

# **Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report**

**The Evergreen State College**

**Olympia, Washington**

**October 7 – 9, 2013**

*A confidential report of findings prepared for the  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*

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## **II. Introduction**

An Evaluation Committee of three members from peer institutions representing the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities with the assistance of Dr. Pamela Goad conducted a peer evaluation of The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington. From October 7 – 9 the Committee conducted a Year Three Evaluation for continuing accreditation under all five of the Commission's Standards and 2 – 21 of the *Eligibility Requirements for Candidates for Accreditation and Accredited Institutions*. In advance of the visit Committee members reviewed the university's Year Three Self-Evaluation Report and reviewed additional materials available electronically or in hard copy.

The institution's Comprehensive Evaluation in was 2008, followed by a Progress Report in Fall 2010. A M.Ed. in Curricular Instruction was suspended in 2011 and dual degree program in Master of Public Administration/Master of Environmental Studies was suspended in 2011, both approved by the Commission as Minor Changes. Most recently, accreditation was reaffirmed 2/13/12 on the basis of the Fall 2011 Year One Evaluation. Two recommendations stemming from that evaluation are addressed in Section IV below.

The Committee met variously with members of the Board of Trustees, the president, vice presidents, four of six academic deans and the Dean of Students, many management staff and faculty leadership groups in our efforts to validate the findings of the Self-Evaluation Report and confirm that the Evergreen State College meets the *Eligibility Requirements*.

The institution's good web presence was vital to the Committee's work.

The Committee thanks the College for its responsiveness to our scheduling needs as well as for the good and frank conversations we had with various individuals and groups.

## **III. Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report and Materials**

The Evergreen State College *Year Three Self-Evaluation Report* was very useful to the Committee in its updating of significant campus changes and developments as well presenting more fully the institution's processes for assessing mission fulfillment. Although a product of multiple authors, the *Report* was reasonably cohesive, complete, and clear. It

presents responses to the two recommendations from the Year One Evaluation that are now incorporated into new versions of indicators of acceptable performance and into rewritten text about direct assessment tools. Unfortunately, the readers needed to refer to the earlier Self-Evaluation to tease out exactly what had changed. A simple statement about the changes was needed. The *Report* then moves on to an adequate self-review responding to the pertinent Eligibility Requirements and Standards for Year Three Reports.

The *Report* is descriptive, something predictable in a Year Three Report that is demonstrating that the institution has the appropriate resources and capacity to fulfill its mission. There were sections in Standard Two reporting where Committee members needed to seek additional materials needed to assess how the institution was meeting the Standard, and in that regard the *Report* was uneven. It does, however, identify institutional challenges met and anticipated.

Other materials necessary for the Committee's review were generally available electronically prior to the campus visit. In fact, the Committee found the college web presence and presentation to be exemplary and commendable.

#### **IV. Topics addressed as an addendum – Past Recommendations.**

The Year One Peer-Evaluation Report to the Commission contained two Recommendations that the Commission, while reaffirming accreditation, requested that the college address in the Year Three Report. **Recommendation #1** was that the college "develop and assign more specific designations of an acceptable level of performance for each indicator under each core theme, articulating in specific terms for each indicator what successful mission fulfillment looks like." Standard 1.A.2 and 1.B.2 were cited.

**Recommendation #2** indicated that the information provided in the college's Year One Self-Evaluation Report "did not make clear how analysis of the student transcripts will provide objective evidence to assess mission fulfillment." The recommendation further indicated that "the college develop or adopt direct assessment tools as indicators for assessing progress toward each objective for each core theme." Standard 1.B.2 was cited.

Perhaps because the complexities of Evergreen's fabric – Mission, Core Themes (with 13 Objectives and a near plethora of indicators), Five Foci, and Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate (which articulates their general education expectations), understanding how the College attempts to meet Standards 1.A.2 and 1.B.2 required multiple readings and multiple conversations with campus leaders.

New to this Self-Evaluation is additional reporting of assessments not emphasized in the Year-One Self-Assessment as well as a significant addition to the campus processes for assessing mission fulfillment. Predictably and, to the Committee acceptably, the College has approached mission fulfillment holistically – which means that everything in the preceding paragraph is at play at once.

This report narrows the list of indicators significantly to those most easily related to the Six

Expectations and allow peer institution comparisons as benchmarking. Many are heavily quantitative, allowing the College to assess whether it wished to "maintain" or "improve" under an indicator for the objective. Key data sources now include End-of-Program Review, Transcript Review, Alumni Survey, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Administrative Data, and Student Activity Data – all of which allow for either internal or external benchmarking. New to this report format is the analysis of student data drawn from new processes and tracking methods established to better collect information about student participation in community service and sustainability and social justice activities. Using this data, the institution did determine whether progress toward mission fulfillment was adequate and should be maintained or improved upon. Substantive text on the rationale for each objective describes the analysis used to determine "maintain" or "improve."

Strengthening the College's ability to understand its mission fulfillment is the new Academic Statement Initiative, piloted in 2012-13. Students are required to write and revise annually with faculty support an assessment of how they are progressing and earning a bachelor's degree. The final statement becomes part of the student's official college transcript. A sensible process beginning at orientation and following to commencement adds to the utility of this assessment. And currently being implemented is an electronic repository that should have great utility in analyzing aspects of mission fulfillment.

In concluding that the College has responded adequately to the Commission's previous recommendations and determining to make no further recommendations in this Report, the Committee notes that in an institution as complex and sometimes complicated as Evergreen where everything seems connected to everything else, the difficulty of analyzing what the College has done requires special efforts by the institution and encourages herculean efforts at clarity as future Self-Evaluations are written.

## **SECTION ONE – Mission, Core Themes and Expectations**

### **V. Eligibility Requirements 2–3**

The Committee's finding is that the institution fully meets these requirements.

*Requirement 2, Authority* – From its founding by the State of Washington in 1967, authority continues via gubernatorial appointment of trustees and operation under state law (Chapter 28B.40 RCW).

*Requirement 3, Mission and Core Themes* – Current Mission and Core Themes date from 2011 and evolved with appropriate governing board oversight and approval. The primary purpose of the institution, reflected in the Core Themes, is serving the needs of its students through programs primarily leading to recognized degrees. College resources are appropriately expended to that end.

### **VI. Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations**

**Standard One – Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations** *The institution articulates its purpose in the form of a mission statement and identifies core themes that manifest essential elements of that mission. It defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment*

The Evergreen State College mission statement provides a clear description of the institution and its intentions. Four Core Themes reflect the essential elements of the mission and lead to how its purpose, characteristics and expectations may be understood. The institution's Self-Evaluation Report articulates its threshold for mission fulfillment.

