



**Report of The Independent External Review Panel
on The Evergreen State College Response
to the Spring 2017 Campus Events**

Presented to:

Hon. Keith Kessler, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dr. George Bridges, President

By:

Hon. Bobbe Bridge

Dr. Thelma Jackson

Dr. Ronald R. Thomas

April 1, 2018

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Submitted to:

- Hon. Keith Kessler, Chair of the Board of Trustees, The Evergreen State College
- Dr. George Bridges, President, The Evergreen State College

By the Independent External Review Panel

- Hon. Bobbe Bridge, CEO and President, Center for Children and Youth Justice and Washington State Supreme Court Justice (ret.)
- Dr. Thelma Jackson, Founder and Owner of Foresight Consultants and former member and chair of the Board of Trustees of The Evergreen State College
- Dr. Ronald R. Thomas, President Emeritus, The University of Puget Sound, former College Vice President and Interim President of Trinity College (CT), and former member of the Board of Directors of the American Council of Education and the Chronicle of Higher Education/New York Times Higher Education Cabinet

Charge

On October 5, 2017, The Evergreen State College (Evergreen) President George Bridges officially announced the formation of The Independent External Review Panel (Hon. Bobbe Bridge, Dr. Thelma Jackson, Dr. Ronald R. Thomas). President Bridges provided the Panel with a charge to conduct a review of the College's response to campus events involving student protests and unrest in the Spring of 2017. Our objective was to gather information about the campus events and incidents, collect data, review actions taken, and prepare and submit a report on our findings and recommendations by April 1, 2018 to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Keith Kessler, and to President Bridges.

The membership of the panel was determined by nominations from President Bridges followed by vetting and approval by the College's Board of Trustees. The primary purpose of the review, according to President Bridge's charge, was to "examine and assess the steps the college has taken to address and/or correct aspects of its programs and campus conditions that may have contributed to the unrest, while also continuing to pursue its strategic priorities for advancing Evergreen." Our report was to focus on the future, even as we sought to gain a better understanding of the immediate and foundational causes of the unrest and to offer assessments of the College's response and the numerous steps already taken to address the campus's safety, clarify and tighten policies on accountability, and reinforcing the College's commitment to freedom of expression. To that end, this report addresses three key areas:

1. What additional changes should Evergreen make to its policies and practices to increase campus safety, strengthen student and employee accountability, and foster dialog on campus in which all views are welcomed and accorded respect?
2. What changes, if any, should Evergreen make in its strategic priorities given the unrest and its many unanticipated consequences?
3. What unique opportunities does the unrest offer the college to advance its initiatives and its commitment to student success?

Process and Work Plan

Convening: The Independent External Review Panel convened for the first time to meet with President Bridges and his Chief of Staff, Dr. John Carmichael, at noon on December 4, 2017 on the Tacoma campus of The Evergreen State College. Prior to the meeting, the Panel had been provided with and reviewed an extensive file of material about the events of the Spring of 2017 and the responses of the College to them. The material included:

- A substantial archive of national and local news coverage of the events
- President Bridges June 29, 2017 Report to the Legislature on the event
- The Leadership Profile and Prospectus for Evergreen's 2015 presidential search
- The College's current strategic plan (adopted by the Board in 2016)
- The President's charge to the Equity Council in March of 2016
- The Equity and Inclusion Council's Strategic Equity Plan of November 2016

- A chronology of critical events in the Spring of 2017 leading up to and following the campus disruptions in May from the Olympian and from the Evergreen student newspaper
- Historical literature on the mission and founding of The Evergreen State College

In addition, the Panel requested and received other information for its review, including:

- Lists of student demands prepared by various groups
- Disaggregated longitudinal data for Evergreen student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates
- Evergreen course catalogs, view books, and enrollment information
- The job description for the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

Work Plan: In the course of our three-hour initial meeting, President Bridges reviewed the charge, conducted a discussion about the events and their impact on Evergreen, and answered questions from us about the body of material we had reviewed on the subject at hand. He then invited the Panel to develop a work plan and schedule of activities that would enable the Panel to prepare a thorough report in accordance with our charge. Accordingly, we agreed to:

1. Become familiar with the documentation of the events in question, the commentary and media coverage they produced, and the responses made by The Evergreen State College in response to them.
2. Conduct two days of in-person interviews on campus with a broad cross-section of the campus community—senior officers, faculty, students, and staff—on January 23 and 24 with an understanding that additional interviews could be scheduled if warranted (with a purpose of developing a broad understanding of the causes, impact, and responses to the events in questions).
3. Develop a report outline and request additional information from the College (data on enrollment trends in and composition of Evergreen’s student population, and disaggregated persistence and graduation rates, staff demographics, information on program and curricular design and enrollment procedures, etc.).
4. Conduct a final round of interviews with additional staff, administrators, a trustee, and President Bridges on March 1.

5. Conduct a final Panel meeting (at the Tacoma campus of Evergreen on March 16, 2018).
6. Prepare a draft report for President Bridges and Chief of Staff Carmichael.
7. Submit final report to Trustee Chair Kessler and President Bridges by April 1.

National and Campus Background for the Spring 2017 Campus Events

Understanding the Events of the Spring of 2017 at The Evergreen State College: The student protests and unrest that took place in the Spring of 2017 at Evergreen must be understood in at least two different contexts:

- First, as a particular expression of an unprecedented national student movement of unrest on campuses across the country; and,
- Second, as an expression of characteristics unique to the Evergreen campus and culture. Events like these do not take place in a vacuum. They have a history with deep roots and ongoing manifestations, even as a series of specific flashpoint events may provoke and fuel their expression. The events at Evergreen are no different.

National Context

As far back as April 2016, a full year before the events in question took place at Evergreen, *Atlantic* magazine published a feature summarizing more than 60 campus protests that had already taken place that year in colleges ranging from Harvard, Princeton, and Yale to Occidental, Claremont McKenna, Amherst, Oberlin, and Ithaca College to University of Alabama, University of Cincinnati, and University of Missouri. Sparked by the Black Lives Matter protests at University of Missouri in 2015, small colleges and large universities, teaching institutions and research centers, publics and privates all saw students expressing concerns about racial equity and justice, the inclusiveness of the campus environments, relations with campus police, administrative action (or inaction), curricular relevance, and student support services.

The subsequent academic year (2016-17) witnessed continued deep and widespread activism on campuses of every kind across the country on these issues (including at Evergreen), and they extended into the current academic year (2017-18) as well, with the most prominent being the events at University of Virginia and in the city of Charlottesville, VA (related to the continued controversial display of Confederate statues and the connections to the history of slavery in many American universities). Those events have subsequently provoked many others, often involving points of tension not only on issues of racial and social justice, but about the values of free of speech, academic freedom, civil discourse, sexual assault and harassment, and community safety as well.

Results from a long-running annual UCLA study, published in February of 2016, demonstrated how widespread the phenomenon of student activism had become by that date: The share of students who said there was a “very good chance” they would participate in a protest while enrolled in college rose to 8.5 percent nationwide from 5.6 percent in 2014. (Among Black/African-American students, the share climbed from 10.5 percent to a full 16 percent). Notably, these figures were the highest the survey had recorded since it began in 1967—encompassing the eras of the Viet Nam War, much of the Civil Rights movement, the military draft, the Kent State shootings, the anti-apartheid movement and the protests against the war in Iraq. The results of the UCLA study were reported in Time Magazine May 31, 2016 edition in an article titled, “The Revolution on America’s Campuses” (<http://time.com/4347099/college-campus-protests/>). Within this broad, national context, Evergreen’s experience was particularly intense because of the national media firestorm it produced and the power of social media to make a local story into an international sensation in a matter of seconds. It is clear that we live in a volatile period of broad social unrest and unprecedented campus activism, made more visible by the media and technology.

The historical, social, and cultural issues behind this foment are not new, but their manifestation in such numbers and with such volume reflects a new national context. Their simultaneous expression on so many campuses with so much furor came about from a series of precipitating local and national events throughout the country, including: the outrage over a large number of deadly shootings of unarmed young Black men by white police officers; the lack of charges and/or convictions in virtually all of those shootings; the emergence of the “Black Lives Matter” effort that grew into a well-organized movement that informed and supported protests nationally; and the increasing diversity of the college-going population (and growing economic disparity) at a time when the cost of college is soaring, student debt is more and more crippling, and racial equity increasingly elusive.

Finally, these conditions were exacerbated by the widespread, divisive use of explicit racial discourse in the presidential campaign of 2016 and the new prominence and heightened visibility of white nationalist movement with the election of Donald Trump and his appointment of an attorney general whose career has been viewed by many as unfriendly to civil rights legislation. The results of the 2016 presidential election itself sparked numerous demonstrations nationwide on campuses and in most large cities in the country.

Evergreen Context and Characteristics

These national events and the social conflicts and pressures they generated were felt on virtually every college campus in the country to some degree, including at Evergreen. In addition, other events and circumstances, quite specific to Evergreen, also formed an important part of the events that took place there last Spring (see Appendix 1, summarizing events leading up to and following the May demonstrations as compiled and published by *The Olympian*).

