing assignment. Students receive a narrative evaluation and a document of completion that represents their achievements, course equivalencies, and the college credits they have earned. SPP students can complete more than one portfolio.

STANDARD 1.C.8 EXHIBITS

[Transfer Credit Policy](#)

[Prior Learning from Experience \(PLE\)](#)

[Upside Down Transfer Option](#)

1.C.9 Graduate Programs

The institution's graduate programs are consistent with its mission, are in keeping with the expectations of its respective disciplines and professions and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. The graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs by requiring, among other things, greater: depth of study, demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/ or relevant professional practice.

Brief History and Program Requirements

Master of Environmental Studies (MES)

The Graduate Program on the Environment at Evergreen awards the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) degree. This program was proposed on April 16, 1981, followed by three planning years, and admitted its first student cohort in the fall of 1984. The program was established to train people to manage natural resources in a broad ecological and sociopolitical context. The goal of the program was to bridge the gap between environmental science and environmental policy at the master's level. Students admitted to the program typically have a strong background in either the natural or social sciences and must have either a degree or completed at least one course in each area within the past five years. Additionally, all students admitted to MES must have taken a statistics course within the last five years.

The MES program aims to produce graduates who combine an interdisciplinary understanding of the social and natural sciences with the skills and wisdom to intelligently and effectively address environmental problems. The program is centered on highly participatory evening classes that accommodate both full-time and part-time students. Alumni are employed in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; some continue their graduate study in related Ph.D. programs.

To obtain an MES degree, students must complete a total of 72 credits, including 56 quarter-hours of coursework (sometimes including internships and independent learning contracts) and 16 quarter-hours of thesis credits, resulting in the completion of a master's thesis. The coursework includes four Core programs that are team-taught and interdisciplinary. These Core courses cover environmental issues from a broad perspective. Students gain a foundation in key disciplines: ecology, economics, geography, climate studies, natural resource management, and sustainability. Within these disciplines, students also develop skills in critical thinking, writing, research, quantitative analysis, and research design. Students have additional opportunities to learn specific topics from experts in a suite of elective courses. Students enrolled full-time (12 quarter-hours) can complete all degree requirements in six quarters.

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

Evergreen's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program was founded in 1982 to meet the needs of the many government workers residing and working in Olympia, Washington, the state capital. In 2002, the program began accepting applications for a cohort focused on tribal governance. In 2019, the program expanded to include a cohort at Evergreen Tacoma. There is a strong focus on putting

theory into practice, and many classroom assignments are applied in communities, agencies, and organizations.

The course of study in all MPA concentrations requires 60 credits of academic work. All students participate in 36 credits of Core courses taught over two years and cover the foundational knowledge of an Evergreen MPA. Core programs are team-taught in interdisciplinary or interfield learning communities. Students complete the program by participating in a six-credit-hour capstone experience (included in the 36 Core credits), which, in addition to reflection and integration, includes developing a demonstration project that puts theory and expertise to work on an applied problem or situation. The remaining 24 credits are fulfilled through a combination of concentration courses, electives, individual learning contracts, and/or internships. Starting in academic year 2026/2027, the MPA program will begin a new graduation requirement that expects all students to take the 4-credit course, Path to Sovereignty. This change is to demonstrate and reaffirm the program's dedication to tribal governance education across the MPA curriculum.

There are two concentrations through which students can study beyond the Core classes: public policy and tribal governance. To complete the public policy concentration, students must finish two 4-credit electives: Foundations of Public Policy and Applied Research Methods. To complete the Tribal Governance concentration, students must complete two out of five 4-credit Tribal Governance electives offered: Tribal Organizations, Tribal Economics, Intergovernmental Relations, Tribal Policy, and Path to Sovereignty.

Master in Teaching (MiT)

The MiT program is a nationally recognized, state-accredited teacher preparation program. The MiT program was founded in 1990 as the college transitioned from a Bachelor's degree with teaching certification to a master's program that awards the teaching certificate. Participants earn a master's degree of 60 credits and teaching certification while obtaining the critical understanding and skills needed to teach in today's diverse public schools. The program's structure, content, expectations, and outcomes are clearly outlined in the program catalog and website and have been regularly approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board (and the State of Washington's Board of Education prior to 2005) since the program's inception.

MiT is a four-quarter, full-time, cohort-based program that matriculates 35-50 candidates each year. The first quarter is devoted to coursework on the foundations of education and schooling, including history and policy of teaching, learning theories, educational research, and school law. Candidates are also introduced to Culturally Responsive Pedagogies through faculty modeling and Mediated Field Experiences in local schools. Over the next two quarters, candidates develop and integrate essential knowledge and skills for teaching as they engage in a part-time field experience in a public-school classroom, while also learning about assessment, curriculum development, strategies for working with diverse learners, classroom management, and content area pedagogies. During the final quarter, candidates engage in their full-time student teaching experience while also completing their Master's Project, which includes the development of a Professional Growth Plan.

How Graduate Programs Link to Mission and Strategic Plan

Evergreen’s mission emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary learning across significant differences, critical thinking, and local and global commitment to social justice, diversity, and service in the public interest. All three of Evergreen’s graduate programs embody these pursuits in their respective curricula and by providing student support and community engagement. All graduate programs have team-teaching as a curricular foundation, emphasize student group work, teach critical analysis and writing, and encourage and support student engagement with alumni, organizations, and agencies beyond the Evergreen classrooms. Further, all three graduate programs find careers in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Evergreen recently completed its [2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#). As the college begins to implement the plan, graduate programs have a fundamental role to play in helping to reach Strategic Goal 1: “boost enrollment by 1,000 during the next five years.” All three graduate program staff are working to increase their respective application pools post-COVID. As of spring 2025, both MES and MPA are seeing significant increases in their application pools.

The MES program has seen a 42% increase in the number of applicants for the first- and second-round application deadline from 2024-25. MES has improved its recruitment strategy by advertising on very specific online opportunity boards, continuing to offer regular virtual information sessions, attending graduate fairs in the region, and hosting the first annual South Sound Graduate School Fair (October 2024). It remains to be seen whether the increased number of applications will result in a significant increase in yield and enrollment growth in 2025-26. Still, the college is hopeful that the MES program can increase enrollment from ~32 to 45 students per cohort. The program continues to offer students the option to attend class remotely, which is an attractive mode of learning for some students.