#### **1.A Mission**

**1.A.1** *The institution has a widely-published mission statement—approved by its governing board—that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.*

The Evergreen State College mission statement is well publicized both in print and on the web and is well understood by its community and its purposes are fully appropriate to an institution of higher education.

**1.A.2** *The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.*

More clearly than many, the statement of mission describes its purpose in terms of approach to learning, intentions regarding students, as well as broader institutional intentions.

## **1.B Core Themes**

**1.B.1** *The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.*

The Evergreen State College has identified four Core Themes, which are generally reflective of its mission statement. They emerged from the work of the Year One Accreditation Committee in May 2011 and were presented to the trustees as part of review of the accreditation process. The themes relate to two broad institutional purposes – one academic and centered on student success; the second broad purpose centers on the institution's role in serving the public interest while still informing the educational experience of students. Taken together, those purposes express mission fulfillment. Conceptually, between the mission statement and the core themes lie the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate, intended to actualize the Five Foci – a set of institutional beliefs first articulated through the college's self-study in 1989.

1. The Integrated Interdisciplinary Learning Core Theme focuses on institutional provision of and student development through curricula that cross disciplinary boundaries and is directly related to the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate.
2. The Individuals Engaged in Community Core Theme focuses on the preparation of students to be informed and active citizens through collaborative learning experiences that are transformative, and that link theory and practice within and outside the classroom, both on campus and beyond. Again, the strong linkage is to the Six Expectations.
3. The Environmental Stewardship and Social Justice Core Theme informs both curriculum and the stances and actions of the college as an organization. Again linkage to the other guiding institutional statements – mission and in this case especially the Six Expectation – is strong.
4. The Diversity and Equity Core Theme serves to guide the college's organizational activities and simultaneously informs many parts of the curriculum and its delivery. It is a strong theme with ample evidence that it springs from institutional history and operations long before the articulation of Core Themes.

The Committee found that these themes adequately manifest the essential elements of the Evergreen College Mission, reaching to also encompass the Five Foci and Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate as well.



**1.B.2** *The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.*

For each of the four Core Themes, the college has established indicators of achievement intended to form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of the objectives of the themes. With three to four objectives associated with each theme – a total of 13 – and numerous indicators articulated for each objective, the college has prioritized its indicators focusing on those closely related to the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate and streamlined its presentation. Six sources of data are identified – End-of-Program Review, Transcript Review, Alumni Survey, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Administrative Data, and Student Activity Data. A new display of the indicators for each objective now captures the indicator, the source of data, and some sample data. In some cases the methodology for analysis of the data is also presented. That strengthens considerably the understanding of how the college interprets mission fulfillment.

Student self-assessment and strengthened academic advisement should now result from the new Academic Statement Initiative that is being piloted, adding in addition an important element to the institution's ability to assess mission fulfillment. Further sophistication will come as the on-line record system is fully implemented as a tool for both students and advisors.

### **Concern**

**Although the Committee concluded that The Evergreen State College has responded sufficiently to the Recommendations from its Year-One Report, a clearer, step-wise presentation of its analysis of mission fulfillment would be helpful to both internal and external audiences.**

## **SECTION TWO – RESOURCES AND CAPACITY**

### **VII. Executive Summary of eligibility requirements 4 through 21.**

#### **4. Operational Focus and Independence**

The Evergreen State College meets the requirement of appropriate focus and sufficient independence to meet Commission standards and eligibility requirements.

#### **5. Non-discrimination**

A primary focus of the institution and its community ensures that this requirement is fully met.

#### **6. Institutional Integrity**

The committee found the institution operating with the highest standards of integrity.

#### **7. Governing Board**

Appointed by the Governor of the State and operating under statute, Evergreen's trustees fully meet this requirement.

#### **8. Chief Executive Officer**

The Committee found this requirement to be fully met.

#### **9. Administration**

The Committee again found this standard fully met and was impressed by the level of collaboration across institutional functions.

#### **10. Faculty**

A sufficient number of appropriately credentialed faculty exist to fulfill this requirement.

#### **11. Educational Program**

The content and rigor of the College's various degrees and identified learning outcomes, while uniquely handled at The Evergreen State College, does meet this

requirement.

## **12. General Education and Related Instruction**

Analysis and description of The Evergreen State College always takes *careful* reading and listening, as this is such a complex yet simple institution. While the College does not provide a lockstep set of curricular building blocks to ensure general education breadth, it does accomplish that end through the breadth and synthesis it requires of students through the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate – and will reinforce that through the newly required Academic Statement all students will write.

## **13. Library and Information Resources**

The College's resources are adequate to meet this requirement.

## **14. Physical and Technological Infrastructure**

The Committee finds this eligibility requirement is clearly met.

## **15. Academic Freedom**

Again, the Committee finds this Requirement met.

## **16. Admissions**

The College's admissions policies are clear and appropriately applied.

## **17. Public Information**

Between its annually published catalog and well-maintained web site, the College has done an excellent job in meeting this Requirement.

## **18. Financial resources**

The Committee found that the college has done exemplary work in fully meeting this Requirement. That review, if fact, leads to our Commendation found at the conclusion of this document.

## **19. Financial Accountability**

Annual audits by the State of Washington's State Auditor's Office are appropriately reviewed by the Trustee's Audit Committee and the entire Board.

## **20. Disclosure**

All information required by the Commission has been disclosed accurately and the

Committee found this Self-Evaluation adequate for its review.

## **21. Relationship with the Accreditation Commission**

The College meets this Requirement and is preparing to respond to the new policy on Student Complaints.

**VII. Resources and Capacity** - *The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.*

### **2.A Governance**

**2.A.1** *The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly-defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.*

The Evergreen State College system of Governance, although complex and distinctive, is clearly understood by its constituencies and authority, roles and responsibilities. More than most institutions, the structures and processes of shared governance provide impressively for the provision of the views of Faculty, staff, administrators and students.

A gubernatorially appointed board with broad statutory authority to operate the college is in place; its policies are well presented and well understood. Web access to policies, procedures, schedules, and minutes is excellent. From conflict of interest to delegation of authority, the function of the Board of Trustees is clear. The functions of the president and senior administration are portrayed similarly in the Leadership and Administration Section.

The structures for academic governance – the provost, deans, Faculty Agenda Committee, and the faculty (acting as a whole rather than with a senate) – are described in the Faculty Handbook. A delightful invention – the Disappearing Task Force (DTF) – allows for specific issues, opportunities or problems to be analyzed and presented to the faculty. Additionally, several multi constituency standing committees exist to attend to on-going matters – budget, space, enrollment, health and safety, etc.

The collective bargaining agreement with the United Faculty of Evergreen further ensures adequate faculty participation in governance.

The Committee found governance at The Evergreen State College to be healthy and effective.

