

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 7, 2014

TO: The Evergreen Community

FROM: Thomas L. Purce, President

SUBJECT: Board Evaluation of the President

At their meeting on Thursday, July 10, the Trustees will evaluate my performance as president during the past year. I invite you to take part in that process by responding to my self-evaluation or by sending your observations to the Board

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The Board's bylaws specify that the president shall be judged by the performance of the College as a whole, so it is in my interest that each of you should be successful in your own work. I need to know how I can most effectively serve Evergreen, and how I can help you to work most effectively as well.

My self-evaluation is posted on the Web at:

<http://www.evergreen.edu/president/selfeval.htm>. If you would like a printed copy of my self-evaluation, please call my office at 867-6100. Comments regarding my performance can be sent to the Board of Trustee's e-mail (tescbot@evergreen.edu), or to me (purcel@evergreen.edu), or to both the Board and me

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I hope you will participate in this process. A tradition of regular self-evaluation is an important part of Evergreen. Thank you for reading and responding to my self-evaluation.

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Self-evaluation 2013-2014
Thomas L. Purce

As I reflect on the past year and begin my fifteenth and last year as Evergreen's president, I am struck by how rapidly the public higher education landscape is changing. Over the past five years we have seen a fundamental shift in who pays for college. The students and their parents are now the major contributors, while we have seen a dramatic decline in the financial role of state government.

At the same time, legislators and citizens are asking for more and more accountability from public institutions. The result of this shift is an increased level of stress for students as higher tuition levels have not been matched with sufficient levels of financial aid.

And there is pressure on the college to maintain the quality of education with fewer resources. Even with this reality, I continue to be excited and pleased with the way that our faculty and staff rose to the challenge and the positive academic experience that most of our students report at The Evergreen State College.

As usual, I started the year by spending time with an academic program. Paula Schofield and Andy Brabban welcomed me to their first-year introductory science program on a field trip to Eastern Washington. It was a great example of the kind of extended field work that Evergreen's commitment to full-time programs makes possible for students. I was able to rejoin the program at the end of fall quarter and had the great pleasure of witnessing a group of students who were blossoming after their first quarter at Evergreen.

Through the many financial and administrative challenges we face, it is the constant reminders of the real difference Evergreen makes in the lives of students that has sustained my commitment to the college. Our Year Three

Accreditation review and visit by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), our regional accrediting body, was a great success. The evaluators praised the way we implement our pedagogical model, and particularly highlighted the Academic Statement initiative. There were no recommendations, which is almost unprecedented.

This year has had its share of challenges, most notably an enrollment shortfall of over 10%, which creates a very difficult budgetary problem. Although the problem does not come out of the blue, the scale and complexity of the problem is sobering. After many years of enrollment growth, driven first by population growth and then by a faltering economy, the reversal of the trend feels sudden to many. In fact, the leveling off of population growth has long been predicted. This, coupled with a tremendous increase in the number and size of institutions offering baccalaureate degrees, creates an enrollment squeeze. While that squeeze is felt by many institutions, Evergreen also must contend with an environment that increasingly views a liberal arts education as less job focused and less likely to be a purely career-oriented economic investment.

Finally, the sharp rise in tuition over the past five years has been accompanied by a drop in demand. The budget cuts we made this year are different from legislative reductions we have had to absorb in the recent past. Shortfalls due to lower enrollment affect housing, dining revenues, and services and activities fees. Consequently, for many areas of the college, the budget cuts we are taking now are among the most painful we have endured. We have worked very hard to minimize the effects of these cuts on the quality of direct instruction available to students and on the lives of faculty and staff, but truth is that cuts of this size have very real effects, especially on our valued colleagues who now face the prospect of reduced hours or lost jobs.

Over many years at the college I have always been impressed by the way the Evergreen community can pull together when faced with a challenge. I am pleased to see faculty and staff across the college step up to take on work in creative and collaborative ways. We have begun to take effective steps to address a changing enrollment environment and growing

competition, both in-state and nationally. The number and variety of enrollment initiatives underway is impressive.

Academic and Student Life

A key to future stable enrollment is the retention of our students. The Academic Division continues to make important strides toward this goal with the implementation of the Academic Statement as a graduation requirement. A greater faculty investment in orientation events for new students has also created a stronger, early connection to the college, leading to higher retention levels for participants. We have also continued to increase the number of first year programs while lowering their class size, resulting in more seats available in these programs than at any time in the past decade.