The case can be made that the national conditions specified above have a greater impact on a place like Evergreen which—like other “nontraditional colleges” that emerged out of the turmoil

of the 1960s Civil Rights and Anti-war movements—possess an explicit historical commitment to progressivism, social activism, and issues of social justice. Such campuses tend to attract activist faculty and students and to encourage more direct confrontation and radical resistance to situations of perceived oppression.

The long tradition of the “Day of Absence/Day of Presence” practice at Evergreen is one example of those characteristics. And the proposed variation of that practice this past year, to invite majority students (rather than underrepresented students) to be absent from campus for that day, is another. Indeed, the campus announcement of that variation was one of the immediate sparks that provoked the events under consideration here. In addition, Evergreen’s unusual degree of historic commitment to diversity and equity—built into its founding—can be seen in the President’s charge for the Equity and Inclusion Council (formerly known as the Diversity and Equity Council) and the far-reaching recommendations of the 2016-17 Strategic Equity Plan that resulted from that charge (See Appendix 2). Again, certain hiring and other recommendations in that plan for faculty were among the points of controversy among certain professors whose communications on the issue touched off the reaction of the students in the Spring of 2017.

The convergence of national and local conditions can be seen in earlier disruptions on the Evergreen campus that reflected an undercurrent of racial tension on campus. They included: the student demonstration at Convocation in September of 2016—sparked by the intense reaction around the country to a police shooting in Charlottesville, North Carolina; student protest of the swearing-in of the new campus police chief; and the student disruption at the Purce building dedication on campus in November, which took place the day after the election of President Donald Trump, when many campuses witnessed demonstrations.

These events were harbingers of those of May, 2017. Sensitivity about racial relations on campus were further fueled by a police shooting of two young Black men in Olympia in the previous Spring (not connected to the campus), and a confrontation on campus between Evergreen students of color and campus police over a disciplinary matter in campus housing in May 2017. Already underway, student efforts were also being directed at revising the Student Conduct Code and creating a “Student Bill of Rights.”

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the Evergreen events relate to the faculty member, who had objected strenuously and publicly to the Day of Absence variation and to other recommendations of the Equity Council and actions by the administration, took advantage of this situation to make a national news story out of it through high-profile interviews with national media, including the FOX News Network, that were used to make a political point, magnify the events’ significance, and ended up drawing to campus radical groups from the left and right, intent on causing further disruption and attracting more media attention to the Evergreen events. Viral videos of that faculty member’s debate with students who disrupted his class lent fuel to the fire.

The national media spotlight, often distorting the facts on the ground behind the unrest, imposed its own narrative on the events and transformed them into an example of “a campus meltdown”

and the wholesale failures of a generation of students and a campus culture. The speed and potency of social media were additional accelerants, generating more conflicting and inflammatory narratives of the events. The Evergreen campus quickly became as much a communications battle with the media as an expression of genuine college issues.

From an administrative perspective, the unfolding of events also brought to light disagreements among senior administrators about how to respond to such circumstances to ensure campus security. Some took a more flexible, non-confrontational, educational approach, seeking to reduce tensions, promote dialog, and defuse anger. Others embraced more of an “accountability and enforcement” approach, seeking to draw clear lines of acceptable behavior and a show of strength to maintain those standards. These differences between campus officials and the resulting tensions they created within the administration, sent a mixed message to the community and created its own fuel for the public relations fires being stoked by national and local (and social) media. These apparently unresolved disagreements hampered the administration’s ability to make a coherent response to the disruptive campus events.

The Effects of (and the Implications for) Evergreen Student Enrollment Trends

Enrollment trends in the student population of Evergreen may be regarded as a contributing factor to the events of May, 2017, as well as—looking forward—destined to be influenced by those events. Demographic trends in the American population, and in particular in the traditional college age segment of the population, demonstrate that we are fast becoming a nation in which people of color make up the majority.

As previously underrepresented populations grow and attend historically majority white campuses in greater numbers, colleges must adapt their teaching, learning, curriculum, and campus life to new realities and expectations across cultural differences. As a self-identified “progressive” and “experimental” institution, The Evergreen State College is going through this evolution as well, and the events of last Spring were undoubtedly reflected in those changes and the changes yet to take place. Evergreen can no longer be considered a “selective” college in terms of admission, with an admit rate that exceeds 95%. While this phenomenon offers the asset of broad opportunity and access, it also presents the challenges of a student population that represents a wide range of college readiness and academic preparation.

The percentage of students of color in the Evergreen student population has gradually and consistently increased every year from 2008 (18%) to 2016 (29%). Almost all of this growth has been in Hispanic students (which have nearly doubled between 2010 (5.4%) and 2016 (10.4%) and in students identifying as multi-racial (from 3.5 to 7.8% in that period). Other underserved populations have been relatively stable with modest growth in Black/African-American students (4.5% to 4.9%. with a high of 5.4% in 2014) and Asian American students (2.9% to 3.1%). About 60% of Evergreen students transfer to the college from other institutions.

Another notable enrollment trend is the sexual orientation of students: in the Fall 2017 entering class, we learned from our inquiry, a Evergreen survey indicated 60% of first-year, four-year

students identified themselves as LGBTQIA, representing a steady increase over recent years and up from 30% in 2011. Evergreen's percentage of students enrolled from what has historically been regarded as "traditional college age" (under 25 years of age) is now only 58%, with less than 25% living on the Olympia campus (the remainder are commuters) and almost two-thirds of students working part-time or full-time.

Overall year-to-year student retention has been relatively stable over the past decade with gradual improvement, reaching its strongest performance in the Fall 2012-13 cycle (82% for all undergraduates). Declines were seen since that year through the Fall 2016-17 cycle—following the Spring 2017 events—when the decline in undergraduate retention accelerated at a 4% clip and reached its lowest performance in over a decade (74%). The most significant decline was seen in first-time, first-year students, who retained this past Fall at only 60%, a full 8 percentage points below the prior year (performance consistent for residents and non-residents).

Also of note, overall retention of in-state undergraduates dropped 2.8 percentage points (to 76%); whereas retention of non-residents slipped 5 percentage points from 75% to 70%. Declines in out-of-state retention were not limited to new students, as continuing non-residents fell from 80% to 75% as well. Institutional Research completed a special analysis of National Student Clearinghouse records to explore where the non-retained non-resident students went: 69% have not yet enrolled at another college; and 28% did enroll elsewhere. Of those who enrolled at a different college, just over half chose a college back in their state of residence. Notably, the percentage of students who returned to their home state is nearly identical to the pattern for the last such analysis in 2015-16.

Year-to-year retention is quite consistent across ethnic lines, with the overall undergraduate Olympia campus averaging 77%, and all ethnicities within 2 percentage points of that number except for Native American at 71%.

While new students who participate in faculty-led orientation programs retain at a higher rate than those who do not, this past year's success rate with the program also declined markedly.

Additional data, showing retention and graduation rates by ethnicity for two earlier cohorts, gives a somewhat more dramatic picture for the cohort of students—first-time, full-time students—who enter Evergreen as their first college experience (less than 40% of total enrollment). Here, ethnic differences in performance rates become more apparent.

- 2007-2011 Cohort 5-yr weighted average retention to 2nd year: Total is 71.7% with Asian-Americans and Whites exceeding that at 76.2% and 72.3%, respectively. African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indian/Native Alaskans lag those results at 65.5%, 64.7%, and 57.4% respectively.
- Overall 4-year graduation rates of First-Time, First-Year students for the 2002-06 cohorts are low (42.5%) with White and Hispanic students at 43.5% and 43.4%, respectively, and Asian-Americans at 42.35, while African-Am students lag at 34.8% and American Indian/Alaskan Natives at 38.8%. The 6-year grad rate shows greater gaps, with Hispanic students now in the strongest position (at 57.5%), Whites at 57.0%, Asian

Americans at 53.6%, American Indian/Alaskan Natives at 50.7%, and African Americans with an even greater gap at 44.9% .

- Relative to the eight public university campuses in Washington, Evergreen's six-year graduation rate for First-Time, First-Year students ranks sixth among the eight in virtually every category, better only than Central and Eastern but behind the UW Seattle campus, Tacoma, Bothell, Western, and Washington State. UW Seattle has the strongest performance among them all, graduating Whites at 85% (vs. Evergreen at 58%), Blacks/African Americans at 78% (vs. Evergreen at 53%). Hispanic/Latinos at 78% (vs. Evergreen at 55%), Asian Americans at 86% (vs. Evergreen at 40%), and American Indian/Native Alaskan at 70% (vs. Evergreen at 50%).

These data demonstrate three relevant and striking pieces of information:

- (1) With the exception of Central and Eastern, graduation rates for Evergreen underperforms other Washington state 4-year public universities in retention and graduation rates for First-Time, First-Year students. This is a cause for concern.
- (2) Over the course of time (from one-year retention, to 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rates), Evergreen Hispanic students tend to close a significant gap and end up leading the way in 6-year graduation rate in some cohorts.
- (3) The gaps in successful persistence and completion for African Americans at Evergreen relative to other populations only increase with time. Asian American students perform at the highest level for 1-2 year retention, but sink below average by 6-year graduation rates. The data suggest, at the very least, a volatile performance for underrepresented groups, changing over time and, likely, affected by lower base numbers where individual students have a greater impact on averages for their group.