**2.A.2** – Not applicable.

**2.A.3** *The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.*

The college is appropriately monitoring its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation including any impact of collective bargaining, legislative action or other external mandates.

### **Governing Board**

**2.A.4** *The institution has a functioning governing board\* consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.*

The seven of the eight member, gubernatorial appointed and state senate confirmed Board of Trustees members serve staggered six-year terms and the eight, a student, serves a one-year term, meeting this standard completely.

**2.A.5** *The board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the board acts on behalf of the board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing board as a whole.*

It is clear from Evergreen's Board of Trustee policies that the board acts only as a committee of the whole and state statute requires publically announced open meetings.

**2.A.6** *The board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.*

The Board of Trustees policies provide for broad oversight of institutional policy and describe clearly its own operation and policies. The Board has been revising and creating new policy – most notably a policy on presidential evaluation in 2009. The board updated its by-laws in 2012.

**2.A.7** *The board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer board-approved policies related to the operation*

*of the institution.*

Under its 2009 Presidential Evaluation Policy, the Board – which hires the president – evaluates the president annually. After meeting in executive session to review the president's self-assessment and public commentary, the board determines its own assessment, meets with the president, and then in open meeting, formally states its assessment of the president's performance.

**2.A.8** *The board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.*

Evergreen's Statement of Board Process indicates that the trustees review and revise long-term goals and as part of the cycle of board meetings; an annual retreat provides for self-evaluation and goal settings. That cycle includes quarterly financial reports and biennial review and approval of both budget requests and allocations.

Two members of the Committee met electronically at some length with the chair and vice chair of The Evergreen State College Board and found them to be engaged, highly knowledgeable about the institution, its mission and core themes and its accreditation status. The Committee was impressed with their enthusiasm for Evergreen's role as an innovative public liberal arts college and willingness to assist the college in fulfilling its mission. The Committee feels that this Standard is fully met.

## **Leadership and Management**

**2.A.9** *The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.*

The Committee found that the college has a good and effective system of leadership marked by clarity of responsibility and a concern for accountability. The administrators appeared to have a high level of collaboration in their efforts, collegiality, and good qualifications. The five major functional divisions – Academics, Finance and Administration, Student Affairs, College Advancement, and Office of the President – all have appropriate personnel, job descriptions that detail responsibilities and authority, and are staffed by qualified administrators. As part of the annual evaluation process, leaders in each area distribute evaluations reporting on the performance of the divisions for which they are responsible.

**2.A.10** *The institution employs an appropriately-qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board, but may not serve as its chair.*

The university president is well qualified and probably more than “full time” in his efforts on behalf of the institution. He is not a member of the governing board.

**2.A.11** *The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution’s major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution’s mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.*

The committee found the qualifications of the administration fully appropriate. There is good evidence of collaborative efforts that cross unit boundaries and the institution functions well. The total number of administrators appears adequate and work fostering the fulfillment of the college mission and core themes is impressive. Despite an amazingly flat administrative structure, it is clear that by employing the hallmark DTFs (Disappearing Task Forces), senior and area staff meetings that routinely involve multi-unit personnel, and retreats, it is clear that the work of the college is getting done.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### Academics

**2.A.12** *Academic policies—including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation—are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.*

Student academic and community responsibilities are made clear through readily available documents including the Social Contract, the Student Conduct Code, course descriptions and syllabi.

Faculty responsibilities are delineated in the Faculty Handbook and the collective bargaining agreement with the United Faculty of Evergreen.

**2.A.13** *Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources—regardless of format, location, and delivery method—are documented, published, and enforced*

The library website includes general policies, reserve policy, copyright policy, media services access policy, media rates, media loan policy, archives policy, etc., adequately meeting this standard.

**2.A.14** *The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly-stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.*

Appropriate transfer-of-credit work is accomplished through publication on-line of the transfer policies and a hard copy guide distributed to all transfer students and well as the credential evaluators in the Office of Admissions.

**2.A.15** *Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities—including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities—are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.*

The Social Contract and the recently reviewed and revised Student Conduct Code provide comprehensive coverage here. They are shared extensively with students through orientation, residential life communication, emails from the Student Affairs Vice President, and other forums. The Committee expresses no concerns under this standard.

**2.A.16** *The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs—including its appeals process and readmission policy—are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.*

Admission requirements at all levels seem clear and appropriate. For undergraduates, in addition to the state standards, the college encourages students to submit a personal statement addressing their previous academic/personal/professional experiences along with an academic plan, effectively introducing them to the qualitative processes at Evergreen. Graduate program policies, although varies, appear appropriate and graduate advisors provide students with information about program prerequisites and expectations.

All entering students are advised of curricular options via electronic and print catalogs and participate in an Academic Advising Planning Workshop. Faculty members assess student skills and knowledge in the context of the coordinated study programs

The Committee found this an effective approach to the complexities of academics at Evergreen College. Policies on academic standing and appeals and readmission are also quite adequate.

**2.A.17** *The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.*

The college policies are clear regarding its relationship with co-curricular activities. Student government organizations have constitutions, policies regarding the allocation of student fees to them exist, and the general relationship between the



college and recognized student organizations is expressed in the Student Activities Covenant. Advising to organizations is provided. Athletics function under the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) governing rules, and policies for print and electronic media appear to be appropriate.

### Human Resources

**2.A.18** *The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews them to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.*

Regularly reviewed and appropriately disseminated human resource policies are in place. Additionally personnel policies of the State of Washington and, in some cases, collective bargaining agreements and the Faculty Handbook apply.

**2.A.19** *Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.*

Classified, exempt, temporary/hourly and student employees are covered here under a variety of announcements, policies, orientations, evaluations and evaluation policies, and union contracts. The institution indicates that the policies and procedures are periodically reviewed. See Standard 2.B below.

**2.A.20** *The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.*

Appropriate measures appear to be in place. See 2.B below.

### Institutional Integrity

**2.A.21** *The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.*

The institution correctly notes that its distinctive approach to curriculum planning requires special efforts to meet this standard and has responded appropriately thought augmenting the catalog with an on-line version updated through a content management database.

In general, communication with various constituencies under this standard appears solid.

**2.A.22** *The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.*

The Committee found that the university displays high ethical standards in its operations and dealings with the public. Through State laws, internal policies, the presence of an internal auditor tasked in part with systematic implementation of these policies, the college exemplifies an excellent response to this standard.

**2.A.23** *The institution adheres to a clearly-defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.*

Policies regarding conflict of interest for various constituencies were clear, including the application of the State of Washington's Ethics in Public Service law.

**2.A.24** *The institution maintains clearly-defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.*

Issues regarding intellectual policy were clear (Patents and Copyright Policy) and faculty rights are included in the collective bargaining contract.