The MPA program has doubled the number of applicants for the first-round application deadline from 2023 to 2024. The MPA program is approaching recruitment in a more targeted fashion, focusing on events that cater to working professionals and community events. The plan is to focus on opportunities to connect with people working in the public sector and those considering a career in service, such as individuals who might visit a Workforce center. This represents a shift from focusing primarily on individuals who come directly from a bachelor’s program. This change in recruitment is based on application data and data on who chooses to attend the MPA program.

MiT is working on increasing enrollment after recently redesigning the curriculum delivery model, moving from a 6-quarter (i.e., two-year) model to a 4-quarter model. MIT’s recruitment strategy includes tabling at more community events, connecting with paraprofessional organizations, and visiting more graduate education fairs.

All three graduate programs already exceed Strategic Goal 2: “We aim to increase student retention to 82% and graduation rates to 57% within five years.”

Table 6. Retention and Graduation Rates for Graduate Programs

Graduate Program	Retention Rate 2023-2024	Graduation Rate 2024*
Master of Environmental Studies (MES)	94%	86%
Master of Public Administration (MPA)	87%	86%
Master in Teaching (MiT)	88%	96%

*For cohort starting Fall 2021, graduating within 150% normal time, or by Spring 2024

Cycles of Continuous improvement of Evergreen’s Graduate Programs over the last 7 years

Master of Environmental Studies (MES)

The MES program has worked to gain a better understanding of our student experience in the program and the curriculum, using two methods. First, MES staff collaborated with the Office of Institutional Research to administer a climate survey to all students and used the survey's outcomes to modify our practices. Second, trained facilitators at the Evergreen Learning and Teaching Commons were engaged to evaluate some of the Core curriculum using the CRAFT (Community Reflection and Feedback on Teaching) approach. Finally, program leadership collaborated with the Associate Dean of Equity and Belonging to revise the MES Equity Action Plan for 2024.

After a review of MES admissions procedure and applicant pools, MES has transitioned to a test-optional application. The motivation was to create a more accessible application process, and one that allowed students multiple ways to demonstrate their preparation for the program. Students can submit GRE scores, but they can also submit an academic writing sample instead of GRE scores. Additionally, over the past year, MES has expanded the types of academic writing samples that can be submitted to be more inclusive of student work. The requirement changed from an “Analytical Essay” to an “Academic Writing Sample.”

Following an assessment of declining thesis completion rates, the MES program implemented changes to support students in completing their thesis projects. In order to continue to have a robust and well supported thesis process, MES shifted the focus of the fourth core program to better prepare students for thesis work. The newly redesigned “Case Studies and Thesis Research” program walks students through the thesis design process. It helps them to write both a Thesis Prospectus and a Literature Review to inform their thesis research. MES staff has developed a website that includes detailed templates, forms, and information to help students complete their thesis research. An annual Thesis Idea Fair has been formalized, inviting community partners, agency scientists, and potential collaborators to meet with students, thereby enhancing networking opportunities. The “Thesis Workshop,” a non-credit course that provides support and peer review to all students involved in thesis research, continues to be improved and expanded. The Thesis workshop is developed and facilitated by the MES Director and Assistant Director on a biweekly basis for two quarters.

To increase the number of students who complete their degree, a system has been instituted that allows students to extend their thesis research—with compensated faculty support—into a third quarter. This process has improved thesis completion. As secondary benefits, the fees collected are allocated to a fund that supports thesis research through the “Thesis Research Fund.” Students can apply for funding of up to \$ 1,000 (occasionally more, with Director approval) to support travel, supplies, and equipment for their thesis research.

In response to changing needs of our adult learners who frequently also work full-time jobs the MES program has maintained a “Hi-flex” approach to learning since the pandemic. The program offers in-person classes, but with opportunities for students to attend remotely in our Core courses. Electives are provided as in-person, Hi-flex, or online. The flexibility and diversity of our

offerings have improved student attendance, allowing some students to attend class and earn an MES degree remotely.

Recognizing the increasing interest in micro-credentials in the marketplace, the MES program developed two graduate certificates: 1) a 12-credit Graduate GIS certificate (started in 2019): which involves a three-course sequence, “Introduction to GIS,” “Advanced GIS,” and “Special Topics in GIS,” and 2) a 12-credit Flying and Mapping with Drones certificate (started in 2020-21): which involves two concurrent summer courses, “GIS Mapping with Drone Imagery” and “Learn to Fly Drones and Prepare to Take the FAA Part 107 Exam.”

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

The MPA program is dedicated to holistic, continuous improvement. This is accomplished using multiple tools. To get student feedback, the program conducts an annual student survey. The survey covers a variety of topics, including preferred mode of delivery, sense of belonging, and the type of content offered. To gather stakeholder feedback, the MPA program hosts a summer institute, inviting stakeholders to share the skills, knowledge, and abilities most needed in their organizations. To bring this information together annually, the program holds a retreat to discuss program goals, current issues, and the results of the annual student survey and stakeholder feedback. Together, these steps enable the program to address emerging issues and remain responsive to the needs of the public sector.

A notable change that has occurred over the last 7 years is the shift to online education. The MPA remains an in-person program but has now started offering online elective courses. This gives our students flexibility and convenience. The MPA program is also launching a new online public financial management certificate in 2025-2026. This addition is in response to stakeholder feedback about the need for financial management skills in the public sector in Washington. MPA leadership has decided to keep the program primarily in-person to preserve the classroom dynamics and holistic approach that are a hallmark of an Evergreen MPA education.

Master in Teaching Program (MiT)

Given the challenges related to the climate of public education, budget shortfalls in our State and country, and an influx of out-of-state experienced teachers, the MiT program has made three significant changes to attract more people into teaching and better serve our increasingly diverse community. First, the MiT program was revised in 2021 from a two-year program to a 4-quarter program. Second, the program offers all candidates an endorsement in English Language Learners in addition to their content area endorsement. This enables teachers to meet the needs of their multilingual students better and also provides our teacher candidates with valuable skills that make them more marketable in a highly competitive job market. In addition, the MiT program has adjusted its coursework to accommodate candidates who attend the program as Alternative Route 2 students, primarily school district employees, including paraprofessionals. The program has a Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with three local school districts to offer this Alternative Route to a teaching certificate. Evergreen is proud to support these highly skilled and experienced educators as they further their education and career goals.

