

# Legislature 101

A guide for students, faculty, and staff of The Evergreen State College interested in the legislative process. This overview will provide information about how the Washington State Legislature functions and an update of the coming session.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> This guide was prepared by the Office of Government Relations for The Evergreen State College.

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## **How does the Legislature work?**

Washington has 49 legislative districts. A senator from each district is elected to the Senate; two representatives from each district are elected to the House. Senators serve 4-year terms, Representatives serve 2-year terms.

The Senate and House of Representatives meet in regular session each year beginning the second Monday in January. When in session, the House and Senate draft Operating, Capital, and Transportation budgets, as well as create and change existing laws.

In the odd numbered years (2015, 2017, etc.) the regular session lasts for a maximum of 105 days. In even numbered years (2016, 2018) the supplemental session will last a maximum of 65 days. If the Legislature needs to go beyond the time allotted for a regular session, the governor may call for an extraordinary session, which can last up to 30 days. There is no limit to the number of extra sessions that can be called.

## **How can new laws be introduced?**

During session, members of the House and Senate can introduce laws, which are drafted as bills for consideration. The bill is introduced to the chamber to which the member belongs. From there it must be reviewed by said committee and passed. If the bill passes review by the committee, it moves to the floor and must be passed there. It must then pass the same process through the other chamber. If it passes through both the House and Senate, it goes to the governor for final approval.

## **Who is representing Evergreen?**

The Olympia campus is part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> district. Senator Karen Fraser represents the 22<sup>nd</sup> District in the Senate and Representatives Chris Reykdal and Sam Hunt serve in the House.

To find more information about representatives, please go to:  
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>

## **Who represents Evergreen to the Legislature?**

Evergreen is represented by multiple individuals, including:

Thomas (Les) Purce, President  
Julie Garver, Director of Government Relations

In addition, the vice presidents, faculty, staff, and students represent the College in work sessions, on legislation and in meetings with policymakers.

For more information, please go to:

[www.evergreen.edu/president/govrelations/home](http://www.evergreen.edu/president/govrelations/home)

## **What are the big issues being discussed in the 2015 Legislative Session?**

The primary issues this session will be to adopt new biennial operating, capital and transportation budgets for 2015-17, funding to support the McCleary decision on basic education, implementation of Initiative 1351, revenue, and climate change.

Other important issues this session will likely include:

- Personnel policies (i.e. pension policy, salaries)
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with a focus on computer science
- Student services including mentoring and advising
- Sexual assault prevention on campus
- Post-graduate success for students including employment and professional/graduate school
- Access: Tuition policy, financial aid, student debt, etc.