**2.A.25** *The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms "accreditation" and "candidacy" (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education*

The Evergreen State College accurately represents its current accreditation status and does not encourage speculation regarding future status. It makes available for public review the self-studies undertaken as part of accreditation review.

**2.A.26** *If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services—with clearly-defined roles and responsibilities—is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission's standards for accreditation.*

In addition to the State of Washington purchasing and contracting rules, the college's rules and procedures ensure a fit with this standard.

## Academic Freedom

**2.A.27** *The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.*

Through the collective bargaining agreement for faculty, and The Social Contract that includes a strong statement on academic freedom for all college constituencies, the college clearly meets this standard.

**2.A.28** *Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.*

The Committee registers no concerns regarding an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and affirms that the college's constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason and perspectives of truth.

**2.A.29** *Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such.*

The collective bargaining agreement that commits faculty to "abide by the Social Contract" and the Statement of Professional Ethics" of the AAUP covers this standard well. College policy governing patents and copyrights sets a clear expectation for accurate attribution and citation of source material.

## Finance

**2.A.30** *The institution has clearly-defined policies, approved by its governing board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources—including financial planning, board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers and borrowings between funds.*

Clear Board of Trustee's policies at the top level of the institution and an array of college policies governing financial management ensure that the college meets this standard. Additionally, the college's Fundraising Policy covers solicitation and management of eleemosynary activities.

## **Standard 2.B: Human Resources**

**2.B.1** *The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.*

Despite losing staff positions to the budget cuts, The Evergreen State College appears to be adequately staffed to fulfill its mission and ensure the safety and well-being of the students, faculty and staff. Those interviewed all verified the adequacy of the staff and felt that, although leaner, the College was stronger now. Procedures for searches and job descriptions were reviewed and meet the standard.

**2.B.2** *Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities.*

Procedures for the regular evaluation of administrators and staff are available through a review of college policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements. Generally, an annual review is required although the new Student Affairs exempt staff union requires an evaluation every two years. Performance expectations are evaluated and feedback from knowledgeable sources is sought. Interviews verified that the evaluation process is used as outlined.

**2.B.3** *The institution provides faculty, staff administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.*

The Evergreen State College offers a variety of opportunities and resources to support professional development for all employees. Faculty, in addition to the unique faculty seminar training, have resources available to support scholarship, artistic work, travel, and research as outlined in the faculty handbook. The state-imposed freeze on out-of-state travel limited some normal professional development opportunities the last couple years but that has now been lifted. Operating budgets in each work unit include some allocation for professional development. Human Resource Services provides professional development offerings on campus although that budget was reduced. The HR Director believes the budget cuts have made them more strategic in these offerings. The State provides on-line learning and an alumnus provides complimentary access to [www.lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com) to all college employees.

**2.B.4** *Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs, where offered and however delivered.*

The unique, strongly collaborative teaching, learning, and governance model of The Evergreen State College requires clear development of qualifications and

expectations by faculty hiring committees. In several sections of the Faculty Handbook the procedures for hiring qualified faculty were reviewed, especially section 4.200. There is currently an active task force working on faculty hiring. Despite the serious state budget cuts since 2008, the college has maintained the faculty to meet the collective bargaining agreement of a ratio of 25 students per faculty. A pilot project to improve academic success, student support and retention is just entering year two. The project reduced the first-year coordinated study faculty ratio to a maximum of 18 students and lower-division coordinated study programs to a maximum of 20 students. The evaluation panel recognizes the commitment to maintaining sufficient qualified faculty to deliver Evergreen's academic programs.

**2.B.5** *Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.*

Since the pedagogical model prizes collaborative work among faculty and students, the expectations for faculty scholarly and artistic endeavors are folded into its expectations for high-quality teaching. The faculty service expectations are based on membership on Disappearing Task Forces, committees and shared governance responsibility. Time is allotted during specific hours for these responsibilities. The mission and unique model of The Evergreen State College can only be fulfilled through a particularly dedicated hardworking faculty.

**2.B.6** *All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.*

A review of the collective bargaining agreement between the college and the United Faculty of Evergreen clearly outlines an evaluation process that meets this standard. Evidence verifies the process is in place.

**Concern: A re-occurring theme in both the evidence reviewed and with those interviewed is the issue of staff compensation across all constituencies. Progress on this issue is critical to the college's ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff. The compensation issue, not unique to The Evergreen State College, is shaped by declining state budgets, state imposed salary freezes, a changing public understanding of the value of higher education and even the willingness of excellent staff to continue to do more. The college places a high priority on compensation and has been creative and supportive in working on the issue within the available funding. The panel**

**suggests this issue must continue to remain as a top priority of college planning efforts.**

## **Standard 2.C Education Resources**

*2.C.1 The institution provides programs, whenever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.*

The Evergreen State College offers only two undergraduate degrees: the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and the Bachelor of Science (BS). Both are interdisciplinary in nature, and vary tremendously in content from student to student. Consequently, neither degree lists any particular disciplinary designation though both fit into accepted CIP codes for postsecondary education. Both degrees are well-aligned with the mission of the college, its core themes, its five foci of an Evergreen Education, and the Six Expectations of the Evergreen Graduate. The Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate form the student learning outcomes for the BA and BS students.

The BA and BS degrees are designed to fully embrace Evergreen's mission, which emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary learning. This part of the mission becomes the first two of the Five Foci of an Evergreen Education, and form the first of the Core Themes (Integrated, Interdisciplinary Learning). Learning across differences, personal engagement, and linking theory with practical applications are woven through all of the interdisciplinary courses offered at the undergraduate level.

The College also offers three Masters Degrees: Master of Environmental Science (MES), Master in Teaching (MiT), and Master of Public Administration (MPA). In each of the Master's Degrees the Evergreen mission is woven into the curriculum; at the same time the degree offers the content and rigor expected of a master's degree and meets external professional and accreditation requirements. Student learning outcomes for each of the Masters Degrees are available on the Evergreen website and in student guidebooks or handbooks. Each program separately tracks and documents student completion of the degree outcomes.

*2.C.2 The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.*

Student learning outcomes for the programs/degrees are available online for all degree programs. In addition, a repository of syllabi is housed under the budget Dean. However, learning outcomes for individual courses are not consistently

available either online or in writing. Many courses provide learning outcomes in course syllabi, most document student learning objectives, but there is no consistent requirement that faculty document student learning outcomes in a written manner to all students for all courses.