In addition to the critical changes mentioned above, MIT continuously reviews and assesses the program to adjust and enhance our learning structures and curriculum to better meet the needs of the K-12 community. Our Professional Educators Advisory Board (PEAB) meets quarterly to review program data and provides suggestions for improvements that are aligned with the expectations of K-12 educators in public schools. Our PEAB includes current teachers and principals, district administrators, and MIT faculty, staff, and students. Faculty and students share what they are teaching and learning in the program, and the PEAB reviews yearly Teacher Candidate survey data and Mentor Teacher survey data. Data-driven decisions informed by program review included the transition to a fully integrated Multilingual Learner program, a redesigned Master's Project that incorporates the standards, skills, and knowledge teachers are expected to demonstrate in their yearly evaluation cycle, the introduction of a Dispositions Self-Assessment for candidates, and the reinstatement of the Distinguished Educator of the Year Award. Our PEAB members also participate in program activities, such as hosting Mediated Field Experiences, participating in Mock Interviews for candidates, and serving as guest speakers in our program.

Graduate Student Support

Master of Environmental Studies (MES)

The MES program provides support for students at all stages of the program. For prospective students, the MES Assistant Director will provide information sessions, one-on-one meetings, and offer support with various aspects of the application process. For current students, our curriculum is structured to provide scaffolding throughout the two years for students as they work on their graduate degree. In the first year of the Core sequence, students learn to work in collaborative groups on research projects and policy analysis, develop their writing skills at a graduate level throughout the Candidacy paper process, and acquire a variety of statistical and quantitative research methods, enabling them to formulate a thesis research question in their second year. They are provided with an opportunity to practice writing either a research proposal or a data analysis project at the end of their second year, as preparation for their thesis research. In their second year, the Core class provides them with the structure and support to develop their thesis research project through the Thesis Prospectus process. It facilitates learning the background material necessary to complete a thesis through an extensive Literature Review assignment. After a faculty member has been selected as their thesis reader and has approved their Thesis Prospectus, students are provided with extensive support throughout the two-quarter thesis process to complete their work through the Thesis Workshop, which is facilitated by the MES program Director and Assistant Director. In addition to providing support for thesis research, the Thesis Workshop is a professional development program that offers workshops for students in writing cover letters, building resumes, interviewing, and supporting inclusivity in the workplace. MES staff have developed a website that includes detailed templates, forms, and information to help students complete their thesis research. If students need support beyond the MES program, they are referred to other services offered by the college (Health and Wellness, Career Support, Title IX, Financial Aid, Registration, etc.) through the CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) report system.

The MES program supports students through six scholarships, which are specifically available to our admitted students. These scholarships are also offered to both prospective students (to aid in

recruitment) and continuing students, in addition to AmeriCorps awards. The MES program supports one student as a part-time program assistant, which is often a work-study appointment. Other work-study appointments and part-time jobs are available through the college, specifically in the Science Support Center and other offices on campus. Two external programs at Evergreen support MES students consistently: 1) The Sustainability in Prisons Project (SPP) which hires several MES students as research and teaching assistants to work in local prisons with extensive support from SPP staff, and 2) The Center for Climate Action and Sustainability (CCAS) which hires several MES students as Sustainability Fellows to work on sustainable practices projects across the college. MES faculty and staff provide connections to students with potential internships and connections to the Evergreen internship office. MES students can also apply for funding to attend conferences and professional travel through the college and the Master of Environmental Studies Student Association (MESA). MESA provides cohorts with community building and support, and organizes talks, seminars, and community sessions, including the annual Rachel Carson Forum.

MES students can provide mentoring and tutoring to other students in their cohort through three formal peer-mentoring positions: 1) Graduate Writing Tutor: hired to the Evergreen Writing Center, the writing tutor provides writing support to students in all three graduate programs. The program hires one writing tutor for the entire academic year; 2) Graduate Statistics tutor: hired to the MES Program, the statistics tutor provides students in the third-quarter Core class (Research Design and Quantitative Methods) with statistics and quantitative reasoning support in spring quarter; and 3) Graduate GIS tutor: hired to the MES program, the GIS tutor provides students in both the MES and MPA program with support in GIS analysis and methods in the first course in the Graduate GIS sequence (Introduction to GIS) in spring quarter.

The MES program provides our current (and prospective) students with several opportunities to engage with our alumni and broader network of community partners every year. In the fall of 2024, the Evergreen graduate programs hosted the South Sound Graduate School Fair, which provided all graduate students with opportunities to meet and network with representatives from other graduate programs worldwide. The South Sound Coalition organized this graduate fair in partnership with Saint Martin's University, the University of Puget Sound, and Pacific Lutheran University, and it will continue to be hosted each fall at one of the coalition's campuses. Although MES is a terminal master's degree, some of our students pursue a PhD every year, and this is an excellent opportunity for them to meet with potential PhD programs. Also in the fall quarter, community partners from state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental agencies are invited to campus for the Thesis Idea Fair, which connects students with potential thesis projects and helps them build their networks. In the spring quarter, MESA hosts the Rachel Carson Forum, which offers current students, alumni, and community partners opportunities to interact and network. Also in the spring quarter, the MES program hosts its Admitted Student Day, allowing students to preview the program before enrollment deadlines. These students have the opportunity to meet the MES faculty, staff, and other key staff members at the college, as well as representatives from SPP, CCAS, and MESA. MES also hosts semi-annual events that bring together the broader community and alumni. In 2015 and 2025, MES hosted anniversary events that served as significant networking opportunities and celebrations of our community. In 2025, the Annual Environmental Professional of the Year Award was developed to honor a notable alumnus.

Over the past seven years, MES has conducted substantial evaluations, assessments, and program modifications. Through two dedicated summer institutes for faculty and staff in both MES and the graduate programs as a whole, staff troubleshoot problems, find solutions, and develop plans to modify our curriculum, program structures, and processes to support students better. Several faculty members have received Evergreen Foundation grants to improve the curriculum. Each quarter, faculty engage in a robust self- and peer-evaluation process to reflect on the success of their curricular activities and identify areas for improvement. Adjunct faculty are reviewed in their first year and then every three years. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated in their first year, after three years, and then every five years.