Looking ahead: In addition to what these data indicate (reflecting conditions where students from certain under-represented groups, especially African Americans, persist and succeed at a lower rate than others), there is compelling evidence from the admission inquiry and application patterns of the 2016-17 application cycle that the events of Spring 2017 have contributed to a decline in overall enrollment (-4.5% in Fall 2017 from the previous Fall 2016). This trend is particularly evident in full-time first-year student enrollment (with the steepest declines from out of state). Further declines in applications (possibly by as much as 20%) and enrollments are expected for the Fall of 2018 based on current year-to-year data. This condition, and the revenue shortfall it will create, will present Evergreen with significant financial challenges that will not be short-lived.

Campus Interviews Conducted by the Independent External Review Panel

On January 23 and 24, 2018 the External Review Panel conducted ten interviews with representatives of the student body, faculty, staff, and senior administration at Evergreen who

were present for and had some connection with the events on campus of May 2017. The Panel performed a second set of five additional interviews on March 1, 2017—this time including a member of the Evergreen Board of Trustees, the newly-appointed Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, the newly-appointed Provost, current staff member who previously served as the former Managing Director of The Evergreen State College Tacoma Campus (and member of the Equity Council), and President Bridges. A total of fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted (See Appendix 4 for a complete list of interviewees).

Objective: The Panel’s work and its report is focused primarily on a forward-looking approach to the events of May 2017, assessing the steps the College has already taken (and plans to take) as well as recommending additional areas of possible improvement in order to more effectively address the underlying conditions that contributed to the events in question. To that end, the Panel also sought to gain a better understanding of those conditions on campus and the factors that led up to the disruptions of last Spring.

Process: Each interview lasted about an hour and addressed the following:

- (1) perspectives the individuals have on the general causes of the events in question—both immediate and more foundational;
- (2) the interviewees’ perspectives on how the incidents were responded to by the College, including their own roles and those of others in the campus community;
- (3) thoughts about how, in hindsight, the interviewees might have responded differently to those events, knowing what they now know;
- (4) the interviewees’ sense of the impact on them and on the campus they believe the events had;
- (5) what changes the interviewees believe various constituencies in the institution could make to address the causes of the events and to repair any damage done as a result; and
- (6) what they personally learned from the events and what they believe The Evergreen State College learned (or should have learned) from them.

The Panel identified several recurring themes in the course of these interviews:

- Deeper Causes: A number of accumulating factors were harbingers of the events of May 2017—the earlier disruptions by students of prominent campus events, strains between students and campus police, the experiences of underrepresented students that led to the recommendations by the Equity and Inclusion Council, challenges for first-generation students in navigating the complex and demanding structure of the curriculum, completion gaps for African-American students, the lack of a culturally relevant academic environment, etc. These factors, which manifested in swelling racial tensions on campus from the beginning of the academic year, combined with an inflamed national context, the disruptions of campuses across the country, and the media firestorm that

followed the controversy over the “Day of Absence, Day of Presence” fueled the flames. Reports in the interviews indicated that these early harbingers of the events were not adequately addressed.

- Deeper Costs: Together, the disruptive events themselves, the impact of their intense and often distorted media coverage, and the targeting of Evergreen and members of the campus community by external groups and organizations (often via social media) were described by individuals and the institution as a whole as nothing less than “traumatic” (a term we heard with great frequency across constituencies). This is true for both the campus as a whole and for individuals within it. A general desire for more healing and for clear messaging from campus leadership about “where we go from here” was broadly expressed across constituencies. While time has healed some wounds, the scars remain and the underlying issues are perceived by many as largely unaddressed. As a result, the campus has seen staff turnover and suffered substantial declines in applications, enrollment, and retention—leaving a legacy of uncertainty and vulnerability on campus.
- Deeper Cultural Characteristics: The Evergreen State College is a famously “non-traditional” college, fiercely independent, intentionally non-conformist, and inclined to be skeptical of authority and institutional hierarchies. Some faculty voices proudly describe the College as decidedly “faculty-centric” in its values and cultural orientation, a place where students are invited to participate in the intellectual life of a faculty devoted to ever-evolving curricula, interdisciplinary learning, and team-teaching. These features of the campus culture, especially in a context of virtually open enrollment, can make the environment present itself as not very “student-centric” or student friendly. This perception is especially true for students not well-prepared for the rigors of taking responsibility for their own education. A more profound sense of exclusion, especially for underrepresented populations, can be an unintended consequence of such a culture as well. It can also inhibit a sense of belonging to a definable campus identity for students and frustrate clear collective action at the institutional level. To remain the innovative college Evergreen was founded to be, a re-imagining of curricular and co-curricular structures, policies, and practices should be considered to make the Evergreen campus more “student-ready” for the variety of student populations the College now attracts. Completion and persistence rates indicate that there are not adequate support structures to enable broad academic success.
- Deeper Communication: The environment on campus in the wake of the events of 2016-17 remains “tentative” and “tenuous”—a mixture of “frustration,” “exhaustion,” “impatience,” and “denial”—with some members of the campus wanting to “turn the page and move on” and others looking to have more clarity and sense of urgency about embracing the significance of the events and their multiple causes and considering “where we go from here.” Despite some administrative efforts in this direction, a general desire was broadly manifested on campus for more clear communication and opportunities for the campus as a whole to engage in deliberate and meaningful ways with the circumstances of these events, clarify the lessons learned, establish trust, and

craft a clear path forward from them. We learned that traditional communication patterns were disrupted after the incidents due to apprehension about "outside" interaction from unknown sources that were personally and institutionally threatening. The resulting lack of visible communication activities during the Summer of 2017 contributed to the anxiety on campus with the opening of the Fall quarter at the College. Campus constituents indicate that these communication gaps on the issues have persisted into the current academic year, though we note some new efforts have been introduced by campus leadership.

- Deeper Damage: It is inarguable that Evergreen suffered significant reputational harm with key local and national constituents following the Spring 2017 events, largely as a result of the events' inflammatory (and generally misleading) coverage in both commercial and social media. Evergreen's campus unrest needs to be understood as a particular manifestation of deeply-rooted social inequities expressed on campuses nationwide that year, events which, because of the incendiary TV appearances of an Evergreen faculty member combined with the explosive power of viral videos, became distorted by media outlets and exploited by extremist groups for their own political purposes. Some 1500 media inquiries came to the Evergreen communications office during June and July 2017 alone, dominating the administration's attention and resources for those two months. In addition, some constituents (even in our State Legislature) became understandably misinformed about the events and their handling. Out of legitimate concerns, some called on the College and administration to explain what happened, while others urged the defunding or closing of Evergreen. This reputational damage (largely due to misunderstanding) to one of Washington's most distinctive and innovative campuses must be repaired; and it can be with a fuller appreciation of the causes and context of the events, the quality of leadership that preserved the campus from violence or physical harm (which was not true for many campuses), and the significant and ongoing efforts by the Evergreen senior administration to address the underlying issues that inspired the unrest. Evergreen should be regarded by its constituents as an institution for donors and state legislators in which to invest rather than condemn.
- Deeper Implications: The decline in new-student applications and projected enrollment numbers for this Fall and beyond is a matter of concern (among faculty, staff, and senior administrators) and is understood to be at least in part the result of the disruptions of last Spring. The financial pressures in lost operating revenue from those declines will be significant, and will potentially generate another sense of "trauma" on the campus. Moreover, these pressures threaten to distract the campus from addressing the core issues at the root of the campus disruptions, and instead cause the campus to retreat to a defensive posture to weather the storm, protect jobs, and preserve programs. This distraction, while predictable and understandable, would be deeply problematic in addressing the root conditions that led to the events of 2017 and that will require significant financial investment as well as institutional focus to be addressed effectively.

Tactical Responses and Strategic Priorities

The Evergreen State College has taken many appropriate and effective steps to manage the rapidly-unfolding events of May 2017 and to address their underlying causes as well (See Appendix 4 for a complete listing). First, the Panel heard consistently from campus members that President Bridges has from the beginning advocated for a strong commitment to the priority of an agenda committed to equity and inclusion and has acted accordingly, before and after the events in question. The appointment of the cabinet-level Vice President for Equity and Inclusion was one such action, the implementation of some of the recommendations of the Equity and Inclusion Council was another, as were the change in policies and leadership in the campus police force, the draft revisions of the student conduct code, and the investments made (and promised) in student support, especially for students of color and LGBTQI students. Convening the “Community Forward” discussion forums is also a step in the right direction.

The Panel regards these actions as responsive and appropriate. We are also impressed that in the handling of the events in real time—while controversial for many—the administration kept its cool and managed the situation (sometimes despite withering criticism) in a way that avoided physical injury and damage to property. We commend all of these actions, and noted from our interviews that additional initiatives are under consideration as well.