**Concern: Although Evergreen State College has long-standing clarity in the degree level student learning outcomes embodied in the Six Expectations of the Evergreen student, there has been less attention to clearly identified content level student learning outcomes at the course level. Faculty and administration are encouraged to make a concerted effort to document content specific learning outcomes in writing for all students in all courses. Provision of those in course descriptions on the website should also be considered as a means of clearly communicating the goals of a particular course offering.**

*2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.*

The narrative evaluation of student achievement by program faculty forms the basis of documenting successful completion of student learning outcomes and the award of credit. Credit is not awarded if the student learning outcomes are not met. The final document is the Evaluation of Student Achievement; it is part of the permanent transcript. The Handbook on narrative evaluation provides additional clarity and guidance on the process. All campuses and all programs adhere to the same standards for evaluation and documentation.

A renewed commitment to including student narrative evaluations was made in the past two years. This speaks further to Evergreen's commitment to holding students accountable for creating and monitoring their own educational experience.

While Evergreen's framework for evaluation and documentation is dissimilar to most post-secondary institutions, the Evergreen student learning outcomes (the Six Expectations of an Evergreen student) are comparable to outcomes at other accredited institutions, credit documentation is similar and transferable to other institutions, and there is consistency in the process in all programs and at all campuses.

*2.C.4 Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.*

Undergraduate programs: Rather than a distinct assortment of progressively more difficult or complex classes within a discipline, Evergreen creates programs of study that incorporate a multidisciplinary approach to learning which builds a progressive accumulation of both broad and deep knowledge. Students are responsible for

selecting study programs (and some individual courses) that progressively build the knowledge and skill they desire. This is clearly articulated on the website and in the catalog.

Faculty advising and the student Academic Statement are critical features of ensuring that students are building a cohesive program that will serve them well after graduation. The Student Academic Statement will be required beginning this fall term for students newly admitted to the college in response to a faculty resolution. The goal of this step is for the student to articulate his/her intentions for the content and outcomes of the degree. This statement will be part of the transcript and will assist any external evaluators in understanding the student's path to the BA/BS. Evergreen has created an appropriate roll-out of the new requirement that includes both orientation for students and faculty, faculty commitment to assisting in the process, mentoring resources for faculty, and administrative support for students to write, revise, and submit the statements.

Administrative oversight of the range of courses taught is also essential in meeting the needs of the student body. This is a responsibility of the academic deans. Faculty further engage in designing the curriculum and hold responsibility for creating courses that make opportunities for the sequential building of knowledge and skills.

Graduate: Clear, specific course requirements are delineated on the program websites and in the catalog as are the thesis or project requirements and student teaching requirements.

Admission and graduation requirements: Evergreen makes its admission and graduation requirements clear in the catalog and on the webpage with easy to navigate pages and pertinent information that is easy to locate. This is true of the BA/BS and the graduate degrees.

*2.C.5 Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

On the Olympia campus, course design and planning is conducted by faculty in nine planning units with oversight by the academic deans who coordinate through the planning unit coordinators. A modified version of this process occurs at the extended campuses and in the graduate programs. Faculty are integral to every step of the process and academic deans oversee the balance of curricular offerings.

Faculty are fully involved in determining hiring priorities for new faculty through hiring priorities DTF.



As noted in 2.C.4, faculty are fully responsible for assessing the learning outcomes of the Evergreen students through the narrative evaluation process. In addition, about every 4 years, faculty go through a transcript review to determine whether students are consistently and fully meeting the Six Expectations. Each end-of-program faculty survey also includes questions about completion of the student learning outcomes.

*2.C.6 Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.*

Teaching faculty liaise with library faculty in both formal and informal ways to ensure that sufficient library and information resources are available for every class and at every campus. Additional detail is provided in 2E.

*2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.*

A clearly identified, formal program for evaluating, documenting, and transcribing credit for prior learning exists only through the evening and weekend college at Evergreen State. The Prior Learning Experience coursework that is required of participants increases the rigor with which students and faculty evaluate the life experience. Information on the website provides clear guidance on the program's benefits and limitations.

One discrepancy exists in the response to this standard: the year 3 report states that only 29 credits may be earned through PLE; however, the weekend and evening Dean and the web site both confirm that up to 30 credits may be awarded through PLE.

**No evidence was cited in the Self-Evaluation response to this standard. Evergreen is encouraged to provide web links or other evidence of compliance in future reports.**

*2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to*

*credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.*

The Evergreen website explains clearly that there are several ways to transfer credit to Evergreen, and that Evergreen determines which specific courses will be transferred. The maximum transfer credit is 135 credits. There are clearly articulated agreements with community colleges in Washington, and with some specific colleges in California, Minnesota, Iowa, and Oregon. Several different policies and mechanisms for transferring credit exist including course by course, or lump-sum depending on degree and articulation agreement. Selected experiences in the workplace may also be articulated for credit through a formal "prior learning experience" process. The robust website is easy to read and understand.

**2.C.9** *The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.*

Evergreen has assessed in multiple ways that its BA and BS programs provide both breadth and depth similar to the typical general education requirements at other liberal arts colleges. Through analysis of the curricular offerings, they ensure that all students will be afforded broad education in social sciences, arts, humanities, quantitative and mathematical reasoning, and natural and physical sciences. The requirement for the BS degree that students earn 72 credits in programs with CIP coding indicating content in mathematical/quantitative reasoning and in natural/physical sciences, 40 of which must be at the advanced level has ensured that Evergreen students earning the BS include these components in their self-directed programs. The requirement, beginning fall 2013, for all students to include an Academic Statement explaining their educational goals provides each student an opportunity to reflect on the general education components they included in their degree.

Evergreen does not offer applied degree or certificates.

The extensive documentation of this standard that is embedded in the year 3 report is very much appreciated.

**2.C.10** *The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes for those programs.*

Evergreen's Six Expectations of an Evergreen student form the student learning outcomes for the general education components as well as the degree completion components. The subjective assessment of both student and faculty provide additional opportunity to clarify how each outcome is met. The assessment rubric for faculty narrative assessment provides guidance and consistency for faculty evaluators.

**2.C.11** *The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within the program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.*

This objective is not applicable, since Evergreen does not offer applied degree and certificate programs.

**2.C.12** *Graduate programs are consistent with the institution's mission; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. They differ from undergraduate programs by requiring greater depth of study and increased demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.*

Each of the graduate programs has clearly identified and appropriate expectations, degree requirements, and program course offerings that align with the professional requirements of the specific disciplines. Clear information is available on the website and in student handbooks/guidebooks. Programs that must meet external professional licensure requirements (MiT) clearly meet those requirements. Each of the programs requires depth of study and intellectual products that are appropriate to their specific disciplines.

**No evidence is cited in the Self-Evaluation response to this standard. Evergreen is reminded to provide links to documentation that supports the response in future reports.**

**2.C.13** *Graduate admission and retention policies ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with the institution's mission and the program's requirements. Transfer of credit is evaluated according to clearly defined policies by faculty with a major commitment to graduate education or by a representative body of faculty responsible for the degree program at the receiving institution.*

Admission requirements and retention policies are appropriate to graduate level study; documentation is available online and in student handbooks/guidebooks. Transfer credit is accepted in both the MES (8 credits) and MPA programs (20 credits); it is not accepted in the MiT program. This information was confirmed by directors of the three programs on is available on the website; however, it is in contrast to the year 3 report which states that none of the three programs accepts transfer credit.