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

For prospective students, MPA faculty and staff provide online and in-person information sessions, one-on-one meetings, and support with the application process. For current students, the MPA offers a range of supports, including scholarships, academic assistance, and internship support, among other benefits. The MPA program offers ten different types of scholarships, as well as an AmeriCorps waiver and merit awards. The MPA program also offers a graduate writing assistant and access to the QuaSR center, which specializes in quantitative and symbolic reasoning tutoring. Additionally, the MPA program offers internship placement assistance. The MPA program receives internship information from alumni, stakeholders, and students, then connects students to this information and provides the necessary support to enable them to take advantage of these opportunities.

The curriculum is structured to provide scaffolding throughout the two years for students as they work on their graduate degree. In the first year of the Core sequence, students learn how to work collaboratively, write at a graduate level, and explore foundational concepts in public administration. In the second year of the Core sequence, students learn research methods and analytical techniques. During the winter quarter of the second-year core sequence, students prepare a Capstone proposal. A faculty advisor works with the students to build out their Capstone project during the winter quarter. In the spring quarter of the second-year sequence, students complete their Capstone project. The project represents the culmination of the skills, knowledge, and abilities the student learned in the MPA program.

In terms of events, the MPA program holds a new student orientation every fall quarter, before the first week of class, to prepare students for the program and provide an opportunity for them to voice questions and concerns. Orientation includes faculty and staff information, as well as an alumni panel that provides a variety of perspectives for students. Also in the fall quarter, the Evergreen graduate programs jointly host a Graduate Fair, which provides the option to meet and network with representatives from other graduate programs. This is an opportunity for students interested in further graduate work to meet with potential PhD programs. In the spring, the MPA faculty and staff host an Admitted Student Night to answer questions about the program and introduce admitted students to their future core course teaching team.

Master in Teaching Program (MiT)

For prospective students, the MiT program provides support through information sessions and one-on-one meetings. Additionally, the MiT program offers ongoing support to those who initiate the

application process, including assistance with transcript review, endorsement checklist review, securing a placement to fulfill the classroom observation hour requirement, and providing vouchers for the WEST-B and WEST-E/NES state tests. The MiT program offers seven scholarships designed explicitly for our candidates. In addition, our program typically supports two candidates as Graduate Assistants to help with some of the functioning of the MiT program.

Once admitted, Teacher Candidates are welcomed with a program orientation the month before the quarter begins. The Evergreen MiT program collaborates closely with school districts within a 40-mile radius of Evergreen to offer full-year field placements with carefully selected mentor teachers. Teacher Candidates and Mentor Teachers are matched with the goals of the Teacher Candidates in mind. A series of workshops supports these relationships throughout the year. Our MiT staff design and implement workshops for Mentor Teachers, including how to provide effective feedback, co-planning and co-teaching strategies, and mentoring adult learners. MiT teacher candidates also engage in professional development related to the Washington State Teacher Evaluation Program, working with education support staff, and exploring the role that education associations play in supporting state educators. Additional professional development opportunities include preparing for the job search, developing application materials, and practicing for interviews.

Upon completing the MiT program, teacher candidates receive support in securing their certification. Participation in the annual Grad Fair is maintained. The program remains connected with alumni in several ways, often inviting them to serve as mentor teachers and guest speakers. Communication with alumni and community partners is also sustained through a quarterly MiT newsletter. Each year, MiT presents the Distinguished Educator of the Year Award to a nominee who exemplifies a commitment to student learning, removing barriers to learning, reflective practice, and developing community partnerships and shared responsibility for learning. Anyone can nominate an Evergreen MiT candidate for the award. The Advisory Board determines the recipient at our last board meeting in June. MiT staff attend quarterly Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education meetings, and the MiT director works closely with the Professional Educator Standards Board as the state moves to redesign how Educator Preparation Programs are regularly reviewed and accredited.

STANDARD 1.C.9 EXHIBITS

[Master in Teaching \(MiT\)](#)

[MIT Handbook](#)

[Master of Public Administration \(MPA\)](#)

[MPA Handbook](#)

[Master of Environmental Studies \(MES\)](#)

[MES Handbook](#)

Standard 1.D: Student Achievement

1.D.1 Recruitment, Admission, Orientation, and Advising

Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

Evergreen’s approach to recruitment, orientation, and advising is grounded in a cycle of continuous improvement. These efforts are aimed at increasing student achievement, particularly among first-time, first-year students. In recent years, the college identified persistent challenges in both yield and retention. Many admitted students chose not to enroll, and those who did often struggled to adapt to the college’s distinctive interdisciplinary curriculum and self-directed academic model. Contributing factors included onboarding gaps between admission and registration, limited familiarity with the college’s unique academic structure, difficulties navigating registration and support systems, and a lack of clear connection between students’ goals and the curriculum. These observations informed a series of intentional interventions designed to improve how students are welcomed into and supported throughout their educational journey at Evergreen.

Consistent with the college’s mission to serve diverse learners and further advance equitable access and success, Evergreen developed a multifaceted response. This approach emphasizes proactive outreach, personalized advising, and integrated support structures, including a new applicant tracking system. These interventions include the Faculty Recruitment Initiative, New Student Advising, credit-bearing Pre-Orientation programs, and the Greener Foundations first-year experience. Designed to work together across divisions, these efforts help students build a stronger connection with the curriculum, faculty and staff, and a sense of belonging on campus. Each initiative was introduced with clear goals and data-informed adjustments over time. The result has been not only improved yield and retention rates, but also a more coordinated and responsive support system that better aligns with the needs and aspirations of Evergreen students.

Faculty Recruitment of Students

In the fall of 2021, the collective bargaining process between the college and the United Faculty of Evergreen, its faculty union, resulted in the creation of two faculty positions with teaching release time to work with the college’s offices of Admissions and other enrollment services. This agreement resulted in the “Faculty Recruitment Initiative”—an effort driven by faculty to engage in student recruitment. Faculty organizers gathered and trained a team of faculty who were given service recognition (governance) for their participation in student recruitment. The work began in coordination with the admissions office in January 2022. The Director of Admissions had identified that Evergreen needed to increase its yield of admitted students—the rate that students who applied for admission chose to enroll and register for classes. Academic programming options are a key factor influencing students’ enrollment decisions; therefore, it made sense to have faculty reach out and discuss academic programming directly with students as a way to encourage them to choose Evergreen.