Most of these actions, as important as they are, may be considered as largely tactical in nature—some, in the heat of events, even existential and essential. Consistent with President Bridges’ charge to the Panel, we have recommended some additional steps of this kind on the pages that follow in this report. In addition, we also believe these actions would be strengthened and complemented by developing some additional and more integrated strategic directions, including those listed in the following section.

Strategic Recommendations

- Develop a strong, pro-active and integrated internal Evergreen campus communications plan that restores a sense of trust and transparency among campus constituencies. The plan should demonstrate a willingness by the leadership and the campus to openly engage, with courage and determination, the events of May 2017 and its deep causes. The plan should involve clear and consistent messaging across media platforms, increased in-person opportunities for campus-wide gatherings—in large groups and small—for analysis and discussion of the issues involved, active in-person presence and engagement of senior leadership with the faculty, staff, and students as a model for how the campus will engage challenges of any kind. While there may be some understandable concern by senior administration that internal campus communications may be shared with or visible to hostile external audiences for distortion and exploitation, the risks are far greater of a deterioration of the fabric of the campus community, characterized by feelings of mistrust and exclusion from the administration.

- Fully empower and fund a properly staffed Office of Equity and Inclusion, where the Vice President can act as a strategic leader, coordinating and supporting initiatives throughout campus and in every department—including teaching and learning—consistent with Evergreen’s clearly-embraced agenda for equity and inclusion. The College should consider establishing in the Office of Student Affairs a position dedicated to multi-cultural concerns and programs (if one does not already exist) to support students and complement the efforts of the Office of Equity and Inclusion. These investments will be a challenge in the context of financial austerity Evergreen is likely to face over the next few years with smaller entering classes and tuition revenues. Especially in the context of the issues that gave rise to the events of 2016-17, however, Evergreen will want to avoid the mistake many colleges make of establishing a senior position in this area and failing to create a supporting infrastructure and staff for the urgent work to be done. In time, such an investment may well result in a reversal of the enrollment and retention challenges Evergreen has faced.
- Enact a comprehensive rethinking and restructuring of the Evergreen curriculum (to make the academic experience more “student-ready” and the “student-centric”). Part of a valuing of equity and inclusion is a better matching of the curriculum with the students Evergreen now enrolls. The current curriculum design assumes of students a great deal of personal self-knowledge, direction, sophistication, and intellectual awareness that may not be justified in a student body with the range of preparation and background that now characterizes the Evergreen student population. The curriculum should have clearer objectives and outcomes, clearer pathways to completion, and more flexibility and predictability to better foster the success of this population, improve retention and graduation rates, and reduce the gaps in persistence among subgroups of the student body. The Panel was gratified to learn from representatives of the faculty that there is faculty interest in curriculum reform and that a “pathways” initiative is underway. In addition, other commitments to instructional excellence are being pursued—including the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Center (or Commons), emerging from the Washington Center, designed to promote dialog and inform faculty in all disciplines on strategies for teaching across differences. These are steps in the right direction.
- Create a stronger sense of identity for and experience of Evergreen as a distinctive community that generates a genuine “student-centered” sense of belonging to the campus for a population that is diverse by almost any measure. Evergreen is a complex community in a fairly isolated campus site (in Olympia), enrolling a high percentage of commuter students, less than 25% residential students, a growing population (now over 40%) of students older than “traditional” college age, and increasing numbers of students from under-represented populations and from the military. Evergreen should—in a collective exercise engaging all campus constituencies—collaboratively craft a fully-articulated identity in which all can feel a sense of safety and belonging. That identity should express the distinctive Evergreen values and expectations that are common to any member of the community, perhaps informing curricular reform. The College should also consider creating an array of co-curricular programs to embody those values that are

attractive and accessible to all categories of Evergreen students, making Evergreen campus an attractive place to be and to interact for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This sense of identity must come from such a collaborative process to be authentic, but may build upon the notion of engaged, active, and responsible citizenship in a democratic society as a hallmark of the Evergreen experience, taking full advantage of experiential learning opportunities in the state capitol, legislature, administrative offices, NGOs in Olympia and the South Sound region.

- Develop and communicate a clear, collaborative process and plan to address potential enrollment and revenue shortfalls of the next few years due to market conditions. The loss of revenues will have significant budget impact that will be felt throughout the campus and have the potential of creating further anxiety and confusion throughout the campus as well. A well-considered and clearly communicated plan of priorities and principles that will inform the budget decision-making process for cost containment has the potential of fostering a sense of trust, cooperation, and shared values on campus in this challenging context. These financial conditions are, at least in the short-term, related to the events of last Spring as well as to longer-term and larger demographic and market forces affecting all liberal arts colleges. We should not underestimate their impact: they will inflict pain on the institution and demand hard decisions and sacrifices be made. Urgency can create opportunity, however; if the difficult but necessary trade-offs are clear to all constituents and the tough decisions that must be made emerge from a clearly articulated sense of shared values and principles, the prospect of broad commitment to a long-term vision of institutional vitality and success can be set in motion.

A Note on Leadership

The Panel heard in the voices of the campus members with whom we talked a call for bold leadership and frank communication from the senior administration—both on issues of equity and inclusion as well as on a broader vision for the future of Evergreen in the wake of the events of 2016-17 and the fissures they exposed. We were also warned that within the independent culture of Evergreen there will be resistance to such leadership as well. It is true that there are many different voices and perspectives about change expressed on campus, and differing viewpoints over how much to focus on addressing the causes of the events of last year and when it is time to just “move on.”

The Panel’s recommendations in this report indicate some significant strategic actions and investments will be required in order for the Evergreen community to “move on” and to truly “move forward” successfully from those events. These actions and investments will require bold and unified leadership from the senior administration, with full understanding and support of the Board of Trustees and the State Legislature. Especially given the distinctive culture of Evergreen, that leadership must be particularly thoughtful, consultative, and respectful of all. But it must also be clear, unequivocal, brave, and strong. There is a difference between the mere exercise of power and the humble but confident demonstration of leadership.

The Evergreen State College represents a distinctive and valuable part of the constellation of higher education institutions in Washington. Its mission of innovation and engagement has never been more relevant to our society, and the imperatives of that mission must now inform its own course forward. The challenges Evergreen faces are not unique to this campus; but the spirit of self-invention and reform that inspired its founders provides this College with a unique opportunity to address them courageously.

Executive Summary of Independent External Review Panel Recommendations

In the Independent External Review Panel’s assessment, President Bridges and The Evergreen State College administration faced admirably and courageously a fast-moving and highly charged set of events in the Spring of 2017. We were impressed with the degree to which President Bridges directly engaged with and listened attentively to the student demonstrators, sometimes under very hostile and intimidating circumstances. It cannot be underestimated how much the campus event was transformed into a *cause celebre* by the national media and by the instantaneously viral power of social media, and how much those forces exploited and distorted a campus protest. The campus became a staging ground for a national political controversy with deep historical roots in our history. In this case, the combination of elements attracted activist groups from the right and the left interested only in manipulating the events at Evergreen rather than resolving them. Under these conditions, the administration managed the situation as well as could be expected and successfully kept it from becoming a violent confrontation, even as threats of violence were made to the campus as a whole and to individuals within it. When pressure from many quarters, from within and outside of Evergreen, urged confrontation, the president and administration opted to listen, to learn, and to calm the troubled waters.

The effects of these events were deep and consequential, however. They traumatized the campus and many members of the community. They created an immense public relations challenge for Evergreen among constituencies, including the press and the legislature. And they have also had an adverse impact on enrollments and revenues that will endure for some time into the future.

The events and their aftermath also present an opportunity. In the clear light of hindsight, the administration realizes it could have been better prepared to respond to events of this kind, and has swiftly taken steps to do so. We endorse and commend those steps. In the spirit of strengthening them, complementing them, and advancing their impact—and in accordance with our charge—the Panel also recommends consideration of the following actions, organized according the categories in our charge.

1. What additional changes in policies and practices should be considered?

- a. To increase campus safety:
 - i. Develop a clear vision and philosophy for the role of campus safety/police on campus and appoint a new director/chief who will partner with campus leadership in implementing that plan.
 - ii. Empower the new Vice President of Equity and Inclusion to have a prominent role on campus and in cabinet, providing support for recommended programs and initiatives emerging from the campus climate survey and the recommendations of this report (See 2b, below).