**2.C.14** *Graduate credit may be granted for internships, field experiences, and clinical practices that are an integral part of the graduate degree program. Credit toward graduate degrees may not be granted for experiential learning that occurred prior to matriculation into the graduate degree program. Unless the institution structures the graduate learning experience, monitors that learning, and assesses learning achievements, graduate credit is not granted for learning experiences external to the students' formal graduate programs.*

All three master's degrees offer either the opportunity (MES and MPA) or the requirement (MiT) for internships during the course of the graduate studies. These may be counted toward completion of the degree as explained on the web and in the student handbook.

**No evidence is cited in the Self-Evaluation response to this standard. Evergreen is reminded to provide links to documentation that supports the response in future reports.**

**2.C.15** *Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research, professional practice, scholarship, or artistic creation are characterized by a high level of expertise, originality, and critical analysis. Programs intended to prepare students for artistic creation are directed toward developing personal expressions of original concepts, interpretations, imagination, thoughts, or feelings. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research or scholarship are directed toward advancing the frontiers of knowledge by constructing and/or revising theories and creating or applying knowledge. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for professional practice are directed toward developing high levels of knowledge and performance skills directly related to effective practice within the profession.*

Each of the graduate programs has documented, in the catalog and on their respective websites, the requirements for either professional level practice (MiT, MPA), or thesis level research (MES).

#### **2.C.16 - 2.C.10**

These are not applicable since Evergreen does not offer continuing education programs.

### **Standard 2.D Student Support Resources**

**2.D.1** *Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.*

Evergreen offers an appropriate array of support services to its students including support in writing, mathematics, community learning, advising – including advising for special populations, career development, and health services. Particular efforts have been made to provide these services on a regular, though limited, basis to the Tacoma campus.

**Numerous links to evidence in support of this response are appreciated.**

**2.D.2** *The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.*

Evergreen has a fully staffed police department available at all times. Appropriate safety communications are in place through text messages, emails, public address, and posted bulletins in paper and on the campus website. An Emergency Response Coordinator works with college personnel and the Police Services to continually refine the emergency response protocol. The police services website has posted campus crime statistics through 2011.

The Tacoma program is under the jurisdiction of the city of Tacoma and Tacoma Police responds to concerns of the faculty, staff, and students. The City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan covers the needs of the campus. Similarly the program at Grays Harbor Community College is covered by Grays Harbor policies and procedures. For Tribal Programs held at regional reservation facilities, the hosting Tribe is responsible for the safety and security of the program participants.

**2.D.3** *Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.*

Statistics indicate a diverse student body with regard to race, ethnicity, income, and first generation status. Admission requirements are appropriate and are clearly communicated. Due to its unique program of study, students self-select for application to Evergreen. Robust orientation programs in Olympia clearly explain the Evergreen program to new students. Off-site programs and graduate programs provide their own orientation programs as well.

As noted previously (2.C.15) the requirements for graduation are clearly explained in various websites and for all programs.

**2.D.4** *In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.*

The question is somewhat irrelevant at the undergraduate level as the BA and BS will continue to be offered as long as the college exists. To remove them would effectively end the college. When significant changes are made in degree requirements, such as the recent addition of the required Academic Statement, Evergreen communicates the information to students well in advance of the implementation of the change.

At the graduate level, the rapid demise of the MED program demonstrates the way that Evergreen handles program termination. The website clearly indicates that the program is in suspension. The year 3 report states that all students were contacted to determine their particular academic needs and timelines to completion. Education plans were worked out with the individual students.

**2.D.5** *The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes: a) institutional mission and core themes; b) entrance requirements and procedures; c) grading policy; d) information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings; e) names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty; f) rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; g) tuition, fees, and other program costs; h) refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment; i) opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and j) academic calendar.*

Each of the items named above is available in either the Evergreen academic catalog or on the Evergreen website. The information is clear and is easy to locate.

**The complete responses to this standard and the web links are greatly appreciated.**

**2.D.6** *Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on: a) National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered; b) description of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation of profession.*

Both a) and b) apply only to the MiT and the information is clearly available online in the MiT student guidebook.

**2.D.7** *The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable*

*backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.*

Evergreen keeps paper copies of admissions and student progress in a fireproof vault in the office of Registration and Records on the Olympia campus and retains electronic records in the Banner system. This applies to current students at all sites and in all programs. Access is limited to specific authorized staff; most access is view only. Records of graduates or students who no longer attend are microfilmed and stored both on campus and off campus with the State Archivist. The recent change to imaged documents will ease the routine access to documents by approved personnel. Imaged records are backed up nightly to computing and communications standards. Audit trail is available for all Banner data.

Departmental records and faculty copies of student evaluations are kept for two years. Records of student complaints are kept within the specific Master's Program Director's office, with specific Academic Deans, or at the office of Student Affairs; the site is determined by the type of complain and its particular resolution. There is no Institutional effort to retain documentation of all student complaints in a central location. A matrix that provides clear documentation of how a particular complain is processed is available on the student affairs website.

FERPA is clearly documented and explained on the Evergreen website.

**2.D.8** *The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.*

Information is clearly available on the website. It outlines the types of available aid, and provides links to appropriate documents and forms. Scholarships are identified in a searchable database that can be filtered for some specific characteristics. Financial aid and scholarships are managed in two separate offices (the office of financial aid vs. the office of the Associate VP for Enrollment management.)

Appropriate deadlines for application are published and workshops to assist students are held throughout the year.

**2.D.9** *Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.*

Students are informed about the status of their loans, repayment processes, and planning through a variety of online websites, and may access their personal financial aid profile through the website any time. Evergreen has provided the default rate for 2011 in the year 3 report.

**2.D.10** *The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success.*

*Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.*

Ample information about advising services, degree requirements, and student responsibility is available online. Advisors are routinely updated about the curriculum through work directly with faculty and through ongoing advising training. There is a low turnover of advisors, which provides substantial institutional knowledge in the unit. Core Connectors – student affairs practitioners who liaise with specific course collaborative programs – help respond to student concerns in the context of their academic program with the goal of increased retention due to early intervention.

The Student and Academic Support Services office monitors student utilization of services; however, no formal program of systematic evaluation of effectiveness is in place. Evergreen has the opportunity to do greater systematic evaluation as that information may derive from the new Academic Statement initiative.