The work helped lead to the development of a New Student Advising office (see below), which collaborates closely with the faculty recruiting initiative. New Student Advising deliberately targets key factors driving yield rates, including the decision point between student admission and enrollment, the introduction of the college's curriculum and academic model, and individualized academic planning support for admitted students. This effort is also really helpful for providing support to every student as they navigate their onboarding process to the college.

Every admitted student receives emails and, in some cases, text messages with invitations to schedule virtual meetings with either a faculty member or a new student advisor. These meetings range from 30 minutes to an hour, on Teams or Zoom. During these meetings, recruiters and advisors aim to build meaningful connections, explain the college's academic model, and explore curricular offerings aligned with the student's interests. Ideally, a student will register for a program or set of classes during the meeting. The recruiters and advisors also seek to address any questions or concerns students may have about enrolling at Evergreen.

This work sits at the intersection of the Admissions and Academic and Career Advising offices, which previously did not share a database. Faculty organizers retrieve data from the Admissions database and Radius, and track outreach and meetings in an Excel spreadsheet. The New Student Advising team uses this spreadsheet to track the mechanics of pairing students with faculty members in their area of interest or professional staff advisors and record when students accept meetings. This process is currently being updated in conjunction with the development of the new database, Slate, which will be shared across Admissions and Advising, along with its Student Success database.

The effort is coordinated through weekly meetings between faculty recruiters, admissions, and the new student advising team. This team discusses updates to and emergent issues with the cycles of recruiting and New Student Advising. The topics of these meetings include the volume of appointments, scheduling coordination, and related logistical issues. They also cover new approaches such as the New Student Preparation Sessions, a series of virtual events held between May and September that address topics like academics, catalog navigation, and registration. These sessions are designed to be a bridge between students' offers of admission and Orientation.

Recruiters also participate in general strategizing and workshopping of recent issues that could be helpful for the larger team to discuss together (e.g., the ways students' interface with the registration process). Faculty recruiters spend much of their time connecting students with campus offices and facilitating communication between offices to resolve questions and logistical issues. As a result, maintaining coordination across departments is a central part of their work.

The Faculty Recruitment Initiative is considered highly successful not only because the college has seen consistent enrollment growth since its inception, but also because it has strengthened collaboration between admissions staff and faculty, deepening their understanding of their unique roles in the success of new students. Enrollment services regularly tracks yield rates of admitted students and continuing student retentions as key drivers of enrollment. Beginning in 2022, faculty efforts focused on connecting with students during the yield phase of the process after they have been admitted and during early summer. Compared to Fall 2021, the admit pool increased by 15%, and the yield from the pool of candidates increased by 6% at the same time. These two enrollment funnel measurement gains in the same year are quite unusual. The college attributes these

improvements at least in part to students gaining support from contact with faculty, advice in academic planning, and an introduction to navigating student systems. One of the reasons the college invested in the Slate Student Success portal is to gain even better data about the efficacy of the work, allowing us not only to improve our enrollment numbers but the overall quality of the student experience.

There are a few other areas that also need improvement. The connection between admissions, advising, and knowledge of the current curriculum remains a challenge. This is in part because of the emergent nature of Evergreen's curriculum as well as the continued need for connections between offices and academic path leadership. Because this is important to our strategic plan and mission, the college is committing resources to solutions that will address this issue. A quarterly summary of the curriculum produced by Curricular Area Team leadership is one solution under development. Another is the creation of new Path advising webpages.

New Student Advising

Evergreen's new student advising model evolved from a history of faculty engaging directly with prospective students to introduce them to the Evergreen academic model. Under the current advising practices, first-year students cannot register until they have had a new student advising appointment or participated in a new student virtual session. This advising approach helps students navigate the system through organic conversations shaped around their interests. It begins by inviting students to share their interests, goals, and reasons for choosing Evergreen. Advisors begin by assessing what students already know, using this as a foundation for the advising conversation. Guided by student interests, they walk through the catalog, explain its structure, and apply filters to broaden academic exploration. If registration is open, the goal is to complete the registration process during the appointment. If not, advisors work with students to identify one to three programs for future registration.

Additionally, advisors inquire about access needs and initiate support processes. Examples of support may look like: providing guidance on clearing account holds, connecting students directly with necessary services, and offering information on relevant resources. Helpful instructional videos on how to register, including a dedicated Greener Foundations registration guide, are available via the college's wiki. Additionally, the Geoduck 101 Canvas course is currently being revised to include new student-perspective videos developed in collaboration with Media Studies, including a segment on Financial Aid.

New Student Advising continues to support incoming students through their first two quarters, after which they transition to Holistic Advising. However, students may opt into Holistic Advising earlier, allowing for greater choice and agency in selecting their advisor. During the initial weeks of their first quarter, New Student Advising also assists students with program-related issues before referring them to Academic and Career Advising (ACA) for ongoing support. ACA staff report that this transition process has generally worked well, though improvements are still needed. They review appointment data in Bookings to identify patterns, but inconsistencies between Bookings reports and calendar data remain a challenge. To gather additional feedback, ACA sends surveys to students following advising appointments. Additionally, depending on the timing of admission and advising, students may plan to participate in a credit-bearing pre-orientation program, which is presented as a required component of their onboarding experience.