Students enrolled in these programs also showed higher levels of retention. Initiation of the pre-term Evergreen Student Civic Engagement Institute with 38 participants was another great success, building civic leadership capacity and higher retention among participants.

I am pleased with the collaborative work between academics and student affairs in establishing two DTFs to make recommendations to increase recruitment and retention of Hispanic and international students. Both DTFs completed their work this Spring, and their recommendations are moving toward implementation. A faculty institute on Hispanic recruitment and retention will occur this summer, with a legislative request likely to support our efforts in this very important future investment of the college. In the area of international recruitment, I am pleased with the conversations that have developed between academics and the EF Language Academy, with which we have had a thirty year relationship on our campus. We are exploring ways that we might increase the possibility of transferring EF language students into four year experiences at the college. I believe a deepening relationship with the EF Academy can result in a natural pipeline into our undergraduate as well as our graduate programs.

Student Affairs has led the joint effort to implement recommendations to expand on our long-standing commitment to veterans by providing an advisor to veterans and their dependents at Joint Base Lewis-McCord. We also

continue to expand our efforts to serve veterans on campus by adding a new Director of our Veterans' Support Center, as well as an academic advisor for veterans.

Improvements to our website and marketing materials are among our most visible efforts as we implement the recommendations of the Maguire Associates for enrollment recovery. Behind the scenes, staff in enrollment services and partners across the whole college are focusing on multiple venues to increase the pool of applicants, to better target prospective students, and to improve customer service to inquirers and applicants through new technology applications.

Our new Vice President for Student Affairs has increased our efforts on fostering a safer and healthier community with a focus on alcohol and drug abuse prevention, building healthy outdoor life styles and preventing sexual violence. We are beginning to explore modernizing the Costantino Recreation Center, and have begun improving the safety environment at the Children's Center.

Campus Renewal and Administrative Operations

Finance and Administration continues to be the strong operational backbone of the college, once again receiving clean audit reports for both the college and the foundation with no findings. The Division has continued to work toward streamlining travel and reimbursement processes, and access to online services, such as direct deposits, have been greatly expanded. The business office has instituted both a nine-month and three-month payment plan for students. Computing and Communications has tripled our internet connectivity and network services. In the physical plant we have finished the renovation of the Comm Building and Lab I, second floors, and have completed the update to the Capital Master Plan. We continue to reduce our energy use.

We reached a one-year agreement with the United Faculty of Evergreen in which both sides recognized the college's urgent need to address recruitment and retention of students. We successfully negotiated the reopening of the classified staff contract; and we continue our commitment to improving the

wellness programs for our community members, promoted by a successful second annual Wellness Fair.

Fundraising and External Relations

The importance of a strong advancement program has become increasingly obvious over the past few years, as students have taken on a greater share of the cost of their education. Well over 70% of our students receive some form of financial aid, and the scholarships available through our advancement efforts play an increasingly critical role. Private giving has also become an important source of support for faculty development.

In order to support the enrollment efforts of the college, the Board of Governors developed a new scholarship program this year designed to increase retention and increased the number of Annual Fund Scholarships by nearly 100, tripling the number of awards. We have, once again, exceeded our fund-raising goals for the year by raising nearly \$3.5 million. Another \$500,000 gift from the Gates Foundation will allow us to add nearly 800,000 to the college Foundation's scholarship endowment.

Our Alumni Programs also continue to grow with a highly successful "Return to Evergreen" which - with 200 attendees - was one of the most successful in recent years.

Looking Forward

In this next year, I look forward to working with the Board, the administration, faculty, staff and students to complete a new strategic plan. As I enter my last year as president, I continue to enjoy my work as much as the first day I returned to Evergreen. I have felt and continue to feel very privileged to lead an institution whose values are so well aligned with my own.

Having served in a wide variety of institutions in my public life, I know that it is rare to have a work place that allows me to express my own personal commitment to access to all, environmental justice, and social equity. I look forward to the upcoming legislative year in order to have the opportunity to

tell our story and to advocate for the future students who will face formidable barriers in their quest for higher education.

I want to thank the faculty and staff for allowing me to be a partner with you in our many adventures over the many years. And I want to acknowledge for all of us an extraordinary Board of Trustees, who have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to the mission and the members of the Evergreen community.