- b. To strengthen student/employee accountability:
 - i. Make a co-led student/faculty presentation on Evergreen's Social Contract an important part of new student orientation program.
 - ii. Request faculty members from various disciplines to sponsor a series of forums/presentations on the Social Contract for all campus constituencies connected with national events.
 - iii. During campus break periods, build-in professional development programs for all employees on accountability, equity, and inclusion.
 - iv. Deploy communications staff to generate a communications plan on community and accountability,
- c. To foster dialog on campus in which all views are welcomed and accorded respect:
 - i. Expedite creation of a Teaching and Learning Center that provides collaborative workshops across the disciplines on teaching excellence, with an emphasis on cross-cultural understanding, teaching across differences, and the range of learning approaches for different populations.
 - ii. Faculty should ensure this principle is modeled in the classroom by required statements on syllabi and enacting it in class discussions.
 - iii. Campus lecture programs should represent a range of political, religious, and personal perspectives.
 - iv. Require all faculty and staff to participate in on-going educational programs on cross-cultural awareness, implicit bias, institutional racism, harassment, and discriminatory behavior.
 - v. Establish a campus climate survey as a regular practice with a clear communication plan to roll out results. Create a committee to evaluate and compare results (directed by the Vice President of Equity and Diversity), disseminate results to community, hold series of forums do discuss the implications, and develop strategies to implement changes where needed.
- d. Prioritize the recruitment of an ethnically, intellectually, and ideologically diverse faculty, administration, and staff.

2. What changes, if any, should Evergreen make in its strategic priorities given the unrest and its many unanticipated consequences?

- a. Create a strong, pro-active internal campus communications plan that restores the sense of trust and transparency among campus constituencies—with clear and consistent messaging, increased opportunities for campus-wide engagement with the issues involved, active in-person presence of leadership with the faculty, staff, and students as a model for how the campus will engage challenges of any kind.
- b. Fully empower and fund a properly staffed Office of Equity and Inclusion, where the Vice President can act as a strategic leader, coordinating and supporting initiatives throughout campus and in every department—including teaching and learning—consistent with Evergreen’s clear agenda for equity and inclusion.
- c. Enact a comprehensive reform and restructuring of the curriculum that makes the academic experience more “student-ready.” Part of a valuing of equity is a better matching of the curriculum with the students Evergreen enrolls with clearer objectives and outcomes, clearer pathways to completion, and more flexibility and predictability in academic programs and course selections.
- d. Create a stronger sense of identity for and experience of the campus as a distinctive community that generates a genuine “student-centered” sense of belonging to campus for a diverse population and give them an identity to which all can feel safe and a sense of belonging, articulating the values and expectations that are common to any member of the community.
- e. Develop a clear, collaborative process and plan to address potential enrollment and revenue shortfalls due to lower enrollments and market conditions (fostering a sense of shared priorities) to clarify trade-offs and ensure that tough choices will emerge from a clearly-articulated sense of shared values and principles.

3. What unique opportunities does the unrest give the College to advance its initiatives for and its commitment to student success? (Including enrollment)?

- a. Distinguish and brand ESC as a college that honors and makes a place for informed political activism, civic engagement, and civil discourse, with a distinctive strength in public policy expressed especially within the context of the design of the curriculum and the life of the college.
- b. Build upon the notion of engaged citizenship and democratic governance as a hallmark of the ESC experience, taking fuller advantage of experiential learning opportunities in the state capitol, legislature, and administrative offices.

Appendix 1

Sequence of Key Events Leading up to and Following the Campus Events of May 2017 at The Evergreen State College

BY LISA PEMBERTON FOR *THE OLYMPIAN*

Before protests erupted on The Evergreen State College in May, student unrest against police and the college's administration had been building up for months.

SEPT. 21, 2016: STUDENTS PROTEST CONVOCATION

During the program, which drew about 1,000 attendees, two students stand by the stage holding a sign that reads "Evergreen cashes diversity checks, but doesn't care about blacks," according to the Cooper Point Journal.

Evergreen senior Sarah-Grace Vasquez, 39, described it as a Black Lives Matter event and "a beautiful, silent protest." She said it was the day after violent protests erupted in Charlotte, North Carolina, following a police shooting.

About 30-40 students remained after the event and used the sound equipment to engage with each other, college officials say. Vasquez said things turned ugly. "I was really surprised at how angry some of the white students were at the black students that were protesting," she said.

NOV. 9, 2016: STUDENTS PROTEST AT PURCE HALL DEDICATION

About 25 students stand to the side of the podium with their fists raised during a ceremony to dedicate a \$12.75 million remodeled building after former Evergreen president Les Purce. One student stood in front of the podium and blocked a speaker from view, and later took the microphone and read a statement that lasted about three minutes.

"Les Purce did not provide his prepared acceptance speech, rather he used the time to attempt to engage with the demonstrators," stated a memo shared with Evergreen's top leaders.

Afterward, current Evergreen president George Bridges met with about 40 students to continue the conversation. It was the day after U.S. President Donald Trump was elected, and protests were occurring all over the country.

That night, Evergreen faculty member Naima Lowe posted on Facebook: "To my white friends: You're on notice. If you're not paying me cash money, working on an impeachment plan, or burning a cop shop to the ground, we don't have much to say to each other," according to faculty member Bret Weinstein's tort claim filed this summer against Evergreen.

NOV. 18, 2016: WEINSTEIN SENDS EMAIL

Weinstein sends an email about the college's equity action plan, which was released earlier in the month, saying he did not believe the proposal would benefit Evergreen's students of color.

JAN. 11: POLICE CHIEF SWEARING-IN CANCELED

About 15 people arrive together at the swearing-in of the college's new police chief Stacy Brown, and eight stand blocking the podium, preventing anyone else from using it. They chant "(Expletive) cops!" according to the Cooper Point Journal.

"One or more people blared an air horn repeatedly, preventing anyone from hearing much of anything," college officials wrote. A student "aggressively approached" and took the mic away from Wendy Endress, the vice president of student affairs.

Brown's children and family were escorted from the area because of "concerns for safety and an interest in preventing further presence in the situation," officials wrote. Later, the student who took the mic was accused of defacing the rear window of a police vehicle with the words "We Bash Back."

MARCH 15: WEINSTEIN SENDS ANOTHER EMAIL

Professor Weinstein protests against the new format for Day of Absence/Day of Presence, in which whites will be asked to leave campus, rather than the tradition of having people of color leave campus.

MAY 14: POLICE DETAIN STUDENTS LATE AT NIGHT

Campus police detain two students after a week of escalating Internet conversations. Both students are black, and were led out of their dorms at about 11:45 p.m. by their residential directors to be questioned by police, according to the Cooper Point Journal.

MAY 15: JOB CANDIDATE QUESTIONED

Students take over a conversation with the first of three job candidates for the vice president of equity position, and talk about recent events and history of racism on campus.

MAY 18: TRIAL ENDS FOR THOMPSON AND CHAPLIN

Andre Thompson and Bryson Chaplin, two brothers had been shot by an Olympia Police officer in 2015 during an altercation, are found guilty on lesser assault charges in the high-profile case. Although the case wasn't on campus and didn't involve Evergreen students, faculty members who spoke to The Olympian's Editorial Board this Spring said they felt the conviction of the two black men influenced student protesters' actions that week.

MAY 19: BRIDGES HOSTS CONVERSATION ON RACE

Some students call for a boycott of a conversation Bridges scheduled with students on race relations.

The Cooper Point Journal said the students sent out a news release stating: "We have already voiced our experiences over this year and Wendy (Endress) and George (Bridges) have made it obvious they don't care about how recent events are affecting the student body. They are making an effort to diminish our voices and take control of a situation they refused to acknowledge until it began to tarnish their reputation."

MAY 23: WEINSTEIN IS CONFRONTED

Weinstein's class is disrupted by a group of students.

"It was pretty shocking, actually," said Brian Stewart, 38, of Onalaska, who was in the class and is pursuing a master's degree in Evergreen's environmental studies program. "Basically we were forced to leave our classroom because of the protest."

Video clips of the protest in which students are calling Weinstein a racist and demanding his resignation were posted on social media and went viral. "When the cops arrived, student protesters formed a protective ring around the students of color conversing with Weinstein," the Cooper Point Journal reported. "The ring of students was ripped apart by officer Timothy O'Dell when he shoved through protesters, injuring two students."

MAY 23: STUDENTS MEET WITH BRIDGES

Bridges meets with students at 4 p.m. to discuss Weinstein, the actions of O'Dell and other concerns. Weinstein is in the crowd. Students take over the meeting, according to a college memo.

Police Chief Brown was asked by protesters to attend without weapons, and Bridges told her to adhere to that request.

MAY 24: STUDENTS TAKE OVER BUILDING

A group of students send the following statement to The Olympian: "What started out as anti-black comments on social media has turned into the dismissal of the rights of students and femmes of color, physical violence by police, and false sentencing of students protesting. Black trans disabled students are actively being sought out and confronted by campus police constantly, police are refusing to explain their actions and harassment. Students will not stand for this anymore, as students of color have never felt comfortable on campus and have not been treated equally."

Protesters use furniture to barricade the main entrance of the library building, which houses the administration on its third floor, hand out fliers that depict Brown dressed in a KKK outfit, and chant outside of Bridges' office.

Later, in a meeting with college administrators, deans and a collective bargaining team for the faculty union, students present a list of demands.

MAY 26: BRIDGES MEETS WITH STUDENTS

President Bridges holds a meeting with students at 5 p.m. in the Longhouse, and fields "criticism for a stark refusal to disarm the police, and, for the most part, repeating patterns instead of acting, implying that many things are out of his control," the Cooper Point Journal reported. He issues a response to their demands, although several of the promises already were in the works.