Pre-Orientation and Orientation

Pre-Orientation programs are well-established tools for fostering student connection, cultivating a sense of belonging, and providing essential structure as students transition into a new academic environment. In 2017, Evergreen committed to expanding and strengthening its emerging Pre-Orientation initiatives, guided by these insights and supported by legislative funding. In 2022, Evergreen's Pre-Orientation program included two sections: Evergreen Student Civic Engagement Institute and First Peoples Multicultural Scholars Program. In 2023, the program expanded to three sections – now serving 90 students – with the introduction of *Civic Engagement Institute*, *Multicultural Scholars*, and *Biodiversity in Evergreen's Backyard*. Building on this momentum, the program grew again in 2024 to four sections, reaching 114 students and adding *Growing Wellness: Community Gardens and Forest Trails of Olympia*. Most recently, in Fall 2025, the program will expand to add a new section (and disciplinary area) with *Arts & Letters in Olympia: Invisible Cities*. This steady growth reflects Evergreen's commitment to offering an increasingly diverse set of options that support students in building community and improving the retention and persistence of first-time, first-year students. Pre-Orientation has helped students connect with peers and build their social support network prior to their first quarter. Importantly, with the incorporation of academics and faculty into Pre-Orientation, students can now earn two credits to jump-start their Evergreen education. Program leaders have embraced a more holistic approach in supporting new students by strengthening collaboration between Residential Life, New Student Programs, and Academics.

In Fall 2022, the college shifted to a Welcome Week model, wherein Pre-Orientation runs for five days, and leads directly into Orientation. Orientation offers both three-day and one-day options, allowing students to choose what best fits their schedules. In recent years, the one-day option has grown in popularity, likely reflecting increased schedule constraints among students. In response, program leaders have been cognizant of this shift and worked to ensure all students- regardless of their Orientation format- have access to the "Academic Address", a shared common experience designed to welcome and engage every new member of the Evergreen community. The Fall 2024 theme, "Democracy: Local to Global," set the base for a series of events connected directly to the upcoming election. Qualitative student feedback shows that students are benefiting from the onboarding process—connecting with faculty, peers, and campus resources while engaging with Evergreen's school culture. Evergreen plans to follow this format for Fall 2025's welcome events and orientation. This year's theme, "Public College, Public Good," will feature guest experts and presenters, along with a series of faculty- and alumni-led events throughout the fall quarter.

Greener Foundations

Greener Foundations (GF) was initially developed as a two-quarter, first-year experience program (two credits/quarter, four credits total), that launched in Fall 2019 with funding from a legislative grant. The program was designed to support first-time, first-year students by improving retention and persistence during their initial year. Since its inception, external factors have necessitated curriculum modifications- most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid shift to online learning. These changes posed particular challenges for a program centered on creating an in-person, welcoming environment that fosters a sense of belonging for incoming students.

The implementation of Greener Foundations required close collaboration with Registration and

Academic Advising to respond to challenges related to first-year course-enrollment and to effectively communicate the college's unique pedagogical model- which includes a full-time structure without scheduling restrictions. To ensure that first-year students could participate in Greener Foundations coursework, all first-year and lower-division programs were adjusted to 14-credits, rather than the standard 16-credit/quarter model in Fall and Winter quarters. This shift had a significant impact on curriculum planning and student engagement at these levels. In coordination with New Student Advising, program leaders integrated messaging about the value of Greener Foundations into their communications, which anecdotally increased student interest. Fall enrollment rose from 194 students in 2023 to 224 in 2024, though participation and engagement consistently declined in the subsequent Winter quarters. In response, the college's first-year curriculum experts reviewed the syllabus, assessments, and learning outcomes, and proposed a new one-quarter model. Launching in Fall 2025, this revised one-quarter structure is expected to better support students by: 1) aiding their academic transition to Evergreen, 2) fostering connection to the campus community, and 3) preparing them to lead meaningful lives in a diverse, interconnected, and evolving world. The redesigned Greener Foundations will enable students to transition more quickly into 16-credit programs aligned with their academic interests, while also being easier to staff and reducing the overall impact on the broader curriculum.

Program evaluation has made it challenging to isolate the specific impact of Greener Foundations from other first-year support efforts. However, Evergreen can clearly demonstrate two outcomes: first-year retention has increased, and students consistently identify curriculum elements such as personal wellness, self-care, time management, reflective writing, and Writing Center support as positively influencing their experience and continued enrollment.

Academic/Holistic Advising

Holistic Advising and TRIO staff members actively seek to assist students who are experiencing academic or personal difficulties, paying particular attention to first-year students, new transfer students, those admitted conditionally, and those wait-listed for their coordinated studies program of choice. The college has built an organizational culture to improve communication between new student advising, access services, TRIO, and academic & career advising. There is an emphasis on in-person, high-touch, wrap-around support to ensure students are getting accurate and timely information. This empowers students by building relationships and providing them with a sense that a unified "team" supports them rather than siloed, disjointed offices.

Seventy-one percent of undergraduate alumni used the services of the Academic and Career Advising (ACA) or Workshops during their time at Evergreen, and 61% of those who did use their services reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience, according to the Evergreen One-Year Alumni Survey. Thirty percent of this same group reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their advising experience. Similarly, 25% of the alumni respondents used graduate or professional school advising services, and 52% reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience.

However, challenges remain, particularly in the handoff from early onboarding (students brought into the college through admissions, recruitment, and faculty recruitment initiatives, and new student advising) to academic advising. Currently, students are able to access any advisor within academic & career advising once they complete the new student advising period. This means

students must shift their thinking from being guided through a process to accessing advising support via self-service, which can be an opportunity for some students to slip through the cracks.

To address these challenges, advising uses two main approaches to close the loop for assessment of advising. First, during the Advising Office's annual retreat, findings from the "NSSE Academic Advising Module" are reviewed amongst the staff. In areas where low scores are noted, plans are made to increase students' satisfaction. Items that show high scores are also discussed to ensure the office maintains or continues to elevate even higher advisees' satisfaction results. Second, each advisee is emailed the "ACA Customer Satisfaction Survey." The instrument informs students that the advising office is seeking to continuously improve services and their feedback aids in this endeavor. Weekly, the director reviews the responses and immediately provides valuable feedback to the advisors.

The college is also implementing changes to better support students during the transition from new student advising to academic & career advising. This includes processes to reach out to students who haven't registered yet and starting to focus on specific populations of students that benefit from additional support, including student athletes and students participating in PaCE curriculum. Strong results from the TRIO model continue to be observed, prompting ongoing efforts to systematize and expand the approach—such as through SLATE student success initiatives—with the goal of scaling up to reach more students.

