

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

August 14, 1973

TO: Lauren Biddle, Debbie Creveling, Craig Ridnour, Jack Webb
FROM: Charles Teske
SUBJECT: NEH Follow-Up Report

Let me express my thanks for the effort, persistence, and intelligence you have shown in compiling this report. I shall circulate it to Charles McCann, Ed Kormondy, Richard Alexander, Will Humphreys, Pete Sinclair, and my fellow deans. After consulting with them, I shall surely send it to all coordinators and group-contract sponsors for the coming year, and perhaps to all faculty members.

What you have discovered and surmised certainly is not calculated to produce a sense of complacency in any of us. Instead, the report presents exactly the kind of incisive diagnosis for which I had hoped. The proof of its impact will be most observable, no doubt, during the curricular planning process for 1973-74. Keep in touch and let's work together on the focussing of all the energy and goodwill available around Evergreen -- the kind of energy and goodwill you have brought to bear on this project.

CBT/eh

cc: McCann
Kormondy
✓ Alexander
Humphreys
Sinclair
Martin
Patterson
Youtz

Supplement to N.E.H. Follow-up Report

E. J. Webb

7/30/73

I. Response to Hamilton-Capitain Reports:

A.) Hamilton: Communications problems do seem to increase in proportion to size and diversification of TESC. Student and faculty frustration in locating available resources is still high. This parallels the lack of administrative implementation of curriculum; the lack of an overall curriculum plan; faculty pleas for curriculum planning (long-term); the under-utilization of faculty expertise and lack of indepth, advanced humanistic studies. Hamilton's point that Humanities are treated as a "break" in real work here is equally true anywhere - even at his own institution. He seems to be looking for a structural-slot formation for Humanities under an administrative fiction that has long existed in this area everywhere. One compelling problem is to develop new administrative techniques for our more appropriate goals. I believe the TESC structure in fact does work best (contra Hamilton) in sequential fields and that all of the Humanities are as sequential as any other field. For this and other obvious reasons the Humanities can no more be separated from each other than they can from other disciplines.

But at this point we have fewer planned curriculum options than most institutions of higher learning in the country. We need to take a hard look at Coordinated Studies programs as they relate to each other, our resources and clientele over a 2 - 4 year period, at least, as a total curriculum - not on their individual merits. Many faculty have made this plea for more advanced, sequential planning.

B.) Capitain: Comparing his report with remarks made to me throughout the year leads me to suspect we are building dandelions where we don't need to. (The report shows much more faculty optimism than I hear daily, yet Capitain is not a legislator.) His report is incisive on the following points:

- 1.) Faculty productivity in their teaching fields is seen at a very low level by faculty, students and outside evaluators.
- 2.) Most students and faculty are tired of not having enough opportunity for intensive work on either the basic or advanced levels.
- 3.) Capitain underscores repeated comments by faculty and students that much Humanities material introduced into programs not focussed specifically on the Humanities was of a "pop" variety, superficially considered. Even if such literature is of a serious, classical nature, superficial exposure may have a "vaccination effect" - as it does in Surv. Eng. Lit. Classes - by almost guaranteeing immunity from its influence because of limited exposure. An analogy is provided by the experience so many have had in studying music long enough to realize the work involved, but not long enough to enjoy performance or find security in satisfactory progress.