MAY 26: WEINSTEIN APPEARS ON FOX NEWS

Weinstein talks about the protests and his views on Tucker Carlson’s FOX News show, in a segment called “Campus Crazyiness.” Some Evergreen faculty members and students say his appearance fueled attacks on the campus from the alt-right.

MAY 31: LAWMAKER ANNOUNCES BILL TO PRIVATIZE EVERGREEN

Republican state Rep. Matt Manweller, R-Ellensburg, announces that he will introduce a bill to privatize Evergreen and called for an investigation to see if the college has violated civil rights.

A threat to student safety prompted a campus alert and closure of The Evergreen State College on Thursday. Video by Tony Overman

JUNE 1: EVERGREEN RECEIVES A MASSACRE THREAT

The campus is evacuated in the late morning because of a phoned-in threat.

“Yes, I’m on my way to Evergreen University now with a .44 Magnum,” the caller said. “I’m gonna execute as many people on that campus as I can get a hold of. You have that? What’s going on there? You communist, scumbag town. I’m going to murder as many people on that campus as I can. Just keep your eyes open, you scumbag.”

The campus remained closed on June 2, reopened for weekend classes and was closed again on June 5 because of an additional, non-specific threat.

JUNE 15: CAMPUS CLOSES FOR PROTESTS

Evergreen officials close the campus at 3 p.m. after there are several announcements of multiple demonstrations on campus, including one hosted by the controversial group Patriot Prayer. The protesters face off for a few hours, and one man is arrested for disorderly conduct.

JUNE 16: GRADUATION IS HELD AT CHENEY STADIUM

Citing safety concerns, Evergreen officials agree to pay \$100,000 to rent Cheney Stadium, Tacoma’s minor-league baseball stadium, for graduation. About 1,000 students participate in the event.

“I didn’t even walk in my own graduation — it wasn’t feasible for me,” said Evergreen graduate Lara Semidei, 43, of Olympia. “It would have been one thing for my kids sitting in Red Square, where I can see them. ... It’s another thing for them to be sitting in a huge stadium by themselves and far away from me.”

The Evergreen State College held their commencement ceremonies in Cheney Stadium in Tacoma because of recent turmoil and threats involving the college.

JULY 3: AN ARREST IS MADE IN CAMPUS THREATS

Robert Kerekes Jr., 53, of New Jersey, is arrested for allegedly making phone calls against the college in June. He is charged with making terroristic threats, criminal coercion and raising a false public alarm, according to police and federal officials.

JUNE 20: EVERGREEN OFFICIALS TALK TO LAWMAKERS

President Bridges tells the state Senate Law and Justice Committee that the college will need more money for public safety training, equipment and staffing.

JULY 5: WEINSTEIN AND HIS WIFE FILE \$3.85 MILLION TORT CLAIM AGAINST COLLEGE

Weinstein and his wife, Heather Heying, file a 14-page narrative that goes into depth about racial tension building up on campus. It includes details on numerous events, including the Day of Absence/Day of Presence activity that Weinstein took issue with, his objections to the implementation of an Equity Plan, actions of other faculty members that he felt were inappropriate, and threats that he and his wife received.

AUG. 7: POLICE CHIEF BEGINS NEW JOB

Brown resigns from Evergreen to become a Tumwater police officer.

SEPT. 15: COLLEGE ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT WITH WEINSTEIN AND HEYING

The couple agree to resign from their faculty positions.

Appendix 2

Recommendations Made in The Evergreen State College Equity & Inclusion Council 2016-2017 Action Plan (Submitted Fall 2016)

Interventions and Strategies to Address Equity Goals:

This section outlines a set of strategies for meeting the equity goals that are tied to four areas of institutional structure and work: (i) Hiring a Vice-President for Equity & Inclusion and developing a new Division of Equity and Inclusion that will enable us to implement coordinated and effective college-wide strategies toward addressing equity goals; (ii) Engaging our college in on-going campus dialogues around equity; (iii) Prioritizing and coordinating ongoing inquiry-oriented faculty development to examine and refine practices that contribute to three areas of students' experiences: learning, connections to campus, and confidence that the educational opportunities they experience at Evergreen are meaningful in the context of their lives; (iv) Structure our work in ways that make sure we attend to both equity goals for faculty hiring and equity goals for on-going faculty development for all faculty.

The following section outlines a set of strategies within each of these areas and provides a brief rationale for how they contribute to attaining the specific equity goals around students learning, connections to campus and confidence in their education.¹

Hiring a Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

In order to implement a coordinated and effective campus wide equity strategy, work has started on the hiring of a VP for Equity and Inclusion and the development of a new division of equity and inclusion that may include academic support services for underserved students, faculty development, a teaching and learning center, along with oversight of equitable recruitment, hiring, retention, and training of faculty and staff, including anti-bias training.²

In terms of the specific equity goals, the VP would shepherd the campus in re-centering Evergreen's approach to teaching, learning, and support services on student needs in order to effectively address three areas of students' experiences: student learning, students' connections to campus, and students' confidence that the educational opportunities they experience at Evergreen are meaningful in the context of their lives. With this as the primary purpose of the position and in light of the equity gaps highlighted in this Plan, we build capacity in all of our employees for teaching and supporting students and for hiring and retaining a more diverse employee group. We begin the work of tangibly infusing equity and inclusion premises and principles into all aspects of College business.

The Council researched administrative positions at colleges to determine the scope of the range of the responsibilities for this newly created position of Vice President of Equity and Inclusion as

¹ See Appendix B for 2016-17 Equity and Inclusion Council organizational chart.

² See Appendix C for full Recommendations to the President from the Vice President Search Committee.

well as the development of a division for Equity and Inclusion. Based upon this research, the Council recommends an organizational/structural change that situates this VP to have the capacity and institutional support to place equity at the center of the on-going work here at Evergreen. In addition, we recommend that this new structure/division provide direct lines of communication to, and/or a dotted-line reporting structure to the new VP among offices within both Academics and Student Affairs including: First People’s Multicultural Advising, TRIO, Upward Bound, Access Services, Veterans Services, Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Office, Title IX administration, Trans and Queer Center (TQC), New Teaching and Learning Center, Human Resource Services (HRS), and Faculty Hiring.

Campus-Wide Initiatives

At The Evergreen State College relationships are important. Relationships between students, students to faculty, staff to students, and faculty to faculty, to name a few. Since relationships are an integral part of our college, the question becomes how can we (Equity Council) leverage this strength of the college to enhance the College’s understanding of what it means to move from a diversity agenda to an equity agenda? In what ways can we involve faculty, students, staff, and administration in respectful dialogue where concerns, suggestions, and strategies for action are taken seriously?

As a Council, our aim for the 2016-2017 academic year is to engage our college in on-going campus dialogues around equity.³ We believe that our campus-wide initiative “Coming Together: The Struggle Continues” supports our work in the following manner:

- Refines our understandings of the issues and helps generate solutions;
- Builds support for efforts already in place and for developing new programs; and
- Forges new community relationships and strengthens existing partnerships.

The Coming Together series for the 2016-2017 academic year will build upon the themes from the 2015-2016 academic year. Last academic year the series centered most of its content on equity, race, and student outcomes. The initial Coming Together speaker Gyasi Ross illuminated indigenous knowledge as a solution to achieve equity. His lecture provided our campus with the Essential Question to guide our collective work towards achieving equity. This thought provoking question, ***“if equity is not about the willingness to give up something, what is it about?”*** posed a paradigm shift in the way our campus thought, spoke, and addressed racial inequities.

The final speaker of series Dr. Veronica Velez challenged leadership to devote the time and resources required to successfully address national data reflecting the overwhelmingly inequitable outcomes for students, staff, and faculty of color. She also delivered a powerful testimonial of the inequities and challenges she faces as Latina professor and administrator in higher education. Her message provided additional context to the urgency for our campus to rethink how we teach, support and learn from historically underserved populations. A follow-up seminar unpacked the theme of the presentation, ***“Beyond Speaker Series: Ensuring Racial Equity on Our Campuses.”***

³ See Appendix D for 2016-17 Equity Council Campus-Wide Initiatives Planning Timeline

And so with “Coming Together: The Struggle Continues” we aim to pursue our guests’ and teachers’ call to action in three distinct, but related activities across the college during the 2016-2017 academic year. A brief outline of these activities is as follows:

- *Coming Together Community Forums* – Building upon 2015-2016 Coming Together Speaker Series, the Coming Together Community Forums will include an Equity Council report-back Fall quarter, one speaker Fall quarter, and two speakers winter quarter. These forums seek to elevate participation and engagement of students, staff, and faculty through varied formats and collaborative workshopping opportunities, including direct support of the Faculty Resolution on Equity passed during the 2015-2016 academic year. The forums are outlined as follows:
 - **Coming Together: The Struggle Continues (11/16/16):** The co-chairs present the work of the Council, including an overview of recommendations made in the Strategic Equity Plan. This forum will be formatted similarly to that of the initial “Coming Together” campus forum held in the Recital Hall and will be open to students, staff, and faculty. In coordination with this public forum, direct outreach to students will happen through connection to their programs and Student Activities.
 - **Fabian Romero (Late Fall Quarter):** In honor of Trans Day of Remembrance, the Trans and Queer Center and the Equity Council present Fabian Romero, a Queer Indigenous writer, performance artist, activist, and Evergreen alumni. They will speak on the importance of mourning and honoring the lives of trans people who have been killed by transphobia, as well as the importance of caring, loving, and fighting for those who are still alive. Fabian will also conduct a workshop that centers on trans students, healing, and self-care as a form of resistance to the violence that transgender people face on a daily basis.
 - **Water is Life (Early Winter Quarter):** This community forum will explore the impact of energy extraction on the Earth’s waterways, the effects of such development on Indigenous communities and indigenous peoples’ approaches to resistance. Presented by artists, activists, and scholars, including current students and alumni, the Panel will look at the struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe against the Dakota Access Pipeline, as well as occurrences in other parts of the world. The panel will begin with a cultural presentation on the importance of water, followed by a panel presentation, small group discussion, and visual art activity.
 - **Black Focus (Mid-Winter Quarter):** Content and presentation format to be determined by the Black Focus student group.
 - **Equity in Education (Mid to Late Winter Quarter):** XITO (Xican@ Institute for Teaching and Organizing) will present the film “Precious Knowledge”, a documentary regarding the criminalization of the teaching of Ethnic Studies in Arizona.
- *College-Wide Equity Read* – One way we intend to address gaps in student learning and student success is to help faculty, staff, and administrators recognize that defining student

success in terms of institutional learning outcomes provides a crucial foundation for our work. We think the campus read project described below will help us achieve the goal because the process of reading and discussing McNair, Albertine, Cooper, McDonald, and Major's *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success* (2016), particularly the chapter entitled "Making Excellence Inclusive," will help build a common understanding of an equity mindset and the process of becoming a student-ready college, both of which will help guide the implementation of the Equity Plan.

The campus read will unfold in the following manner:

- 1) In December 2016, the Equity Council will meet with senior staff to seminar on *Becoming a Student-Ready College*, the first step in the process of building common understanding about equity mindsets.
 - 2) Following the December gathering, senior staff will choose a date in late February or early March 2017 to bring together staff, administrators, and faculty from across divisions to participate in a seminar/workshop, focused on the book. The goal of this larger workshop is to continue the process of building a common understanding of equity mindsets. Representatives of student groups will be invited to participate in the workshop.
 - 3) The Equity Council will request time at a faculty meeting late in winter quarter to hold a parallel discussion about the Equity Read, particularly the section in chapter 3 about defining student success as learning.
- *Day of Presence Conference on Race, Equity, & Inclusion* – Finally, our college-wide actions will culminate in an expanded Day of Presence (April 14, 2017), one in which we ensure the involvement of the College by halting all other activities including classes. This conference, planned in collaboration with Day of Absence/Day of Presence stakeholders across campus, will include several tracks for all members of the Evergreen community – students, staff, and faculty – with workshops proposed by on- and off-campus educators and community leaders. Intracollege presenters will be supported by the opportunity to apply for funding from the Equity Fund. The conference will culminate in a keynote speaker. To effectively execute the Day of Presence Conference on Race, Equity, & Inclusion, the Council recommends a faculty resolution agreeing to commit to incorporate Day of Presence into their Spring quarter syllabus, including not holding class on this day and requiring student participation and written reflection. The Council also recommends the dedication of resources, financial and other, to support conference preparation and incentivize participation.

In addition to "Coming Together," we aim to build and transform the diversity precedent initiated through the work of the President's Diversity Fund. By rebranding and repurposing the President's Diversity Fund and restoring original funding levels, we intend to coalesce existing and potential grassroots equity programming across campuses. The *President's Equity Fund Committee*, modeled on the recently concluded President's Diversity and Equity Standing Committee, will support the *President's Equity Fund* in elevating the prior work of the President's Diversity Fund to provide funding, in the form of small grants, to grassroots

programming initiatives and will incentivize proposals for the 2017 Day of Presence Conference on Race, Equity, & Inclusion. New standards for funding applications will ensure that future grassroots programming aligns and supports the College's equity goals as a whole.

Faculty Development and Faculty Hiring/Retention

Faculty need access to informed and ongoing faculty development in order to engage relevant inquiries and practices that will address the equity goals, they will need access to informed and ongoing faculty development. The primary strategy to further this work will involve coordination with the Dean of Faculty Hiring and Development and the emergent Teaching and Learning Center to prioritize workshops and inquiry cycles that will be relevant to addressing the equity goals. In addition, there needs to be a process for supporting the faculty in acting on the *“Resolution on Faculty Development in Race & Equity*. We understand faculty hiring and faculty development do have implications for each other, while our original charge did not ask us to look concretely at faculty hiring. By aligning hiring criteria and practices with the equity minded competencies and dispositions that are being cultivated through faculty, we can begin to hire faculty who are prepared to address equity goals related to student outcomes. By attending to not just the hiring, but also the qualities of supportive climates and resources for faculty of color we will also have a way to sustain an environment where underrepresented students see themselves reflected in the academic roles and interests of faculty.

(1) Faculty Development –

- a. ***Prioritize and coordinate faculty development*** with the aim of helping faculty to understand and refine practices that intended to reverse the sharp decline in confidence that new students have in the ability of Evergreen to meet their needs from Fall to Spring of their first year; address the reasons why the decline is so sharp for students of color; and create learning opportunities across the curriculum aimed at addressing equity gaps in student learning and student success. This strategy will involve coordinating with Academic Deans and Standing Committee on the Curriculum to make use of the structures for the Teaching and Learning Center forwarded by the group that attended the Teaching and Learning National Institute. Part of the organizational structure of this Center involves translating the institutional priorities into ongoing equity-minded and inquiry-oriented faculty development that attends to student learning experiences and outcomes related to the Six Expectations, and then coordinating, supporting, and assessing it.
- b. ***Provide supports for enacting the faculty resolution and connecting it specifically to our equity goals***
 - The Academic Deans will work in collaboration with the Equity and Inclusion Council to identify a set of criteria and resources that could inform and support faculty in making relevant moves that are equity minded. Develop a strategy with the Agenda Committee and the emergent Teaching and Learning center to share these criteria and resources, and develop a strategy for assessing the effectiveness of this work, both in

terms of faculty engagement and also in terms of student learning. The resources should also specifically target this year's equity goals.

- Work with the Academic Deans, the emergent Teaching and Learning Center, The Washington Center, MiT, and UFE to develop a set of protocols for informing and engaging equity-minded reflection on teaching that can be built into faculty development workshops and guide individual faculty annual reflections. These protocols will specifically connect with this year's equity goals.
- Work with the Academic Deans and UFE to identify and refine any criteria tied to renewal of contract/continuation that might inadvertently create either ambiguity or even a double bind for faculty about how to best represent their commitments to the college.

(2) Faculty Hiring and Retention –

- a. *Faculty Hiring Priorities Process* - Recent academic publications on diversity in faculty hiring emphasize placing equity at the center of establishing hiring priorities (see *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “How to Hire for Diversity, 9/16/16). Evergreen’s 2012 Hiring Priorities DTF report includes some equity considerations in determining hiring, such as data on whether students of color are distributed in the curriculum, and suggestions on revising job descriptions to broaden applicant pool. Yet, there is no specific reference to diversity and equity in the criteria for prioritizing faculty hires – an issue which needs to be central to equity minded practices. The report does offer criteria for support of campus-wide initiatives: “Faculty should be hired to support initiatives after campus-wide discussion and support with institutional commitment to develop resources” (Hiring Priorities DTF report 2012, 10). However, our current practices for setting long- and short -term faculty hiring priorities is inconsistent at best, and raises a number of interlocking questions: What would it look like to move the entire hiring process, from setting hiring priorities to the recruitment, interviewing, and selection of faculty, to a more explicit equity framework? How can we work to shift the process for determining temporary/visiting faculty hires to an explicit equity framework? This would include working against the tendencies of nepotism and the faculty impulse to “replicate themselves” at all levels of the hiring process.

Action Steps

- Explore more transparent models of temporary/adjunct faculty hires, possibly in the form of a Temporary Hiring Pool.
- Have an equity justification/explanation for each potential hire/position that is submitted to the Hiring Priorities DTF.
- Develop practices for anticipating retirements and other faculty hiring emergencies, so that we can recruit from broader applicant pools.
- Require that all members of the Faculty Hiring Priorities DTF take part in implicit bias training, and/or other appropriate professional development

that will help them identify approaches to setting hiring priorities that are equity minded.

- Explore the features and capabilities of the soon-to-be implemented new applicant tracking system in support of equity goals.