As students progress toward graduation, Evergreen provides access to clear, timely, and personalized guidance about degree completion. Academic advisors assist students in understanding degree requirements—including breadth, depth, and total credit expectations—as well as the academic planning necessary to meet them. Students can plan their academic direction through the college's [Degree Planning Guide](#) and reflect on their progress in their annual Academic Statement, which allows them to track earned credits and identify any remaining requirements. The graduation application process is also housed in my.evergreen.edu and is supported through regular communication from Registration and Advising offices. Advisors frequently hold graduation planning workshops and offer individual appointments to support students in determining whether they are ready to graduate and to help them complete the graduation application process. This integrated approach ensures students can navigate the final stages of their academic journey at Evergreen successfully and be prepared for post graduate success.

STANDARD 1.D.1 EXHIBITS

GreenerSprouts Dashboard (Intranet)

[Greener Foundations](#)

[Admissions and Aid webpage](#)

[Connecting with an Admissions Counselor](#)

[New Student Advising](#)

1.D.2 Indicators of Student Achievement

Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

Strategic goals (see 1.B.2), developed through broad input around mission fulfillment, include a focus on enrollment and retention- both of which are tracked in the [Student Profile](#). Efforts to improve enrollment and retention strategies are informed by disaggregated demographic data, including residency, enrollment status, gender, age, first generation status, veteran status, income level, Pell status, and race/ethnicity. To evaluate post-graduation success, Evergreen administers an Alumni Survey and publishes the [Alumni Survey Report](#), while also monitoring graduate earnings- disaggregated by major and degree level- through the [Earnings for Graduates](#) dashboard, prepared in partnership with the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC).

Additionally, the college publishes a Peer Institution Comparison dashboard [in development], which compares Evergreen to regional and national peers across dimensions such as admissions, enrollment, retention, and graduation- disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, residency, enrollment status. The peer selection process is detailed in section 1.B.2. This dashboard is monitored in the context of the strategic goals mentioned above and serves as a valuable set of key performance indicators. For example, the college aims to improve its six-year graduation rate to 57% within five years. Together, these strategic goals, metrics, and shared data serve to keep Evergreen moving towards mission fulfillment.

STANDARD 1.D.2 EXHIBITS

[Student Profile](#)

[Alumni Survey Report](#)

[Earnings for Graduates](#)

[Peer Comparisons Dashboard](#)

1.D.3 Publication of Indicators

The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used to continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

Evergreen shares meaningful, institutionally identified indicators of students success on its website, located on the Institutional Research department [Facts and Figures](#) page. The [Student Profile](#), which also serves to help monitor our enrollment and retention strategic goals, includes many dimensions of disaggregation, including residency, enrollment status, gender, age, first generation status, veteran status, income level, Pell status, and race/ethnicity. Complete [Common Data Sets \(CDS\)](#) for the past five years are also publicly available on the [page](#).

The college also makes peer comparison data publicly available on the [Peer Comparisons page](#). The Peer Institution Comparison dashboard [in development], which benchmarks Evergreen's student success indicators against select peer institutions at both regional and national levels , is described further in 1.B.2 and 1.D.1. Furthermore, Evergreen partners with the Washington State Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), which publishes the [Statewide Public Four-Year Dashboard](#), featuring key data on annual enrollment, graduation, course completion, and degree metrics such as time to degree and completion ratios. This allows for further comparison within the state and helps support mission and statewide data collaboration.

STANDARD 1.D.3 EXHIBITS

[Facts and Figures](#)

[Student Profile](#)

[Common Data Sets \(CDS\)](#)

[Peer Comparisons page](#)

[Peer Comparisons Dashboard](#)

[Statewide Public Four-Year Dashboard](#)

1.D.4 Processes and Methodologies for Analyzing Indicators

The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

Evergreen provides a range of transparent student achievement indicators drawn from multiple sources, which are used to inform strategic decisions and guide resource allocation. These efforts are supported by layered planning processes (see Table 3 in 1.B.1) and the college's new strategic plan, detailed in sections 1.B.1 and 1.B.2. The plan is closely aligned with mission fulfillment and linked to measurable indicators, including strategic goals in the following areas:

1. Access and Enrollment
2. Student Learning, Retention, and Success

- 3. Community, Culture, and Campus Climate
- 4. Innovation and Investment

Section 1.D.2 outlines how Evergreen has assembled, shared, and integrated a set of student achievement indicators that are disaggregated in multiple ways. Disaggregation enhances transparency and enables the assessment of equity gaps in student outcomes.

The college has developed the Peer Institution Comparison dashboard which allows for assessment of student achievement gaps and the strategic goals within the context peer institution benchmarks. These institutions were selected through a sequential process (described 1.B.2). The peer benchmarks are considered in conjunction with other resources, such as the [Statewide Public Four-Year Dashboard](#), both described in further detail in 1.D.3.

Disaggregated student achievement indicators are regularly reviewed at the academic and executive leadership levels and are shared annually with the Board of Trustees. These data are centered in decisions informing operations, strategic planning, resource allocations, and new initiatives. For example, our progress in improving overall retention rates can be sourced back to recent initiatives and investments in new student advising, revisions to financial aid, scholarships and waiver practices, enhanced first-year student experience programs, such as expanded opportunities for pre-orientation and a Greener Foundations course, and our Title III supported holistic advising changes. Moreover, the college credits our relatively low equity gaps along many student achievement indicators to ongoing strategic investments in responsive academic programs and student support structures. These include the new Basic Needs Center, sponsorship of the LatinX Youth Summit, the new Shelton Promise program, investments in our Prison Education Program, the adoption of a dual language early childhood education program, and ongoing support for our Native Pathways program and programs at our urban Tacoma campus, among others.

STANDARD 1.D.4 EXHIBITS

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Statewide Public Four-Year Dashboard](#)

Conclusion

Evergreen's sustained growth – reflected in both increased new student enrollment and improved retention rates – signals a strong trajectory for the college. While some institutions might become complacent following a 19% rise in total fall enrollment and a 40% increase in first-time student enrollment over three years, Evergreen remains committed to strategic growth and to articulating its continued relevance. This commitment is especially critical in light of reductions in state appropriations and a national climate that increasingly questions the value of higher education. To address current challenges and ensure long-term sustainability, Evergreen will continue implementing its strategic plan with a focus on enrollment growth in areas that generate the greatest revenue. This approach supports the college's goals of providing access to a diverse student population and sustaining programs that may produce less revenue. At the same time, Evergreen remains deeply committed to its foundational values - interdisciplinary studies, community-based learning, and innovative pedagogies. This commitment is evident in our support for faculty development opportunities and the integration of these values into new academic programming.