**Concern: The Student Affairs Office is encouraged to establish a clear and cohesive program to evaluate the effectiveness of its advising services to students across all sites and in all programs.**

*2.D.11 Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.*

Review of the documentation presented for 2.A.17 confirms that programs are governed appropriately and that they align with the spirit of the campus for flat governance and substantial student involvement in setting priorities for spending.

*2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution's mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.*

Evergreen operates several auxiliary services; all appear to appropriately support the mission of the institution. Staff, faculty, students, and administrators have transparent, meaningful opportunities to provide input into operation of the services.

**A link to the RAD was provided; however, no additional evidence in support of the other services was cited in the Self-Evaluation, although it is available on the website. Evergreen is reminded to provide evidence in support of responses in future reports.**

*2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution's mission and*



*conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.*

The Evergreen website confirms that funding from various sources, including general funds, supports Evergreens intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs. The website points to clear cohesion with the Evergreen mission. Requirements to maintain eligibility are clearly stated on the website.

**No evidence was cited in this section of the Year Three Report, though it is available on the website. Evergreen is encouraged to provide access to evidence in subsequent reports through website addresses at a minimum.**

*2.D.14 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.*

This does not apply as Evergreen State does not offer distance education courses or programs.

## **Library and Information Resources**

**Substantial information was available on the Evergreen website to document and provide clarification to standards 2.E.1 – 2.E.4 below; however, no evidence was cited in the year 3 report. Evergreen is encouraged to provide website addresses, at a minimum, in its subsequent reports.**

*2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

The Evergreen library holds many volumes and provides extensive access to resources through its membership in the Orbis-Cascade partnership with libraries throughout the northwest region. Electronic access and interlibrary loan provide access to information at each of the campuses. Coordination with teaching faculty through library liaisons ensures that each course has access to the library information supports that it requires. Library faculty also partner in teaching on a routine basis, though only a limited number (one or two) may be teaching in any term.

*2.E.2 Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources faculty, staff, and administrators.*

Requests for additional acquisitions may come from a variety of sources including faculty, staff, and administration; all requests go to the Library Resource Committee, consisting of various library personnel, where final decisions are made. Decisions are data driven based on curricular requirements, circulation and online user statistics, gate counts, user satisfaction surveys, alumni surveys, and end of program reviews.

*2.E.3 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

A Library Faculty liaison is assigned to each coordinated study program to provide whatever level of assistance/teaching is needed for the faculty and students in the program. In addition, there is individual assistance by library staff at research, circulation, other help desks, and media services, as well as online instructions and help request forms. Library faculty collaborate with off-campus teaching faculty and may travel to program sites to assist students and faculty. Electronic formats and mail delivery of resources provide access to most everything for off-site students.

*2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.*

The library routinely evaluates the collection and the library services through circulation and online user statistics, profiles for purchases, gate counts, user satisfaction surveys, alumni surveys, and end of program reviews. The physical collection is monitored with security strips.

## **Standard 2.F Financial Resources**

*2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.*

A review of the financial documentation verifies that The Evergreen State College demonstrates adequate financial stability to support its programs. Significant incremental state cuts in appropriations over the last five years have been offset by

increased tuition and reduced expenditures. Evergreen continues to be and will remain financially challenged by trends and mandates in both public financing for higher education and the current economic environment. The college has developed and carried forward good operating reserves to create flexibility in meeting current operations while creating time for strategic management of the appropriation reductions. Conservative and realistic projections of revenue and enrollment for financial planning and budgeting have facilitated the college's ability to meet these challenges. The reserves and conservative budgeting are laudable and have helped ensure adequacy of financial resources. There is evidence of both short and long term planning for solvency and obligations and a compliment of insurance policies for specific programs and issues are in place if needed. The review showed evidence of adequate resources to support the programs and services and that the commitment of those resources reflects the mission, core themes, and priorities of the institution.

**2.F.2** *Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.*

A review of financial and budget documentation along with policies and procedures indicates careful and realistic resource planning. Again, conservative enrollment and revenue projections for planning have been part of the management strategy. The formation of the Strategic Enrollment Management Group in 2007 helped integrate these efforts with "recruitment, marketing, admissions, curriculum planning, faculty hiring, tuition pricing, retention, financial aid and government relations." All fund groups are budgeted based on realistic revenue projections and historic expenditures. Units must stay within the budget. The evidence demonstrates that financial planning and budgeting are ongoing, realistic, and based upon the mission and goals of the institution.

**2.F.3** *The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.*

Financial planning and budget development appear true to the Evergreen value of collaboration in opportunities for participation by all constituencies. The process requires appropriate constituent involvement. College policies and procedures for financial planning and budgeting are readily available on the web site along with other resources to explain budgeting at the college. The distributed budget process, which includes a budget coordinator in every division, is guided by the Office of Operation Planning and Budget and the vice presidents. The President presents the budget to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Board members interviewed have a clear understanding of the mission and unique culture of Evergreen and the linkage of the budget to their approved strategic plan, master plan, biennial operation and budget request, the annual budget and debt.

**2.F.4** *The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.*

The qualified staffs of the finance area are responsible for timely and accurate financial information. The college uses a well-established accounting system, SunGard Banner (now Ellucian), which follows generally accepted accounting principles for colleges and universities. The evaluator reviewed the college policies, which are posted on the website, determining that appropriate policies are in place for timely and accurate financial information. College policies are due to be reviewed/updated and are fairly well known campus wide although The Evergreen State College reports there is always room for providing more information and training on policies. The college has an internal auditor who meets regularly with the financial staffs and helps maintain an effective system of internal controls.

**2.F.5** *Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.*

The campus master plan is in line for a required update but is still an excellent living document that is informing the capital budget of the college. The plan establishes priorities consistent with the interdisciplinary teaching mission of the campus. One of the bright spots of the last five years is that the capital budget remained fairly well funded and the college has been able to continue moving on its goal of renovating the campus buildings and maintaining a safe environment for teaching and learning. Debt is reviewed and carefully controlled. Currently Evergreen has only two outstanding debts, which are appropriately managed and anticipated in financial planning.

**2.F.6** *The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.*

The evidence verified the reports discussion on the appropriate relationship between general operations and auxiliary enterprises. Auxiliary revenues have remained stable during this period.

**2.F.7** *For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.*

Financial and compliance audits are conducted annually by the Washington State Auditor's Office and the audited financial statements are available on line to the public. A review of the audits causes no concerns about the financial management and stability of the college. Appropriate procedure is in place to review and respond to the audits. The Evergreen State College Foundation is audited annually by an outside independent auditing firm.

**2.F.8** *All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.*

The evaluator reviewed the agreement with the Evergreen State College Foundation and the fund-raising and other policies managed by the Vice President for Advancement. These documents support the self-evaluation report in meeting this standard. The work of fund raising remains very important to the Board and college to help with affordability as tuition has increased. The panel recognizes the work of the Foundation in securing two very large grants for student scholarships during the last couple years. With the loss of state appropriations, fundraising becomes even more critical as a revenue source to meet the goals of the college.