II. General Remarks: (based on Program Histories, evaluations and interviews)

1. All-college problems related to Humanities: a) Basic inter-disciplinary Coordinated Studies Programs do not provide room for sequential, depth learning necessary for advanced work in all subjects they cover. Are these programs erring on the side of trying to do too much within their own resources? b) Fewer books as focus and more books as supplements has been recommended as a successful way of dealing with the individual's pedagogical problems in a. c) Basic capacities and levels of achievements need early identification and response. d) The need for high impact information dissemination of faculty resources is critical. e) Student and faculty frustration at not dealing with subjects in depth is mounting. f) Joint student-faculty planning of curriculum is a moot point when a large portion of the faculty itself does not now participate in curriculum planning.
2. Specific, high-priority needs in the humanities. a) Books in all areas are not available in the library for even the most basic humanistic studies. b) Fine arts faculty have universally expressed a need for additional part-time/full-time faculty. c) The need to establish sequential learning career opportunities for students in Humanities and Arts at TESC is most evidenced by the loss of many high-quality students who have left to study their art elsewhere, even at the cost of loss of credit and taking much irrelevant required course work. Priorities could be shifted more toward the needs of our students - perhaps even without a clear view of whether they are better or worse than those we might establish for them.
3. Narrative Remarks

Hamilton raises the issue of Humanities as a field, or series of fields. Can we separate the arts from the humanities or the other disciplines and keep them alive? No. We have said as an institution that we ought to cut this out in our thinking and practice. We've begun, but we haven't gotten very far (c.k., we're only 2 years old). We need now only to develop the third component of our curriculum that was supposed to support the ones we now have (Self-Paced Learning) so that disciplines may be developed so that inter-disciplinary programs of an advanced nature may really take place. Many faculty have indicated that, even in Basic Coordinated Studies programs, many students did not possess enough skill to meet program goals and that nothing could be done to prepare them to during the year.

The lack of advanced work in the Humanities in all modes indicates two things: first, the need to recognize that humanistic and artistic studies are just as sequential and progressive as the other disciplines and, second, that truly advanced coordinated studies in the humanities and related disciplines (including the sciences) will only be possible with a greater variety and number of advanced options. While the college has achieved much in revitalizing the relation of the humanities to the world outside the college; but in terms of competence and performance within these disciplines, how does the college measure up to colleges of comparable size and facilities?

Three final, unrelated points:

1.) To what extent are we focussing our curricular and teaching efforts on getting students to learn how to learn the humanistic disciplines? Evidence gathered for this report indicates a major emphasis on content - either sporadic in some Coordinated Studies or consistent in some Group and Individual Contracts. If "learning how to learn" is not one of our goals and learning "specific whats" is, we ought at least to change our rhetoric. (I take "learning how" to mean a focus on methodological and experiential aspects of specific material, so that students develop the ability to meet new material on their own at a higher level of understanding -- as opposed to a focus on content, appreciation, or deeper understanding of isolated works or segments of fields.

2.) Members of Coordinated Studies faculty and, to a lesser extent, Group and Individual Contracts should not try to do all things for all students exclusively through the delivery mechanisms of their particular mode. Faculty should not feel that they have failed in their goals if they must rely on outside resources consistently and significantly for a portion of their goals. The practice of semi-isolation and containment in all modes leads to over-expenditure of faculty effort with minimal impact on student growth.

3.) The college is now in a position to make significant contribution to the surrounding community on which we rely for support. Part-time offerings in all areas of the arts and humanities for local adult residents - many of whom are enrolling in increasing numbers at other area institutions with higher tuition fees. Such offerings require a different approach to design, scheduling and presentation than our regular programs - a problem which makes it more difficult for us than other institutions that don't have to make such degrees of adjustment. However, not to do so would represent a failure to discharge our obligation to these people, to create a tradition of isolation that need not be established and to pass up an enriching influence on the internal life of the college.

We need to remember that we have been engaged in curricular implementation for a short period of only two years. But the critical years in innovative colleges' histories - the 4th through 8th - are far enough ahead of us to focus in good time on concrete, systematic development of administrative techniques and pedagogical devices that will provide long term growth for our vitally needed educational philosophy.

I must express my admiration for Craig Kidnour, Debbie Creveling and Lauren Middle who have spent several hundred hours compiling the data for this report. During this period of time and in the three days of intensive work putting the report together, I was greatly impressed by their maturity, objectivity, and their professional and human concern for the development of the humanities for the good of this college.