Timeline

- Fall quarter: Connect with Scott Coleman (Chair of HP DTF) to strategize how/when a broader conversation about these ideas will fit into their work for the year. Link this work to the Hiring Priorities Report (2012).
- Fall/winter: action subcommittee explores models of temporary hiring that promotes equity at other institutions.
- Fall/winter: once the applicant tracking system is in place, connect with HR staff and Faculty Hiring Office staff to share action steps and consider implications and opportunities related to the tracking system.
- Winter quarter, prior to call for position proposals: action subcommittee develops draft language to propose adding an equity justification/explanation on position proposals)
- Winter/Spring: Follow-up with HP DTF at one or more meetings
- Summer Institute trainings on “Re-envisioning Faculty Hiring through an Equity Lens” with emphasis on setting priorities, crafting equity-based job announcements, and recruiting diverse candidates.

- b. *Faculty Hiring Procedures* - We’re observing that some elements of our hiring procedures can undermine equity as outlined in our overall plan. This includes inconsistencies in our collective understanding and use of the Multicultural/Equity and Diversity Statement, nascent of anti-bias training for hiring committees, underdeveloped plans for outreach and networking to candidates from underserved communities, and narrow minimal qualifications in job descriptions that often exclude candidates from underserved groups.

Action Steps

- For faculty hiring, change the Multicultural Statement to an Equity Statement (action already taken by Hiring and Development Dean Therese Saliba, effective for this year’s AY 16-17).
- Requiring implicit bias training for all members of faculty hiring search committees. (Progress already made with workshop, entitled “Re-Envisioning Faculty Hiring through an Equity Lens” and attended by over 75% of search committee members and recorded for the viewing of those who missed the workshop).
- Institutionalize ongoing implicit bias training. How do we make sure that our work on implicit bias training/learning is ongoing and iterative?
- Institutionalize summer institutes focused on Search Advocate training, and ensure that there is at least one search advocate involved in the writing of job descriptions, as well as on hiring committees.

- Ensure that the Equity Statement required of faculty candidates is intentionally considered by all hiring committee members by developing a rubric for assessing the statement in a meaningful way. Possibly take a further step to blend the equity statement with the teaching statement.
- Poll current faculty and staff about their professional, academic and social networks that could potentially be used for recruitment outreach for faculty positions.
- Once the new automated applicant tracking system is implemented, work with the Office of College Relations to explore options for using social media (e.g. LinkedIn, alumni or social networks, etc.) and developing consistent messaging designed to attract/appeal to diverse applicant pools.
- Explore whether our consortium peer colleges (i.e. Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges or Consortium for Innovative Environments in Learning) would want to partner with us to develop recruitment and outreach events that help us have a broader audience with underserved groups. This might also include working together to develop more trained, diverse graduates for the pipeline to liberal arts faculty.
- Find out what other institutions are doing to increase the diversity of their applicant pools.

Timeline

- Winter quarter: Conduct a poll of current faculty and staff regarding networks they would be willing to share job postings with.
- Summer: Continue to provide institute opportunities (across faculty, staff, and students).

Staff Development and Hiring

We recommend implementing a strategy that compliments the efforts in the faculty recruitment and hiring section of the plan. Working in collaboration with Human Resources and campus appointing authorities the council will review the "16 Steps in the Hiring Process" identified by DEHPD (Diversity & Equity in Hiring & Professional Development).⁴ DEHPD was formed in 2014 in order to respond to the low numbers of faculty, administrators, and staff of color and other underrepresented groups throughout the state college and university system. Across the state, region, and nation students of color and other under-represented groups on college campuses have called for the demographic disparities between employee diversity and student populations be eliminated as a crucial step to increase student success.

This collaboration will provide the opportunity to perform collective analysis of existing hiring data. In addition, the collaboration will produce the development of new policies to address structural racism, unconscious bias, and other forms of exclusion with regard to the hiring process and professional development opportunities, among other aspects of institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion. Racial equity and accountability to the needs and aspirations of

⁴ See Appendix E – 16 Steps in the Hiring Process Outline and 14 Steps in the Hiring Process Descriptions.

the increasingly diverse student body is not possible without placing equitable hiring practices at the center of our efforts.

Opportunities to Improve Equity Practice through 16 Steps of Hiring Process

Human Resource Services (HRS) recommends the implicit bias training piece be the same (or very closely aligned) for both faculty and staff so that both employee groups are operating under the same principles and conveying the same message/actions with our students. We strongly believe that further collaboration and development of staff hiring practices is necessary to achieve equitable outcomes [through the entire process from the assessment of the need for a new position, job description, posting and recruitment, selection and appointment process, offering and onboarding process, retention, professional development, and promotion.]

Action Steps

- Implement implicit bias training for staff position hiring committees. Last year, we completed 72 recruitments. We anticipate 85 recruitments this calendar year. Given this volume, we recommend the College purchase one implicit bias training video, that all search committee members view it, and that we achieve consistent message and training.
- Task each division with allocating a percentage of their hiring that goes explicitly to hiring candidates from under-represented groups.
- Poll current faculty and staff about their professional, academic and social networks that could potentially be used to broaden outreach for staff recruitments.
- Explore models for temporary staff hires that seek to broaden the pool.

Appendix 3

Individuals Interviewed by the Independent External Review Panel

Jamil Bee, Student

Steve Blakeslee, Chair of the Agenda Committee and Member of the Faculty

George Bridges, President

Jennifer Drake, Provost

Wendy Endress, Vice President of Student Affairs

Chassity Holliman-Douglas, Vice President & Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion

John Hurley, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Olga Inglebritson, former Managing Director of the Tacoma Program and Member of the Equity Council, Associate Director of Development

Sandy Kaiser, Vice President of College Relations

Keith Kessler, Chair of The Evergreen State College Board of Trustees

Jacqueline Littleton, Student

Eric Pedersen, Interim Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services

Justin Puckett, Student Trustee

Ken Tabbutt, former Interim Provost, former Academic Dean, Member of the Faculty

Sandy Yannone, Director of the Writing Center, Member of the Faculty, Past Chair of the Faculty Agenda Committee and Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees

Appendix 4

Summary of Actions Taken by Evergreen State College Administration

Prior to this Report

1. See Progress Report on Campus Safety to Senator Mark Schoesler (June 29, 2017) identified the following actions taken:
 - a. Formation of a 60-day working group to review and identify administrative tools to improve campus safety
 - b. Development of a departmental assessment by Evergreen Chief of Police outlining training, equipment, personnel needs for campus police
 - c. Campus-wide initiatives established or continued: Bias Incident Response Team, pathway lighting, blue light emergency phones, training in de-escalation, SaferSteps escort program
 - d. Project launched for the improvements to student conduct code in summer of 2017 (completed)
 - e. Summary of disciplinary actions taken for violators of student conduct code
 - f. The proposed establishment of an external review panel to assess College responses to the events of the Spring.
2. Testimony to Senate Law and Justice Committee June 20, 2017 by President Bridges responding to questions about safety policies and procedures (and recent improvements) on the Evergreen State College Campus.
3. Recruited and appointed a Vice President/Vice Provost to lead and advance our work on equity and inclusion.
4. Continued implementation of the Equity Council's recommendations in the Strategic Equity Plan of November 2016.
5. Selected a location for the College's planned Equity Center.
6. Cultural competency, sensitivity and anti-bias training program developed and implemented for staff and for faculty.
7. Increased staffing level of the College's civil rights officer from part-time to full-time.

8. Increased the budget in First Peoples Multicultural Advising Services to address student wage concerns, provided programming support to welcome new Native students, and committed to opening every major public event with the announcement that Evergreen is located on the ceded land of the Salish people who are the traditional custodians of this land, to pay respect to the elders past and present of the Squaxin Island Tribe, and to extend that respect to all other Native people present.
9. Made permanent the staff coordinator position of the Trans and Queer Center (TQC).
10. Took steps to address advising and support needs of undocumented students.
11. Piloted the Safer Steps program to escort students, faculty and staff across campus in evenings and weekends when needed.
12. Established new College policies under the Washington Administrative Code to increase campus safety by establishing rules governing access to and use of the College's public spaces and prohibiting the presence of weapons on campus.
13. Currently working to revise Evergreen's Student Conduct Code with significant input from students working on the code this past summer.
14. Initiated and completed an internal review of police response to calls and complaints received about May 2017 events.
15. Identified an external review team of state leaders to evaluate the impact of the unrest in Spring on the strategic direction of the College.
16. Committed to increase training and support for campus police services focused on addressing external threats to campus along with safe and non-threatening engagement of people, de-escalating interpersonal conflict while minimizing use of force, and responding to the wide ranging safety and accessibility needs of Evergreen community members.
17. Developed improvements in campus communications including a bi-weekly newsletter going to all faculty and staff (*Evergreen Forward*), a campus leadership group of senior staff managers and supervisors (College Leadership Group) that meets monthly with executive leadership, and increased in-person meetings between senior executives and staff and faculty in their respective divisions.
18. Developing alternatives to the Day-of-Absence/Day of Presence event that are focused on thoughtful dialogue about race.

19. Conducting Implicit bias training with all faculty and staff .
20. Conducting active-shooter trainings with many groups on campus in response to threats of violence received in June and July, 2017
21. Requested and received funds from the Legislature to strengthen campus law enforcement