## **Standard 2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure**

**2.G.1** *Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.*

Part of the good news during the last five years of budget cutting has been the ability to continue to make significant investment in Evergreen's physical resources to meet the needs of students, faculty and staff in support of their teaching and learning experiences. The State of Washington, the college and students have invested more than \$90 million dollars over the last four years to continue the systematic renovation of Evergreen's buildings as planned over the last decade. Examples are a comprehensive remodel of the College Activities Building, expansion of the Longhouse Education and Cultural Center, construction of a sustainable agriculture lab at the organic farm, remodeling of the Art Annex, construction of a Native American carving studio, remodeling of student housing apartments, and remodel and upgrade to the Communications building - one of the largest academic building on campus. The campus has also continued with many energy saving projects. The self-evaluation report and review also showed that maintaining these resources throughout their lifecycle is important and well-managed.

The evaluator appreciated the on-line walking tour and the 360 degree photos of the campus on the website. All work in this area is directly tied to the core theme of

environmental stewardship and the evaluator applauds Evergreen's steadfastness in being a leader in all things green.

**2.G.2** *The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.*

The college is in compliance with standard 2.G.2.

**2.G.3** *The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.*

The cornerstones of physical planning are the college's well-done flexible master plan and the Ten Year Capital plan. These are closely tied to TESC's mission and goals and sustainability is a key component of the plans. The master plan is slated for an update in 2014-15. A review of committees and policies, and interviews with campus professionals clearly indicate that the planning for physical resources is thorough and a high priority at Evergreen. The college also plans for safety, emergency and accessibility issues. The planning processes appear to be very collaborative and focus on environmental sustainability, accessibility, and health and safety for the campus community.

**2.G.4** *Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.*

During a tight fiscal period the college has continued to make significant investments in the equipment required to fulfill its mission and the intended outcomes of its programs and services. Through planning and commitment the facilities are furnished and equipped adequately to serve the students and faculty. The college has been able to spend significant dollars on furnishing and equipment from capital budget projects and through planned replacement cycles in the operating budget over the last several years. The standard is met for sufficient quantity and quality of equipment to meet the educational goals.

### Technological Infrastructure

**2.G.5** *Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.*

Despite declining state budgets, Evergreen State College recognized and maintained a high interest in advancing the use of technology across campus for both academic

and administrative use. The College wanted to take advantage of immersing technologies and mature software and application uses both for teaching and learning but also to help create efficiencies throughout the academic programs, operational functions, and support services. Significant resources, both dollar and human, have been purposely and strategically added to updating, creating, purchasing and maintaining appropriate technology over the last several years. The list of accomplishments in the report and further discussed during the visit is impressive both in new infrastructure, new organizational structures, and projects completed that clearly help not only with administrative efficiencies but also with meeting the needs of the college in interdisciplinary curriculum planning and in assessment and evaluation of student learning outcomes.

**2.G.6** *The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.*

The availability and wide spread use of technology are a commitment of the college which requires a constant goal of providing support and training. The Evergreen State College provides a wide variety of technology instruction and support to meet the needs of faculty, staff, students and administrators. Dividing technical support services into two support teams and hiring an associate director of Client Services in 2010 is an example of the commitment to instruction and support to the college community. The verified evidence in the report shows the many ways technology training and support are done on campus.

**2.G.7** *Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.*

The Evergreen State College's commitment to supporting faculty's technology needs and student's technology expectations has been a very high priority the last five years and the results are evident. During times of declining state support the budget for technology remained stable and strong. The College manages the planning of the technology infrastructure through the Computing and Communications management team. The Banner Users Group and the Campus Web Manager help guide the direction of the management team through their cross collaboration with many campus stake holders. The team engages in close coordination with other constituencies on campus. The college is implementing an updated technology governance plan that will assign key people to the team working on technology infrastructure. This collaborative group will continue to include faculty, students, and staff but will include assigned academic and business leaders, budget coordinators and well as people with direct domain knowledge and technology interests. Although just started, it appears to be working well and should continue to improve technology planning on campus. The other improvement in this area was hiring a technology project manager in academics who reports to the Provost. This position's emphasis is coordination, consultation and management of academic

IT projects with the IT team. It is reported this has been invaluable to the implementation of important IT academic projects.

**2.G.8** *The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.*

The Evergreen State College has an extensive Technology Strategic Plan and has policies regarding information technology infrastructure, planning and renewal and replacement that were reviewed. The various technology replacement cycles and related funding listed in the report were verified through campus interviews. Evergreen is in compliance with Standard 2.G.8.

## **IX. Summary**

The Evaluation Committee conducted this review through study of the Evergreen State College Year Three Self-Evaluation Report and Appendix, extensive review of college policies and information available electronically, telephone and web-based interviews with the senior administration, deans, coordinators, faculty leaders in key governance positions, union leaders and others. Staff support for the tricky task of coordinating multiple meetings for participants in *three* time zones was handled with skill and good will. The interviewees at the college were forthcoming and helpful and knowledgeable regarding both the institution and its mission and core themes. Information not fully available in the Self-Evaluation or on the web was provided as needed before and during the interview process. Although all members of the Committee felt the frustration attendant in "evaluation at a distance," our conclusion was that we have sufficient knowledge of the institution to make recommendations.

The Evergreen State College appears to be evolving intelligently from a locally well-understood if complicated way of operation and it has undertaken such valuable work as that of the Re-Modeling Teaching and Learning at Evergreen (RTaLE) taskforce, leading to the Academic Statement Initiative. With the work of the Long Range Curriculum Task Force, the bold initiative to reducing class size, the Summer Undergraduate Research Program, and the current development of an online record system to provide students and faculty with ready access to student histories and evaluations, Evergreen positions itself for mission fulfillment and leadership as an innovative public liberal arts college.



## **X. Commendations and Recommendations**

### **Commendation**

The panel commends the college for the collaborative and strategic management of significant incremental losses of state funding over the last five years. This loss was managed with a steadfastness to mission and principles, maintaining faculty, direct student services, technology upgrades and capital improvements while moving forward with bold initiatives such as lowering class size and exploring other recruitment and retention measures.

The panel commends the students, faculty, staff and Board of Trustees for the hard work, willingness to do more and the collegial spirit demonstrated during this time and encourages continued steadfastness.

### **Recommendation(s)**

There are no recommendations from the Evaluation Committee. Although there are a number of Concerns expressed in this report, the Committee did not find any of them rising to the level of a Recommendation. Nevertheless, the Committee states the Concerns for the benefit of the college and subsequent review committees.