Evergreen's new academic programming reflects a strategic effort to expand access, generate revenue, and build on institutional strengths. The upcoming Sustainability and Social Impact MBA, set to launch in Fall 2027, is expected to attract a new cohort of graduate and out-of-state students, contributing to an increased revenue. At the same time, this program builds on Evergreen's strengths in Environmental Studies and community-based learning, while advancing strategic priorities such as expanding our online offerings. Similarly, initiatives like Shelton Promise and the new transfer agreements with South Puget South Community College (SPSCC) are designed to reach underserved student populations and provide clear, community-based pathways to a four-year degree.

Evergreen is deeply aware of the challenges facing higher education today, including the looming enrollment cliff, increased costs, and a growing public skepticism about the value of a college degree. However, the college has long been a leader in education innovation. For instance, while many institutions are only now embracing the Ungrading Movement, Evergreen has championed narrative evaluations for over fifty years. This flexible, student-centered approach to education will continue to serve the college well as it navigates new challenges. Notably, Evergreen's longstanding commitment to serving non-traditionally aged students provides a strategic advantage, as the anticipated decline in high school graduates is likely to have a less pronounced impact compared to institutions that are dependent on first-time, first-year enrollment.

Evergreen's commitment to interdisciplinary, collaborative learning better equips students with the adaptable, integrative skills increasingly demanded in the twenty-first-century workforce – skills often less emphasized in institutions with more traditional, siloed academic structures. By strengthening Evergreen's interdisciplinary, liberal arts core while also offering undergraduate students access to courses and certificates through Professional and Continuing Education programs, the college not only bridges liberal arts and career-oriented learning, but also demonstrates how a liberal arts education is itself a form of career preparation. While there is ongoing work to refine and communicate these messages more effectively to both internal and

external audiences, Evergreen is well-positioned to lead these conversations. The college is prepared to continue its legacy of innovative educational models that respond to the evolving needs of students and society.

Addenda

Findings from the Year Six Report

There were **no findings** from Evergreen's peer-evaluation report of the Year Six: Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR).

The college's PRFR report, along with the Peer Review Feedback report, can be found here:

[Evergreen 2024 PRFR Report](#)

[PRFR Commission Letter and Feedback Report 2024](#)

Distance Education

Institutions authorized to offer Distance Education must include an addendum to their EIE Self-Evaluation Report. In this addendum, institutions should address and provide evidence of the following:

- *Policies and procedures for ensuring the student who registers in a Distance Education course or program is the same student who participates in the course and receives credit.*
- *Policies and procedures that make it clear student privacy is protected.*
- *Notifications to students at the time of registration of any additional charges associated with verification procedures.*
- *Academic policies and procedures for instructors to implement requirements for regular and substantive interactions in Distance Education courses or programs.*

Institutions also need to address the following, which can either be done as part of the addendum or in relevant Standard One elements identified below:

- *The institution's Distance Education programs are consistent with the mission and educational objectives of the institutions (Standard 1.C.1).*
- *Institutions that offer courses or programs via multiple delivery modalities ensure learning outcomes and levels of student achievement are comparable across modalities (Standard 1.C.6).*

Distance Education Policies and Procedures

Evergreen ensures that all students listed for an offering have their identity verified by using a secure, authenticated Evergreen login and password to access the Canvas learning management system (LMS). Between a verified student identity card, an official Evergreen email address, and a secure login to the learning management system, student identities are ensured. These standards and requirements are described on the [Evergreen Student Account Activation and Verification](#) page. Students also use their MyEvergreen accounts to register for classes, update personal

information, and view unofficial student records and financial aid awards. Across systems, student privacy is a priority and is protected and maintained as described in the [Online Privacy Statement](#).

Furthermore, unlike many other institutions, Evergreen provides narrative evaluations rather than letter grades. In learning communities, students in relatively small classes earn academic credit through a variety of learning activities over an academic quarter. Faculty members know students individually and work with them in seminars, lectures, labs, studios, and more. The high level of face-to-face and small group instruction on platforms like Zoom ensures that faculty members visually recognize each of their students.

Regular and Substantive Interactions in Distance Education

Regular and substantive interactions are a part of all Evergreen programs, including distance education. All distance education courses and programs include synchronous components, with the possible exception of some individual learning contracts (ILCs) – those done abroad, particularly. However, no student can complete their entire degree through ILCs. On the college's [ILC page](#), it says: "College policy states that you can only earn a maximum of 48 credits using Individual Learning Contracts toward your baccalaureate degree and that you can only earn a maximum of 48 credits in internships toward your baccalaureate degree." The policy also states to be approved for an ILC: "The student [must have] already completed a [coordinated studies] program at Evergreen prior to starting this contract".

Elements of regular and substantive interaction are also addressed in the faculty contract. 6.1.2 in the [Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#) requires adherence to FERPA, while 6.2 lays out required trainings. 6.3.1 references requirements for teaching well, including 6.3.1(c) "... being available to meet with students outside of class, in set office hours or by appointment" and (e) "Meeting student evaluation responsibilities and timelines. Faculty members teaching alone are responsible for the evaluation of each student registered in each of their offerings. ...". Moreover, faculty are required to maintain a Canvas page, though no formal training is currently required.

Evaluation of distance education instruction is in alignment with in-person instruction. All of Evergreen's online classes have synchronous components, and area deans observe these. Deans also review Canvas websites for online classes. In addition, the college has an instructional designer, and new faculty are encouraged to work with the curriculum designer. The service is available to all faculty and encouraged among distance education instructors.

Distance Education, Mission, and Educational Objectives

Evergreen's Distance Education programs are consistent with the mission and educational objectives of the institutions, as described in the elements of standard 1.C. The academic rigor and standards described in 1.C.1 also apply to distance education, with a renewed focus on the alignment between program curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessment (1.C.5-1.C.7). Faculty and leadership also work together to ensure the quality of distance education, as outlined in the section on regular and substantive interaction above. Taken together, these approaches help students meet their educational objectives and drive mission fulfillment for the college.