

September, 1995

TO: My colleagues  
FROM: Charles B. Teske  
SUBJECT: Dr. Ludwig Huber's study of Evergreen

For two full weeks in late February of 1994, Ludwig Huber and his wife Ingeborg visited our campus. They stayed in a dormitory, attended many of our activities, and generally immersed themselves in our environment. ("Immersed" is a proper term, for the rain was such during their visit that they never once were able to see the mountains.) As will appear from his article, Dr. Huber sat in on many meetings, spoke with many Evergreeners, and read through many pages of our documents.

He is the chief academic officer of the Oberstufen-Kolleg, a "laboratory school" at the University of Bielefeld -- "the only example of a sort of liberal arts college in the Federal Republic of Germany" (Association for Integrative Studies Newsletter, vol. 14, nr. 3; October, 1992). Having been founded in 1974 by Hartmut von Hentig, the Oberstufen-Kolleg is a four-year institution, enrolling students between the ages of 16 and 25. It seeks to provide an alternative to the conventional German system by combining the last two or three years of Gymnasium education (the Oberstufe -- preparatory for study at universities, and comparable to the first two years at an American liberal arts college) and the first one or two years of study at a university (comparable to the last two years at an American college). Because its curriculum combines disciplinary specialization with theme-oriented interdisciplinary courses, Dr. Huber was much interested in examining interdisciplinary study at Evergreen.

As he was leaving, he announced his intention to write a report of what he had experienced with us. I volunteered to make an English translation so that his remarks could be available to the Evergreen community. In sending a copy of his article to me in May, 1994, he doubted whether a translation would be worth the effort, because he deals mainly with things which we already know well. He wished that he had been able to discuss critical points at much greater length. But his attempt to describe to German educators an institution so different from theirs would not allow for more than a few brief conclusions.

Having made first a word-for-word translation (June, 1994) and then having tried to make the sense of the scholarly German accessible as English, I sent Dr. Huber my second draft (September, 1994) and commented: "The task is well worth whatever effort it takes. Yes, my colleagues and I already know much of what you have written. But we are self-conscious and either prejudiced or susceptible to the charge of being prejudiced. You bring a keen-sighted and keen-eared objectivity to the description of our college. Like the beloved figure of science-fiction, the anthropologist coming to Earth from one of the moons of Saturn, or like the geologist examining an exposed stratum of

rock as a 'time-slice,' you tell us how we have appeared in February, 1994." In November, Dr. Huber responded with a number of emendations and further suggestions, which I now have had the opportunity to incorporate into a final draft of the translation.

With his approval, I am offering it to you and to any other colleagues with whom you may wish to share it. It clearly belongs among our archival materials and in the Office of Institutional Research. Those who had the opportunity to meet Dr. Huber may be interested in his findings. The report as a fairly objective discussion may be useful to those who wish to understand Evergreen better and have not yet had much occasion to think about how our enterprise fits into the larger domain of Western-cultural higher education. And at a time when we must adapt the college to new conditions, possibly including substantial growth, it may be useful for those engaged in planning.

The original article will be stored in our archives, along with a copy of the translation. But if anyone has a further question about the "feel," the "spin" of phrases in the original text, I shall be glad to discuss Dr. Huber's own German words.

*Charles B. Teske*