OUTLINE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPUTING REVIEW
BY SUB-COMMITTEE

I. Assessment of Goals and Objectives

    A. Goals
        1. Effective services at lowest possible cost - Budgets;
        2. Data collection and provide facilities for report generation;

II. Assessment of Current Operations

    A. Service to Users
        1. Are systems meeting needs?
        2. Are system reports timely?
        3. Is the report distribution to the right people?
        4. Are users adhering to production schedule deadlines?

    B. Operating Policies
        1. Should system costs be a chargeback to users?
        2. Are the production priorities clear and appropriate?

    C. Human Resources
        1. Are there adequate staff to handle system requirements?

    D. Administrative Systems Software
        1. Are current systems well designed, accurate and reliable?
        2. Is critical software well documented and maintainable?

    E. Security and Back Up
        1. Is it important that the system data not be lost?
        2. Is critical data being retained for proper length of time?
        3. Is it important that no unauthorized people see the data?
        4. Is it important that no unauthorized data changes be prevented?

    F. Future Directions for Administrative Computing
        1. Should staff utilization change to meet new needs?
        2. Does the College need on-line information systems and, if so, what areas and at what costs?
        3. Are any current administrative systems/services obsolete and/or unneeded?
        4. Are there new management information systems specifically needed to provide necessary data for the institutional research position?

MAJOR FINDINGS
Administrative Computing Disappearing Task Force

I. Current State of Affairs

The task force has reviewed every administrative system which is utilized at Evergreen. Included in the second section of this report are separate analysis for each of these systems. Each analysis discusses the major issues associated with the current computer system.

Computer services users are generally satisfied with the manner in which their administrative systems are operated and maintained by computer service staff. There were suggestions for improvements, but the users and systems analysts have already begun work to make desired changes in many cases. The major exceptions to the general aire of satisfaction were as follows:

(1) Accounts Receivable System: Age of the system and the needs of several users indicate that this system should be thoroughly analyzed to determine the most efficient and effective method of meeting current needs.

(2) Accounting Systems: There are several adjustments pending which need attention.

(3) Library Circulation System: The current circulation system is not functioning and will be replaced within the next year. Computer services will be required to furnish staffing to affect this change.

A special effort was made to ask as many users as possible about the

budgeting and accounting for computer services expenditures. Most users of computer services prefer to maintain the current budgeting and accounting system.

II. Planned Enhancement of Current Systems:

The library, plant operations and maintenance and instructional programs have initiated steps to enhance the circulation, key control, scheduling, space utilization, space inventory, and the equipment inventory system. No later than July 1, 1979 the library anticipates installing the circulation subsystem of the Washington library network. This on-line circulation system will provide daily operating circulation functions and detailed statistical record keeping. The library anticipates that within one year from the installation date, the batch system demands of the current circulation system will subside as the batch system is phased out. The library expects personnel from computer services to provide assistance in creating the necessary interface programs between the library circulation system and other vital areas of the campus such as the Registrar's Office and Student Accounts.

The Office of Facilities plans to install on-line systems for scheduling, space utilization studies, space inventory and key control. The computer program for the new key control system is completed and the terminal and printer are anticipated to be on-line by January, 1979. It is anticipated that the space scheduling and utilization programs will be written during Winter Quarter with the printer and terminal expected to be delivered in February. The space inventory system is also anticipated to be brought to an on-line status during the coming year.

The instructional program is planning to install two computer terminals to maintain an on-line check out and inventory system. These will be installed as soon as the terminals - presently on order - arrive. They will be placed in the Communications and Lab Building. It is anticipated that the terminal in the Lab Building will experience the greater use because it will include the operation of LAB stores. This system will also include information on maintenance schedules and proficiency test requirements and will be largely an extension of the system currently utilized in Media Loan. The computer science staff will be requested to get the system operative.

III. The Future:

There is a need to continue the maintenance efforts on the current software packages but it is also apparent that technology has provided alternative methods for current operations. The accounts receivable system is an example where on-line processing may be a feasible alternative to the current batch processing system. In fact, on-line processing may be an alternative to many of the batch processing systems currently in use. Another technological alternative which should be explored in connection with the new institutional research office is a data-based system. Such a system may produce a more flexible software alternative while providing a very broad data base. Benefits of these alternative technologies should be measured against their potential costs when major changes to a system are under consideration.

The institutional research position is bound to place immediate and future demands on the administrative computing staff. As of yet the anticipated demands have not been identified. It seems certain that staff efforts will be intermittent and piece meal until the data base needs for this position

are clearly spelled out. It would be premature to completely identify
this data base need until a permanent institutional research director is
hired but, soon thereafter, it is recommended that a concentrated effort
to identify the data base need be initiated.

The College has been blessed with adequate computer services budgets in past
years. However, with the Council for Postsecondary Education's recommendation
to place an expenditure lid on administrative costs at current levels, there
will come a time when requests for administrative computer services staff time
will be greater than what is available. It seems advisable then to begin an
annual planning cycle concurrent with the budget cycle. This planning effort
could recommend priorities to be used by the director of computing services
in assigning staff projects throughout a year. The planning could be accomplished
by a special ad hoc planning committee of users with input from the director of
computing services and other college officials. If any conflicts over priorities
arise which cannot be resolved between the various users, the President's
Council could be the final voice in the matter.

The task force believes that the teaching activities of computer services staff
are legitimate and should be continued. Such activity helps to maintain pro-
fessionalism in the analyst and provides depth to the academic curriculum.

Because Evergreen is ten years old and computer services staffing has been
relatively stable there has been a high degree of continuity in the software
maintenance operations. Consequently, data interpretation has been accurate
and consistant. Continued staff stability is hoped for but cannot be expected
to last forever. To prepare for staff turnover and provide a basis for accurate
data interpretation over the years, many colleges compile a data dictionary.

A data dictionary defines data elements and requires updating on a year to year basis. Compilation of a data dictionary is recommended. At Evergreen, the compilation of a data dictionary and the updating could be administered by a computer services staff member.

In summary, the task force wishes to emphasize the need for good planning and flexibility. Computer technologies are changing rapidly and for the College to continue providing good administrative computing services with the financial resources made available, there will have to be excellent foresight coupled with the energy and wisdom to act.